THE EXPERIENCES OF INTERNATIONAL FAMILIES IN U.S. PRESCHOOL SETTINGS IN A UNIVERSITY TOWN IN SOUTHEASTERN TEXAS

A Dissertation

by

KISHA LASHON LEE

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Chair of Committee,	Norvella Carter
Co-Chair of Committee	Robin Rackley
Committee Members,	Radhika Viruru
	Elsa Gonzalez y Gonzalez
Head of Department,	Joyce M. Alexander

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ABSTRACT

The search for child care can be a daunting task for parents of young children, with a variety of choices available. To search during, or shortly after, a move to a new community without an established network of support can be a frustrating experience. The stress and confusion of locating quality services that are adequate to the family's needs and unique circumstances are high. Research shows that quality child care environments are linked to higher early language and cognitive and social development in young children. With an increasing number of parents working outside of the home, child care has become more necessary, even as school systems and preschool environments are becoming increasingly more diverse.

This study used a qualitative approach and in a town in southeastern Texas that attracts international faculty, staff, and students. A growing percentage of the students arrive as married spouses with young children in search of child care services while they teach, attend school, or conduct research. This research study examined the unique experiences that these parents face when arriving in the United States and searching for child care for their young charge(s) and how these experiences affected how they viewed the American child care system after, or as a result of, that search. The study compared specific mechanisms and experiences throughout the search process and subsequent location of child care services, as well as child care in their home countries. The intent was to understand how international families become familiar with available services, how they navigate the system, and their experiences as their child(ren) attend a program

or programs in the community. This study examined whether cultural factors affected any aspect of their search, location, and experiences throughout the process.

The study included 10 mothers, whose experiences varied. It was concluded that, while most found the search process to be challenging and difficult, all located a suitable child care environment for their children. Suggestions for child care programs were presented.

DEDICATION

First and foremost, I dedicate this project to my loving husband of 22 years. There is certainly no way that any of my degrees would have been earned without his sacrifice, dedication, and commitment to being the "best mother AND father" to our five children. His belief in me and his unending encouragement and support mean more to me than he will ever know. I strive daily to be the best based on the best that he gives to me and our family each and every day.

I also dedicate this study to my five children, who never complained about my absence even, when my pseudo-presence meant a head stuck in a book, writing a paper, or conducting research on the computer, temporarily unavailable to tie a shoe or read a story or play. I am so proud of the young men and "little lady" and hope that my example as a returning student after being home for 12 years with them will help them to know that it is never too late to achieve dreams. I feel blessed beyond measure and accomplish all that I do because of them. I adore them and will support their dreams as well.

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I thank all of the professors who have not only been excellent scholars but have provided wonderful feedback and guidance. There are too many to name, but I would like to highlight Dr. M. M. Capraro, Dr. Webb-Hasan, and Dr. Lincoln. All have been caring and have provided advice, insight, powerful feedback, a firm wake-up call, and/or a listening ear; they challenged me when I needed it. I aspire to become like each of them in some way, as they have pulled out the best in me.

Finally, thanks to the teachers and staff of the early childhood programs in which I have worked. I am proud to have worked with them and am proud of the work that we accomplish with children every day. They make me proud to be an educator and an administrator. My work and my research have meaning because of them and the children and families with whom we interact daily.

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Contributors

This work was supervised by a dissertation committee consisting of Professor Carter, Professor Rackley, and Professor Viruru of the College of Education and Human Development and Professor Gonzalez of the Department of Educational Leadership, College of Education, Texas A&M University Corpus Christi.

The translation of the interview protocol was provided by Myung Hee Im and Sung Won Lee, former postdoctoral research fellows in the College of Education at Texas A&M University. The peer reviewer for data analysis was Dr. Jennifer LeBlanc, former graduate student in the College of Education at Texas A&M University.

All other work conducted for the dissertation study was completed by the student independently.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Prologue

Agar (1986) contended that the background of the researcher guides the framework in which the study, its organization, and analysis of data are influenced by the distinctive experiences that weave throughout the study. I approach this work as an emerging researcher, compelled to begin with my own story to provide the background of how I came to be involved in this work and why this research is important. Therefore, I begin this study with my background, which begins with my journey as it relates to this field.

Having worked in the early childhood field for more than 20 years and having managed child care programs for the past 15, it would be easy to assume that all five of my children attended early childhood programs. However, this was not the case. As a mother of four sons, all born prematurely and with special needs, I resigned from my position with the federal government and remained at home with my then 3-year-old son and my second son, recently released from the hospital. Being cared for at home by pediatric home care nurses, he was doing poorly, with inconsistent nursing care due numerous shift rotations. In the meantime, friends and family members asked whether I would watch their children as well. In order to remain home with my children and to earn a living, I applied for and was granted a child care license and began to operate my own home-based business. I continued my education in the evenings, majoring in human

development and early childhood education and eventually relied on part-time care for my youngest son while I completed my student teaching requirement.

Having returned to school at a local community college to complete prerequisites, I reapplied to the university to which I had been accepted after high school. I applied under the 10-year re-admittance policy and was accepted into the College of Education. I was excited to return to college as a student, although as a nontraditional one this time. I had left college an 18-year-old single mother, feeling disappointed and ashamed. As a married mother of four young sons and working full time during the day, I was a very different student from the other 27 women in my cohort. However, I quickly bonded with two other mothers. We supported one another through 2 years of coursework and student teaching by meeting, with our children in each other's homes, at the park or library, and on fun and educational field trips that were real assignments for our classes. We used our own children and experiences in our papers and tested hypotheses proposed by theorists and scholars whom we studied.

The beauty of living and attending university in the Washington Metropolitan Area was the vast selection of early childhood center sites for students to observe as part of their methods rotations; they included federal, corporate, and nonprofit sites. My first experience with early childhood from a global perspective came when I was assigned to 8-week observational rotations at the World Bank Children's Center (for children 15 to 24 months old), the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center (for children 3 years old to pre-kindergarten), and the University Center for Young Children (for children 5 years old to kindergarten). At each of these sites, the diversity of the young children was a

very new experience for me as these government agencies and the university attracted scholars from all over the world. This was a unique opportunity to provide child care to a wide range of children.

My first unique cultural experience came when I checked into the World Bank site. I was asked upon entering to wash my hands, even before I had signed in at the front desk. Two sinks were located by the front door, one on an adult level and one on a child's level. I was taken to my assigned classroom and noticed small wooden racks filled with shoes, both adult and child sizes, lined up in the hallway. I immediately took off my shoes and was given a pair of soft silken socks. The room was set up with baskets in various shapes, sizes, colors, and materials, filled with various items, some of which were unfamiliar. Later, I was told that most of these items had been donated by parents from their travels or from their home countries to share their cultures with their children and their peers in the program. Mealtime was also a different experience. As I shared lunch with the toddlers, the teachers asked the child in charge of music what country, artist, composer, and song the child wished to have played during the meal; the child could choose from a menu of music from many countries. It was the first time that I had experienced a center that truly reflected a cultural perspective that represented the children in the program.

The Smithsonian program also provided a unique cultural early childhood environment. The entire child care program and curriculum centered around the vast collection of museum exhibits housed on the National Mall in Washington. I accompanied the class to picnics in front of the Smithsonian castle, scavenger hunts in

the Museum of Natural History, and a learning unit on how to navigate the subway system in the downtown area. It was interesting to experience a 3-year-old explain the difference between a traditional Native American dwelling and a Sub-Saharan African habitat for a family or discuss the reasons for different bone structures on various dinosaur fossils.

The university center was similar in its instructional program, using an inquiry-based approach to learning through hands-on investigations and projects. The students reflected a rich diversity of children from many nations whose parents were faculty, staff, and students at the university with a high level of parent involvement in the learning units. These programs enriched my understanding of the importance of cultural relevance in the early childhood environment.

After student teaching and becoming certified, my passion for teaching increased and I was inspired by the Title I school to which I was assigned for student teaching. My mentor teacher was in her 30th year of teaching and told me often that this would be her last year in the school system. Rightly so, as I discovered she had a quiet contempt for the predominantly Hispanic and African American kindergarten students in her classroom. I took great care to prepare the classroom for their first weeks of school, brushing up on Spanish instructional and conversational language and translating documents with the help of the school translator and English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher. I was shocked after the first week of school when more than half of my class was “pulled” for ESL during my reading block, even though I had spent hours preparing lessons from the curriculum and translating everything. This came in handy

later, when my 12 weeks ended the parents gave me a farewell party. In tears, the mothers in the classroom told me that they had all improved their English because of the time that I had taken to translate their homework packets each week. This had enabled them to help their children with homework and they had learned the language in the process. I was proud of my accomplishments with this class, much to the chagrin of the mentor teacher, who told me that my efforts were useless since homework had never been returned to her for years. I realized that, if she had taken similar steps, she would have been helping not only her students but their families as well.

I have taught in elementary schools, both public and private, but returned to my roots and moved in administration of early childhood programs to ensure that there are programs of high quality, to recruit and retain the best teachers, and to provide care that is developmentally appropriate. While I believe that the best place for young children is to be cared for by parents in the home, which is where my own children were mostly cared for, I also know that this is not an ideal situation for many families. Having chosen to work in this field, I personally feel that, when child care is needed, it must be of the highest quality and suit the needs of the family as well as the child.

This study, particularly the research questions, derives from my work with families in the past 10 years as a director. Working as the administrator for a church-based program, my daily interactions with international families had been less than they no were in the university setting. I went from working with children in a mostly homogenous program and families from very few countries outside of the United States to a school in which the children represented close to 30 countries and spoke more than

20 languages. This is not uncommon, as many families may not find a Christian-based program to be suitable for their child, based on their beliefs, religious practices, or an absence of belief in any organized religion.

I quickly learned that I had to educate myself about various customs and observances with which I was unfamiliar. This was not easy, as I learned that simply because a parent was from a particular region of the country or shared a particular religion or belief did not mean that the experiences and practices in that home were the same as in the next family with whom I came into contact from the same background. Although my skin is brown, this did not mean that I was more culturally sensitive; as an African American female, my views were mostly Eurocentric in nature. I had to become open minded; I learned to place myself in the position of the parents, to learn to understand their needs, and never to hesitate to ask so that we understood each other. In many instances, I was required to explain policies and procedures that regulated the care that we provided that was not understood by some families. I learned that accommodations based on culture, religion, or even preference had a very important place and, in many cases, were necessary to respect each child and the family. These accommodations did not violate state standards but elevated respect for the child and the family.

I have learned and understand that I should not become offended, make assumptions, or take things personally. Some parents have refused to shake my hand, refused to sit during a meeting, or refused to accept my answers to their questions (based on limitations placed on decisions via state standards). It is not uncommon for me to

have to explain the appropriateness of play to a renowned faculty member and parent who demands strict teaching strategies and limited play for the child, even though this goes against basic principles of early childhood care. I have learned the importance of allowing a parent to provide the child with food from home with a strict feeding schedule during Ramadan; I have learned the significance of cleansing rituals while using the restroom that are important to a 3-year-old and her family, and I have learned to choose my words carefully when explaining a particularly difficult subject, such as a child's accident or misbehavior in the classroom. This learning has sparked my interest in their stories and in their journeys as they navigate the world of preschools in the United States.

Background of the Study

It is estimated that 80% of children in the United States regularly attend a child care program (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD] Early Child Care Research Network [ECCRN], 2006), at rates similar to those in Australia and the United Kingdom (Center for Community Child Health [CCCH], 2009; Smith et al., 2010). About 50% of these children in the United States are 3 to 5 years old and are in full-time care for at least 35 hours per week (Capizzano & Main, 2005).

Navigation of the U.S. child care system is often mystifying for parents. Locating and choosing an appropriate child care arrangement for a young child can be one a stressful experience for a parent (Gonzalez-Mena, 2001). To do so while moving to a new community without an established network of support can be daunting. To embark

on this most important undertaking while new to a country can be a frustrating and frightening experience.

Approximately 225,000 new international students arrived in the United States during the 2011-2012 school year to attend higher educational institutions (Institute of International Education [IIE], 2013). A small percentage of them arrive as parents with young children. Child care services are often expensive, with the average family contributing more than $7,000 annually for the care of an infant (Texas Workforce Commission, 2011). Quality child care services are in great demand, especially for young infants and toddlers.

It is estimated that 61% of children under the age of 5 years are in some type of regular child care arrangement while one or both parents work or attend school, according to the U.S. Census Bureau Survey of Program and Income Participation (SIPP; Laughlin, 2013). Children in center-based programs spend an average of 33 hours per week in nonparental care (Laughlin, 2013).

Child care providers vary in the types of programs and services provided, from informal in-home providers to formal, private preschool centers. Programs also vary widely in level of quality. Child care quality and positive child development outcomes are determined by traditional measures. These include low classroom ratios between caregivers and children, ample classroom space, warm and responsive interactions between caregiver and child, educated staff in child development, low caregiver turnover, the use of positive guidance strategies, and developmentally appropriate materials and toys (Campbell, Lamb, & Hwang, 2000; Howes, 1992; Kontos, Hsu, &

Dunn, 1994; NICHD ECCRN, 2001, 2005). This aligns with what parents in search of child care report to be important to them: the type of curriculum offered, caregiver experience, educational level and training, program flexibility, location, cost, and recommendations by those whom they trust (Rose, Vittrup, & Leveridge, 2013; Kontos, Howes, Shinn, & Galinsky, 1995; Leslie, Ettenson, & Cumsille, 2000; Rose & Elicker, 2008; Zinnser, 1987).

Cultural diversity has become increasingly important in recent decades. The increased mobility and migration of people, forced or voluntary, has led to greater exposure to persons from various cultures and backgrounds from all over the world. This has become an increasing reality in Europe, which received an estimated 3.4 million immigrants in 2014 (Eurostat, 2017), with these numbers rising steadily due to the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria (Lozano & Escrich, 2017).

Culture is shared among members of a community and passed to each subsequent generation. Culture is a set of invisible rules, values, and beliefs that are learned (Hatano & Wertsch, 2001; Holtzman, 2000). Although they are learned, these rules, values, and behaviors are often based on common backgrounds and experiences. Every child is a product of his or her culture, upbringing, and experiences. However, that culture may not be consciously acknowledged. People view one another based on personal perspective (Gonzalez-Mena, 2008). Today, the prevailing culture in the many traditional child care settings is based on a White, European, middle-class norm; however, an increasing number of families do not fit this category. Families today are as unique as their experiences and backgrounds. They include a range of races, ethnicities, national origins,

colors, genders, sexual orientations, ages, marital statuses, political beliefs, religions, and, quite possibly, mental, physical, or emotional disabilities (Holtzman, 2000).

It is quite possible for a person to belong to a culture that influences thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors. Researchers have noted the importance of cultural pluralism, which is "the notion that groups and individuals should be allowed, even encouraged to hold on to what gives them their unique identities while maintaining their membership in the larger social framework" (Gonzalez-Mena, 2008, p. 13). This translates into allowing young children and their families to remain connected to their home cultures as much as possible when they enter the child care environment and seek to adapt to unfamiliar surroundings. The cultural rules that children learn at home may be very different from the ones that they are expected to know when they enter a child care environment. A clash between home and school cultures may result in a child being regarded as having deficits (Fleer, 2002; Keyser, 2006).

The more distance between home expectations and school expectations, the more likely that the child will have difficulty in adjusting (Reese, Garnier, & Gallimore, 2000). In instances such as these, it is important for educators to learn to recognize cultural information without stereotyping in order to screen, evaluate, and understand a child's development accurately and include the whole picture of the child (Fleer, 2002).

Research has shown the importance of developing a multicultural climate for children. Culturally responsive pedagogy is a key concept in educational environments based on emphasis on the educators' responses to children as well as their inclusion of

the children's cultures in their daily practices and interactions with students (Gay, 2000; Irvine, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2001).

This study examined how international families associated with a local university navigated the child care system in the local community once they began their search, as well as their unique experiences throughout the process. The researcher observed that many families new to the United States had questions and concerns regarding the care that their child would receive when enrolled in a particular child care program and relied heavily on word of mouth from others with their same racial, ethnic, or religious backgrounds.

Rationale and Significance of the Study

This qualitative, multiple-case study was designed to discover the unique experiences of international families searching for child care when they move to a new community. This is important for several reasons. First, while research currently exists regarding the experiences of international students on college and university campuses, little research exists on the process on which international families embark when searching for child care in a new community. The available literature has a range of topics that examine diversity training in residence halls (Grubbs, 1985); the perceptions, attitudes, and discrimination of international and minority students on campuses (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007); and the experiences of Muslim students who veil on college campuses (Cole & Ahmadi, 2003). There is also information on how American families locate child care services. However research is lacking regarding international families' experiences with the early childhood educational system.

Second, a plethora of research is available regarding parents who are interested in finding child care. However, many studies do not take into consideration the delicate role of culture as families bring a unique dynamic to a widely traditional system. Research on experiences of parents attending graduate schools generally include the experiences of American students, namely women who are seeking to balance family life, teaching, and research while pursuing tenure-track positions. U.S. demographics highlight an increase in international students who choose to study, work and, in some cases, remain in the United States (IIE, 2013). The present study includes new knowledge about how international parents located potential child care options, how they navigated the search process to choose an appropriate place, what support networks they used or formulated, how they located resources, if any, and their experiences once a school was chosen. How do families from different cultural, racial, linguistic, and religious backgrounds feel during this process?

Child care safety and health regulations vary from state to state and include the minimum requirements for a child care facility (Rosenthal, Jeon, & Crowley, 2016). The regulations dictate daily operations and include details and guidelines such as hand washing, sanitizing materials, teacher qualifications, and daily routines.

This study was designed to discover how families navigated available information. Once parents located a child care program and enrolled their child, how were they parents educated regarding the specific state regulations, rules, and school policies? How did these regulations and policies compare to child care services provided in their own home countries, if this arrangement was used? Did parents feel that their

children received good care or that their uniqueness was celebrated? Did the centers that they selected include a diverse population of families, and did this influence their choice?

Answers to these and other questions provide information for early childhood educators and specialists who are interested in providing quality services for their clientele. The study provides information for future researchers interested in this topic. The study was designed to determine whether families in this geographic location felt welcomed and how they were introduced to the unique structure, standards, regulations, customs, and traditions inherent in the American child care system in this region of the country.

Research Questions

This study examined the unique experiences that international parents faced in searching for child care and how these experiences affected how they viewed the American child care system after, or as a result of, that search. The study compares the search mechanisms and experiences throughout the search process and subsequent location of services for their children, the differences in child care in their home countries, and their expectations prior to their search. The intent was to understand how international families become familiar with available services and how they navigated that system. This study examined whether cultural barriers affected any aspect of their search, the location and experiences of the process, and their experiences once the child was admitted to a child care program. Based on the purpose of this study, three research questions guided the study:

1. How do parents of children who attend preschools or child care centers in a small university town in southeastern Texas describe their unique experiences?

2. What experiences influenced the parents' view of the American child care system?

3. What impact did their experiences have on the services that local preschools provide or offer to families? How can centers work to become more inclusive of families that are economically, linguistically, racially, and ethnically diverse and celebrate the differences in a diverse student population?

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study includes parents who are part of the local university community and surrounding areas who arrived in the United States within the past 10 years. Additional criteria include the requirement that they have or had a young child in a child care or preschool program in the local community. Parents who have or had a child enrolled in one of the programs that the researcher had previously directed were excluded from participation in order to reduce bias or undue positionality in the early childhood community, as the center is rated one of the top in the area. However, these parents were included in the pilot portion of the study to test the feasibility of the interview protocol.

Research Gaps

While there is a wealth of research on the experiences of families in their search for child care for their children, especially American families of European descent searching in the United States, few studies have concentrated on the unique experiences

of immigrant, international, foreign, or temporary resident families. The stress, frustration, and anxiety that many families face is paralleled in all families; however, many who are familiar with the American child care system—the choices, levels of quality, cost, types of programs, assistance available, and hierarchical structure—also face this stress. Being new to the United States and having to locate a suitable child care arrangement for a young child can compound this stress and anxiety (Gonzalez-Mena, 2001). Reliance on social networks to provide information on available resources may not produce desired child care arrangements, or availability at the desired facility may be limited. This study documents these experiences and gleans information on how child care centers and preschools can work to accommodate the needs of international families who seek child care.

Professional Reasons for the Research

I am the current director of a child care program in the university community that provides child care and educational services to families of faculty, staff, and students. The question of how international families navigate the system and find suitable child care services frequently arises in my daily work with children and families from more than 30 countries. The center serves children who speak 26 languages. Many families wait for as long as 2 years to place their children at the center, due to large demand and limited number of spaces in the surrounding area. Quality child care services are at a premium in the county. Many of the children are from international families whose parents are students studying at the university as doctoral students, faculty (tenured and nontenured), or staff.

Many special circumstances that arose in the past 6 years of my tenure as director of two high-quality programs piqued my curiosity as to the experiences that many of the families had in their search to find a place that would care for their child, especially in a way that celebrates the uniqueness of families, cultures, and backgrounds. Prior to my current directorship, I was director of a faith-based child care program in which there were very few international families, or even families of color for that matter. My move to the university sparked my interest in the question of diversity of the student body and parents' search for appropriate child care.

A second reason for this study came about after I experienced two separate study abroad experiences as a doctoral student in 2012 and 2013. I traveled to Africa with fellow students and distinguished faculty. While coming into contact with educators, advocates, university administrators, historians, students, women entrepreneurs, business owners, community members, school administrators, and a civil rights activist and political icon in Senegal, the Gambia, South Africa (Johannesburg, Pretoria and Soweto), Botswana, and Zimbabwe, I was inspired to begin thinking about the education of young children from a global perspective. Learning about the exceptionality of each location from the people, the traditions, the challenges, the hopes and dreams of the people, and the rich history of each place led me to question what this journey was like for the families with whom I interacted on a daily basis. Would their stories be largely different or eerily familiar?

Intended Audience

This research study is intended for persons in the early childhood community, especially as it pertains to the children and families served in preschools and child care centers. The United States was built by many who emigrated here and the current diversity will only increase, based on census data. Centers that currently serve a mostly homogenous population will, over time, find that families with young children of a diverse nature, with different backgrounds, traditions, beliefs, cultures, and experiences, will seek their services. These establishments may require a road map of how to serve all families well while respecting and celebrating the diversity of those families (Gonzalez-Mena, 2001).

Further research regarding this population of students can be beneficial for researchers. Research in this area may provide relevant information to those who legislate policy and manage funding for early childhood programs.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Review of Early Childhood Education

Child care is a traditional, and often controversial, topic in American society. However, the care of children is not a recent concept. Today, there are numerous varieties of programs for young children. These include day care, Head Start, Early Start, Montessori, nursery schools, independent kindergartens, parent cooperatives, laboratory schools. and kindergartens affiliated with universities and colleges. There are also parochial and church-sponsored programs, playgroups, and home-based child care (Webster & Schroeder, 1979). These include programs that are public and private, nonprofit and for-profit. Even today there remain two types of programs for families: those who can afford quality programs that enhance the development of their child or those who simply receive custodial care while the parents work outside the home (Cahan, 1989). Much of the available programming is the result of services that existed as early as the 16th century for various reasons, primarily to provide places for young children to be cared for during the working hours of their parents, especially mothers entering the workforce en masse for the first time.

From as early as the times of the ancient Greeks, schooling for young children was not thought useful until the child reached the age of 6 years. The belief at the time was that the family was the primary responsible party in fulfilling all of a child's needs (Morgan, 2007). The education of young children of the poor became the mission of England in 1598. Charity schools used mainly instructional methods that were religious

in nature and designed to eliminate the social ills of the day, to prevent the decline of religion, and to combat the possible increase in ignorance among the poor. In the 18th and 19th centuries in Europe, programs were viewed to assist people as they moved from poverty into prosperity, with the goal of moving the family out of poverty within three generations (Cahan, 1989). By 1750, more than 30,000 children were enrolled in charity schools; however, there was no focus on young children. The movement spread quickly to Great Britain and throughout the rest of Europe. In the 1800s, the Industrial Revolution led to creation of care and educational programs for preschool children as families sought full-day care. The increase in demand for the mass production of materials led to a common factory life for many. This led to increases in the population in England, moving scores of poor families into crowded urban areas (Cahan, 1989).

The Birth of the Infant School Movement

The infant school movement began to provide care for children of poor and working-class families, who suffered harsh times that resulted in high infant mortality rates. In 1824, the Infant School Society was created by English reformers; a year later, 55 schools had been established. They were welcomed as a means of solving social ills, and other schools were opened by reformers in England, France, Belgium, Germany, and Italy (Cahan, 1989).

In the 17th century, philosophers and theorists began to view teaching and learning as essential for young children. The organization of schooling for children under 6 years old did not occur until the 18th century through the work of Johann Oberlin in France and Johann Pestalozzi in Switzerland (Morgan, 2007). Pestalozzi

began similar schools in Switzerland and Robert Owen began preschools in 1816 in Scotland. Owens's schooling began at 18 months and children were separated by age groups (2–4 years, 4–6 years). The instructional emphasis was on Christian values and principles, as well as the formation of the impressionable child's character. At age 6 years, the child was promoted to a general classroom. By age 10, children completed their education and left school to work in the local mill or to begin an apprenticeship (Cahan, 1989).

In Germany in 1840, Friedrich Froebel was considered the "father of kindergarten ("garden of children"). Froebel believed that play activities were unique vehicles for learning. The current kindergarten curriculum was derived from the early activities of this time, such as clay modeling, singing, dancing, stories, and dramatizations. Froebel believed that seating children in a circle allowed them to identify themselves as a part of their own small social group. His original designs were classrooms of small groups of children between the ages of 3 and 6 years in a comfortable, easy atmosphere with little rigidity (Webster & Schroeder, 1979). Froebel's "garden" was inspired by his philosophy that education can be enjoyable and effective when teachers are well trained and encouraged to think of their young charges as healthy flourishing plants (Morgan, 2007).

Froebel's kindergarten concept was brought to the United States in the middle of the 19th century. The first American kindergarten began in Wisconsin; it was privately run and instruction was in German. Subsequently, the first public kindergarten in the United States began in St. Louis.

One school concept from England that traveled to the United States was the Dame school. Dame schools were run by housewives who cared for young children in their homes and taught them the alphabet and rudiments of reading (Webster & Schroeder, 1979). This would later become today's in-home child care concept, which is highly regulated today.

By 1832, infant schools began to wane due to criticism that it was against nature to separate mothers from their young children. A major shift back toward the education of young children at home with their mothers was reaccepted as the norm. Also, articles and books cited research on the possible harm of infant schools on the development of young children. These concerns led major supporters to withdraw funding. A new era of child care began as day nurseries for poor families began. Separate private nursery, preschools, and kindergartens for affluent families were also beginning to flourish at this time (Cahan, 1989).

European Day Nurseries

The first day nursery, or *crèche*, opened in Chaillot in 1844 on the outskirts of Paris, with the purpose of combating the high infant mortality rates of the time (Cahan, 1989). Prior to this, major cities in Europe were well into the period known as the Industrial Revolution, in which demand for low-paid, unskilled factory workers was high. Many industrial firms of the time supported/sponsored crèches. They allowed mothers to breastfeed while continuing to work in the mills.

In 1875, child welfare was first placed on the government agenda. As a result, Sunday schools, missions, orphan homes, children's aid societies, settlement houses,

tenement houses, reformatories, probationary measures for young offenders, and mothers' pensions for single-parent households were established. Between 1878 and 1916, the number of day nurseries grew from 3 to around 700 (Cahan, 1989).

In the early 1900s, many major cities included urban centers that were overpopulated with Black migrants and European immigrants. To assist with the influx of newcomers, social service agencies opened settlement houses, in which neighbors could learn about important resources in their new environment (Morgan, 2007).

In 1898, the National Federation of Day Nurseries was established to assist the broken family by offering day shelter for the children (Michel, 2000). Previously, children had been housed in institutions that focused on the total care of the young child, called almshouses. Nurseries were overcrowded and located in surroundings unsuitable for young children. It was a necessary service for many families with few choices, usually required by European immigrants or recent arrivals to cities in order for work. Philanthropists opened day nurseries as a response to the problem surrounding the demands for the employment of women and the care of their children.

Notable theorists emerged to influence the practices within the field. These included Sigmund Freud, Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky. Freud's theoretical framework explained that all life passes through prescribed stages of growth and development. This development is directly influenced by individual relationships between the child and those around him or her. Piaget contended that thinking about knowledge occurs at all stages. The acquisition of new knowledge at all stages requires a framework that is acquired as knowledge gained during ongoing experiences. When learners have attained

a stage of concrete operations at approximately 6 years old, their logical thinking is more advanced. Vygotsky contended that it was trivial and unnecessary to separate play from the great variety of experiences during childhood. He theorized that, within the zone of proximal development, learning takes place smoothly and spontaneously as the learner shares experiences with peers and superiors who are likely more mature (Morgan, 2007).

Other theorists who have made great contributions to the field, including Erikson, Bruner, and Skinner (Webster & Schroeder, 1979). Another early pioneer in child development was Maria Montessori, an Italian physician who initially worked with mentally disabled children and moved to the education of young children living in poverty in Rome in 1828 (Cahan, 1989). After a failed attempt to bring her educational ideals to America in 1911, the Montessori movement moved to the United States in 1960 and Montessori schools exist today.

The Preschool Movement Comes to the United States

During this time the colonization of European settlements in the United States was slowly gaining momentum as increasing numbers of settlers set off to the New World. In both the 17th and 18th centuries, primary schools were created for children between the ages of 4 and 7 years in New England, with a focus on reading in order to be able to read and interpret the Bible (Webster & Schroeder, 1979).

In the 1820s and 1830s, infant schools began in the United States, with the idea that low-income families were incapable of socializing their children properly. The schools were also a means of preparing children for elementary school and teaching

morality. Private kindergartens were mostly reserved for middle- and upper-middle income families of American society (Cahan, 1989).

New York, Pennsylvania, and Boston opened infant schools with a moralistic and religious focus. Formed by groups of evangelical women, their sole purpose was to provide religious instruction, preschool education, and child care for poor families. In 1828, The Infant School Society of Boston began to open schools that accepted children from 18 months to 4 years old. They operated from 6am until 7pm during the summer months and 8am until 5pm during winter months. As many as five such school operated from 1828 to 1835, using a sliding tuition scale of 2 cents per day. Funding was supplied by various means, mostly from private donations, fundraising, annual dues of member schools, and the tuition paid by families. The children's day included brief instructional periods, movement and exercise, story reading, outdoor play, marching, clapping, and sewing (Cahan, 1989). Scores of affluent parents in cities such as New York, Hartford, Detroit, and Cincinnati utilized infant schools to provide their young children a "head start" before years of formal schooling. However, they generally utilized private schools that focused more on enrichment activities and less on moralistic values. There were far fewer private infant schools than those that served the poor (Cahan, 1989).

In the 1920s and 1930s, popularity of child care greatly increased. In World War II, scores of mothers entered the labor force to assist with the war effort (Webster & Schroeder, 1979). Also during this time, child psychology emerged as an extensive research field and acceptable research enterprise. The Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Foundation awarded significant sums of money to colleges and universities to

establish child study institutes. This included research on child development, as well as nursery schools that provided a laboratory school for research and an enrichment program for children.

Child care programs now became popular with child psychologists, educators, researchers and affluent families. The focus of nursery programs was on socialization, play, individualism, motor skills, sensory discrimination, physical growth, and the "whole child" (Cahan, 1989). However, although the "whole child' focus was introduced as a new concept, it was not entirely new, as this concept had been introduced by Froebel, Pestalozzi, and others under other terminology.

The movement at colleges and universities to begin preschools was parallel among African Americans. Hampton Institute and Spelman College opened nursery schools in 1929 and 1930, respectively. In 1931, Flemmie Kittrell was the first African American to receive a doctorate in early childhood education. She went on to open a laboratory school attached to Bennett College, a historically Black college located in North Carolina (Cahan, 1989).

Children's advocates launched a campaign to raise day nursery standards by means of state regulation in the mid-1920s. By the time of the Depression, most of the approximately 800 schools were subject to some form of regulation, although most of those regulations were strictly enforced. Today, all preschools, nursery schools, and child care centers, public, private or in-home, must be registered and are regulated (Cahan, 1989).

Rise of Federal Funding for Preschool Education in the United States

During the Depression, the demand for new workers increased greatly. In World War II, mothers were needed by aircraft, ship, and bomber manufacturers. Data show that about 13 million women were in the work force in 1940, compared to 19 million in July 1944. While single women made up a significant percentage of women who participated in the labor force, married women, for the first time, outnumbered single women workers (Ring, 2001). Scores of workers were needed to work in numerous plants to help the war effort and accessible child care allowed workers to remain employed without child care issues that could cost production difficulties.

The Kaiser Shipbuilding Company used federal funding from the U.S. Maritime Commission to establish 24-hour child care centers for children ages 18 months to 6 years. The centers were of high quality, had long and flexible hours, employed a skilled and well-paid staff, were in close proximity to the plant, and provided take-out meals. Although these programs were considered to be models for their time, they were not widely duplicated, possibly due to the high cost to build and maintain (Cahan, 1989). Today, many companies sponsor corporate child care programs for these same reasons.

Funding (under the Lanham Act) was given only to those communities engaged in the production of materials for the war and that required workers in need of child care. The stipulation was that funding would cease as soon as the war was over. Thus, the first real federally funded child care centers were solely for this purpose. The demand was at crisis proportions and supply could not keep up with the demand. Some communities did

not accept the funding because of the stipulation that any unused funds be refunded to the government (Cahan, 1989).

In 1946, President Roosevelt requested that Congress earmark $7 million for child care projects. The request was approved with the stipulation that it was only temporary. By the late 1950s, 2.9 million mothers worked outside of the home and required child care services (Cahan, 1989). Federal legislation from the 1960s was introduced to eliminate poverty, which also had great implications for the civil rights movement and education, including early childhood education. The growth of early childhood was spurred by the increase in attention given to minority groups and to the disadvantaged, an increase in research funding to study infants and young children, and the increase in mothers who entered the workforce (Webster & Schroeder, 1979). The purpose of early childhood education is socialization, enculturation, and equalization through exposure to education and early intellectual development during the optimal period, beginning in infancy (Webster & Schroeder, 1979).

Research conducted in the 1950s and 1960s challenged the notion that child care experiences interfered with cognitive development, as women continued to enter the workforce in large numbers. Despite the reassuring findings about early intervention efforts in the late 1960s, opposition to the care of infants outside of the home continued to grow as an increasing number of American women entered the out-of-home workforce in the 1970s. An extensive amount of research on child attachment focused on the potentially damaging influences of extended mother-infant separation during the first year. There has been subsequent research concluding that there is no convincing

evidence that noncustodial child care negatively affects typical attachment behavior in children (Zigler, Marsland, & Lord, 2009).

Both child development and child guidance became professional scientific subcultures, with centers for research and training, access to resources for research and public outreach, professional organizations, and scientific journals. Also, the child development field became a discipline with its own distinctive methods, fundamental principles, research traditions, and paradigms. Child science became an established science and profession in the American scientific and academic system (Cravens, 1993).

Initiated by President Kennedy and continued by President Johnson, early childhood education became a component of the war against poverty. With government support and research, Operation Head Start was created for disadvantaged preschoolers. Launched as a summer program in 1965, its success led to expansion into a year-long program with additional spinoffs that reached scores of children of preschool ages (Cahan, 1989, pp. 48-49).

In 1968, the Follow Through Program was started to provide specialized assistance to disadvantaged children through the third grade. This program is no longer in existence (Webster & Schroeder, 1979).

By the mid-1970s, Head Start made a niche for itself in the national political system. It worked to allow children from poor families to become ready for school in all respects so that they could compete on a level of equality with their middle-class peers. In 1975, Head Start operated 9,400 centers, dispensed grants to 2,200 groups or agencies to run such centers, and enrolled approximately 350,000 children at an annual cost of

$392 million. Approximately 80% of those children attended their programs on a full-year basis. Serious cutbacks to Head Start occurred during the Reagan administration, but the program rebounded by 1990, at an annual cost of $2 billion.

Head Start can be placed in the same category as Social Security and Medicare, as programs that began in the 1960s and still exist today (Cravens, 1993). Today, the primary federal programs that are exclusively designed to support child care are the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC). Both are intended to offset costs of child care for families where parents are working, or, in some cases, attending school or training. The block grant is targeted toward low-income families, while the tax credit is designed primarily to benefit middle- and upper-income families. Indirect programs include the Child and Adult Care Food Program and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), in which welfare funding is available for child care. These programs continue to assist millions of families today (Ring, 2001).

Growing Diversity in Child Care Programs Today

Diversity has been steadily growing in the United States for the past 2 decades and has reached nearly every state, with South Carolina becoming one of the fastest-growing states in terms of immigrant population growth. California, New York, Texas, and Florida currently hold steady as the four states with the largest immigrant populations, while West Virginia and Hawaii have the smallest immigrant populations (Associated Press, 2006). The most diverse areas of the country are heavily populated, particularly in southern and southwestern United States, with great increases

documented in rural and micropolitan urban areas located near larger metropolitan urban centers (Environmental Science Research Institute [ESRI], 2013).

The U.S. Census Bureau has estimated that the non-Hispanic population will become the majority population by the year 2042 and that the total minority population will grow by 54% by 2050. Between 1990 and 2000, children under the age of 18 living in immigrant families grew by 63% and by another 82% between 2000 and 2007, with an estimated 16.5 million children of immigrant families living in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). Children of native-born (U.S.) families decreased by 3% within this same time period (1990–2007; Mather, 2009). The disproportionately shrinking number of older non-Hispanic Whites, coupled with a growing younger minority population, has created what some researchers are calling a "generational rift" that has forced new responses to cultural differences in how services are delivered, such as in students who are in ESL or Limited English Proficient (LEP) programs in schools, social service programs and other government programs (Mather, 2009).

Today, most child care programs remain homogenous in terms of the populations of students that they serve. This is no accident, as parents routinely choose programs in which the program's philosophies of care, education, and discipline, as well as language, mirror their own (Willer et al., 1991). Providers of early childhood education must offer care that affords children the opportunity to learn about tolerance, respect, and acceptance of others, as an increasing number of child care programs and their communities welcome children from all nations (Wardle, 1992). This demographic shift has given rise to a primary focus on diversity and issues of multiculturalism in programs

for young children, with the emphasis on inclusion of children of color and accommodating needs with respect to cultural values. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2013), 20.5% of children ages 5 to 17 speak a language other than English in the home. It is estimated that there will be close to 1.1 million children of Asian American heritage under 5 years old by the year 2030 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013).

International Early Childhood Education

Researchers Tobin, Wu, and Davidson (1989) and Tobin, Hauch, and Karasaw (2009) studied preschools within three separate cultures: China, Japan, and the United States. A preschool in each culture was studied in 1989 and then 20 years later to identify possible changes and differences over time. The study included gathering data through video footage to document classrooms; interviews with parents, teachers, and administrators; and historical data on the cultures themselves, such as government policies, traditional trends, and societal pressures or norms (Tobin et al., 1989; Tobin et al., 2009). The researchers found that culture played a large role in how young children were viewed, cared for, and educated in each of the countries and that this care carried over into the home. Values, beliefs, and cultural norms drove such decisions as class sizes, classroom management strategies, gender roles, and expectations between home and school environments. Examples were documented in the effects of the one-child policy in China and child-rearing practices in which parents were viewed as overindulging their children due to an inability to have more than one child due to government regulations to curb population growth and strains on resources. This

phenomenon is called the "4-2-1 syndrome in which four grandparents and two parents focus their love and attention on just one child" (Tobin et al., 2989, p. 86).

In Japan, teachers remained mostly observers to conflicts among students as they believed that young children learn best when they learn how to resolve their own disagreements and become resourceful in problem identification and solutions. This mirrored the views of the Japanese government, which currently struggles to retain traditional values, culture and identity while balancing old and new Western philosophies (Tobin et al., 1989).

Twenty years later, Tobin et al. (2009) returned to discover that, although much had changed, much had remained the same. China had made the largest changes to their early childhood programs, mostly based on modernization and globalization influences that transformed their country into a successful capitalist economy. In order to see the changes of growth, the government designed a campaign to shift the approach from less controlling to more personalized and child centered, closely resembling a Westernized view. Japan had made the least changes, based largely on their slowing economy. The U.S. culture was somewhere between the other two countries. All three countries justified their changes to continue to focus on a competitive work force in the future, although the three countries went about this in different ways, with China pushing creativity, Japan's focus on constructivism, and the United States focusing on academic readiness, assessment, and accountability with sights set on a national pre-kindergarten model (Tobin et al., 2009).

The Growing Trend of International Students in Higher Education

In 2009, nearly 3.7 million international graduate students studied at various colleges and universities worldwide. The largest numbers of students were from China, India, and Korea, with Asian students representing 52% of foreign student enrollment. Approximately 50% of all international students chose to study in one of five countries outside of their country of citizenship: the United States (19%), the United Kingdom (10%), Australia (7%), Germany (7%), and France (7%). Other students have chosen to study in Canada (5%), Japan (4%), Russia (4%), and Spain (2%). Student choice of country depends highly on the language spoken and used in instruction. This includes English, French, German, Russian, and Spanish. Japan is the only exception, since Japanese as a language of instruction is not widespread elsewhere, although 93.2% of their foreign students are from Asia. The most popular destinations for students are English-speaking countries, reflecting the adoption of English as a global language. Students may choose these countries due to prior familiarity with the language in their countries of origin and/or wish to improve their English language skills by being immersed in the language in context (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2011).

For the 2012-2013 school year, approximately 819,644 international students entered the United States to study at colleges and universities. This was an increase of 7.2% since the 2011-2013 school year, with the greatest growth arising from students from Brazil, China, and Saudi Arabia (IIE, 2013). According to the Council of Graduate Schools (2012), offers of admission from graduate schools in the United States to

prospective graduate students increased 9% from 2011 to 2012, following an increase of 9% the previous year. This is the largest increase in admission offers since 2006, as well as in applications received, and was attributed to admission offers to prospective students from China (23% increase), the Middle East and Turkey (16% increase), and India (8% increase). These increases were also seen demographically in the United States, with the West experiencing the most growth (13%), followed by the Midwest and South (11%) and the Northeast (10%). First-time enrollment from China, the source of the majority of graduate students, increased by 21%, followed by the Middle East (13%) and India, reflecting on increase of 2%. The increase was primarily in doctoral programs, which traditionally enroll more international students than master's programs.

Acculturation of Immigrant Families

There is limited research on the voices of immigrant families and their experiences in the United States (Adair & Tobin, 2008) as graduate international student families. Since much of the research on child development has maintained a focus on populations of European descent, more research is necessary to acknowledge and understand the voices of families from other cultural backgrounds. However, there is a wealth of information on the acculturation process that newcomers face in host countries.

It is quite common for families, and the children, to adopt a dual identity in two countries: their country of origin and their host country. This concept has been termed *hybridity* by some scholars as a way to define the contemporary cultural landscape of immigrants whose cultural identities overlap, blend, or become layered, as they hold on

to their current culture while adopting, and eventually identifying with, a new culture in a new global society (Bhabha, 1994; Isik-Ercan, 2012; Yazdiha, 2010). This process occurs in many ways and can be a result of relocation or displacement; it is often a shared experience or exchange as groups interact (Bhabha, 1994).

Each family arrives with their own beliefs, set of ideals, and ways of being. The process of changing one's cultural norms and customs to integrate in a new community is what anthropologists and sociologists term *acculturation*. Individuals acculturate at various rates and to different levels. For very young children, who are impressionable and easily influenced, acculturation can progress quickly, especially in social situations. This concept is illustrated in Figure 1.

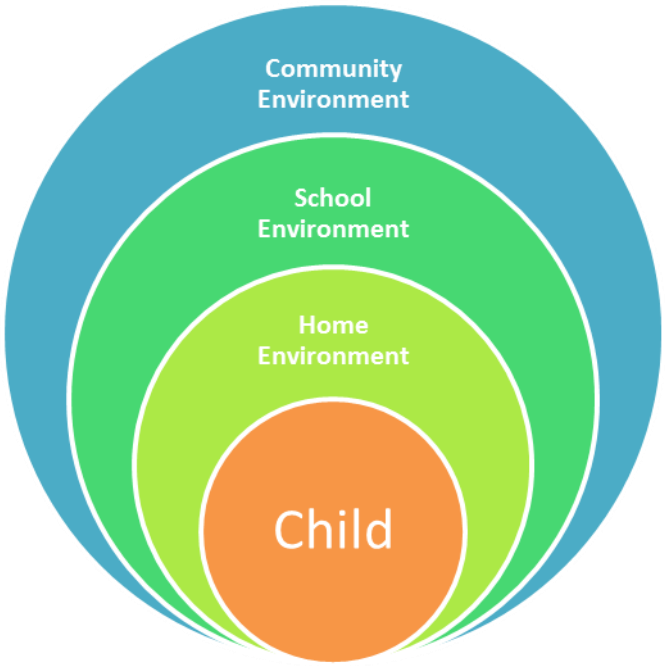


Figure 1. The child in relation to his or her environments.

The term *acculturation* appeared in the literature as early as the 1930s in studies of groups of migrants to determine how people from different cultures interacted (Lowie, 1935). Originally thought to be a unidimensional process with the newcomer adopting the host country's values, this view has been discounted and now includes a process that has great impact on both the newly arrived and the hosts as an exchange of ideas and views.

New families search for ways to retain their cultural belief systems and values once they enter their new environments, especially when the new area is very different from their country of origin. Language is one area where many immigrant families hold fast, as communication within the family in one's native language is important. Many families, including Korean, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, and Vietnamese, rely on heritage language schools to provide a balance between their child's home culture and the host country (Kim, 2011). The number of heritage language schools has greatly increased due to the growing number of immigrant populations. These after-school, weekend, or religious-affiliated programs allow immigrant children to receive a balance between their cultural heritage and education in their host country (Lawton & Logio, 2009). Most programs provide instruction from pre-kindergarten through high school in the native language and provide a social aspect that may not be represented in the traditional classroom (Cho, 2000).

Isik-Ercan (2012) studied Turkish families that relied on religious or cultural mentors to guide their young children in activities relating specifically to their culture. The mentors, sometimes single graduate students, parent volunteers, or language

instructors from their home country and religion, guided the young mentees during their free time or in Sunday schools. Students received informal lessons in Turkish arts, history, national symbols, museum tours, important holidays (such as Republic Day and the Children's Festival), music, reading from the Qur'an, prayers, and instruction in the Turkish language. The study highlighted the benefits of instruction in the Arabic alphabet as a positive aspect, as many of the children developed a deeper understanding of phonics, syntax, semantics, grammar, and vocabulary. This cultural instruction outside of formal schooling included tenets of tutoring but also provided a strong foundation and connection to the country of origin.

Acculturative Stress

Many families arrive with a limited knowledge of their new environment. Naturally, adjustments based on social, personal, environmental, and community changes must be accounted for. Adjustment to the new environment can cause anxiety and stress. This psychological stress can be caused by myriad reasons, but many cite limited resources, communication/language issues, finances, and lack of social networks (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994).

Sandhu and Asrabadi (1994) conducted a study of Muslim college students in which the students reported that they felt judged based on their religious affiliation and that the college environment lacked appropriate accommodations for meals, prayer times, or observance and acknowledgement of Islamic practices and holidays, even when colleges and universities portray an image of acceptance and inclusiveness. Muslims who adhere to the religious dietary practices shared that there was limited opportunity to

meet their dining needs and that the hours did not allow for them to eat during Ramadan, when they must fast from sunrise to sunset. After the September 11 terrorist attacks, the term *Islamophobia* was used to define the negative and incorrect beliefs and perceptions held by many Americans who thrust negativity onto Middle Easterners in the United States. Students also discussed that simply being the only minority in particular classes created a particularly uncomfortable learning environment (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994).

International families with young children face additional stressors and pressures. Negotiating new cultural worlds and enduring stress are not uncommon as many groups try to assimilate to their new environments. Since this study was conducted in Southeastern Texas, considered a "red," conservative, religious (Christian) state, this identity of America is ingrained in the community, as well as in the greater society, and those outside of these categories or dissenting to those values may be at odds with this patriotism. Individuals from Latino populations face tension when they are unable to communicate and misunderstandings ensue due to differences that are social, cultural, linguistic, and economic in nature (Cornelius, 2005). Kim (2011) found that Korean mothers had limited resources and networks in their host country for themselves and for their children, even though the mothers had been in the United States for more than 10 years. Most understood and communicated in English very well, so their concerns and fears were not due to a language barrier (Kim, 2011).

Becoming a new mother can be an overwhelming experience for any woman. However, it can be an even more daunting experience in a new country (Nystrom & Ohrling, 2003). Research has shown that new immigrant mothers often face challenges

based on the cultural differences in their new environment, including language barriers, resources, and social isolation (Liamputtong, 2000; Liamputtong & Naksook, 2003). Also, many factors play a role in how Asian women perceive motherhood or fulfill their roles as mothers, such as their emigration status, social position, and social supports (Phoenix & Woollett, 1991).

Important Components of Culture

Many immigrant families consider mastery of English to be an important component of successful acculturation into American society, even as they value preservation of their home language (Draper & Hicks, 2000). Studies of the attitudes of immigrant parents with regard to maintenance of their home languages have been documented (Guardado, 2002; Kim, 2011; Lao, 2004; Lawton & Logio, 2009; Park & Sarkar, 2007; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). In a study of Chinese parents, Lao (2004) concluded that parents supported their children's bilingualism, which resulted in formation of positive cultural identities and increased communication with parents and communities. Cho (2000) found similar attitudes among Korean parents, who also found that bilingualism benefitted their children in employment as bilingual speakers.

It is not uncommon for young children to transpose languages when they are introduced to new ones. Termed *language code switching*, it reflects the ability of children to use particular words in both languages for others in context, often unintentionally. This important language skill helps with later word usage and transferability. It also allows children to understand their bicultural identities, which is important in their overall development (Isik-Ercan, 2012).

Building social networks with children from their own culture is important. Kim (2011) found that parents believed that heritage schools provided social and emotional support that was not provided at their child's American school due to misunderstanding of cultural behaviors, even though academic supports were valuable. The study went described mothers who shared that in their (Korean) culture, the children frequently touched each other; however, the children were disciplined at school for being "too physical." This misunderstanding of behavior often led to children being referred to special services or being disciplined. The parents felt a lack of cultural insight by the classroom teachers (Kim, 2011). The parents also felt stress in these situations but felt that their heritage schools provided a safety net for their children.

This type of anxiety and stress by internationals is also referred to as *acculturative stress* (Berry, 2006; Kim, 2011). Kim (2011) suggested that educators should address immigrant children's lack of access to social networks and encourage diverse play groups at school to assist with limited access to such groups outside of school. Also, teachers should be aware of how cultural differences may be perceived as behavior, personality, or other disorders or challenges when they may be cultural in nature.

Food is a major component of a child's and family's culture. Children learn early about the values of food, including what is good, how to eat particular foods, and what are allowable and acceptable food choices. This can include avoiding animal products, eating or refusing to eat unhealthy foods, or requesting fruits and vegetables (Bone, 2005). Some cultures engage in communal eating; the term "to break bread" exudes an

element of a sacred ritual, routine, or shared experience (Bone, 2005; Marshall, 2005). Within Christianity, the term refers to a spiritual connection in which a priest blesses and breaks the bread, changing it from an everyday object to a sacred one, merging the religious with the cultural. However, bread may not have the same significance in other parts of the world. Young children are engaged in daily social practices and experiences that teach them who they are in the world, and this includes food as a social practice to celebrate the spirit of the child and the culture that the child represents (Bone, 2005).

Germov and Williams (1999) contended that food habits are not universal and that sociocultural variations can be significantly different. Examples range from the cow being a sacred animal in India to observance of kosher foods in the orthodox Jewish community, as well as inclusion of dogs, kangaroos, or horses on the menus in some countries while they are pets in others. The intricate link between food, culture, and identity is heavily documented in many cookbooks, as chefs relay their journey and the importance of food and origins of the recipes in their lives (Latshaw, 2009). Food has many social, cultural, and symbolic meanings beyond simple nutrition and sustenance (Bell & Valentine, 1997). Eating has become more of a social activity that can be regulated by the environment and community regarding what is perceived as appropriate or in "good taste" (Gronow, 1997; Marshall, 2005).

The idea of food as an important cultural value is not a new concept in early childhood settings. In Montessori schools, food is included as a learning and social activity. Many Montessori preschools allow children to visit the "food table" at any time during the day. A small table is covered with a cloth and usually includes a jug of water,

crackers or biscuits, sliced fruit and cheese cubes, or other choices, depending on the school. Some children share with friends, satisfy their hunger, or are comforted as this is seen as an equitable practice for young children to be nurtured and respected (Bone, 2005; Montessori, 1967).

Many parents have questions and concerns prior to their child beginning a child care program. Some of these concerns focus on meals and feeding plans. It is not uncommon for young children to be finicky about the food choices. Parents who may be concerned about whether the child is receiving the appropriate nutrients may also stress about how much food the child is receiving and may decide to supply popular foods from home to supplement foods provided in the child care setting. Carruth, Ziegler, Gordon, and Barr (2004) found that approximately 50% of children in the United States ages 19 to 24 months were classified as "picky eaters." This meant that they were consistently unwilling to try new foods or had strong preferences for food or preparation methods (Jacobi, Schmitz, & Agras, 2008).

Just as First Lady Michelle Obama's initiative to get people moving and eating healthy, other countries are beginning to legislate health initiatives to encourage healthy lifestyles. In Japan, the basic law of Shokuiki was enacted in 2005 to educate the public about food, nutrition, and appropriate food choices. *Shoku* means diet and *iku* means growth and education. There are seven core concepts that include the promotion and practice of the approach in schools and in educating young children (Miyoshi, Tsuboyama-Kasaoka, & Nishi, 2012).

Since healthy eating is a struggle for many in low-income neighborhoods, the federal government has subsidized child care and healthy eating programs though Head Start programs. As the largest federally funded early childhood program, Head Start serves large numbers of young children from low-income households that are racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse and at increasing risk for obesity and unhealthful living (Hoffman, Agrawal, Carter, Grinder, & Castaneda-Sceppa, 2012; National Head Start Association, 2011). Federally funded Head Start programs provide meals, snacks, and nutrition information, as well as staff training. In one study, researchers found that Head Start directors cited that the main barriers to more healthful eating in families were a lack of money and limited knowledge of healthy food choices (Hughes, Gooze, Finkelstein, & Whitaker, 2010).

Young children of immigrant groups tend to have higher percentile body mass indexes and are more likely to be overweight than their racial/ethnic peers who are native to the United States (Van Hook & Baker, 2010). In exploring whether this could be due to immigrant parents' early food deprivations and acculturation that shaped their subsequent beliefs and behaviors, Cheah and Van Hook (2011) concluded that the parents' early food insecurity led to obesity-promoting behaviors and inadvertently resulted in children who were heavier than their peers. The parents had failed to recognize the risks of higher-calorie food selections or favored heavier children, unintentionally leading to their children's weight gain. This is not uncommon in cultures where food deprivation is prevalent and in which overweight is seen as a symbol of wealth.

Clarke-Stewart, Lee, Allhusen, Kim, & McDowell (2006), observed groups of children in the United States and Korea to gauge the cultural context of a developmentally appropriate framework. In the United States, teacher-to-child ratios were lower, teachers were more closely engaged with the students in the classroom, and there were more opportunities for social interactions with peers. In Korea, teachings had greater cultural influence on traditional attitudes, students maintained higher levels of attention, and were more self-reliant. This may provide insight into some of the differences that families face when they enter another country's educational system.

Graduate Student Parents

A growing number of graduate students from across the world travel to the United States with a spouse and/or children. They are assisted by numerous resources for graduate students with families from college and university websites, and recommendations from colleagues and friends from their countries of origin and state and federal government agencies.

Almost one quarter (24%) of children in the United States under the age of 8 years have at least one parent who is foreign born. Some of those parents travel to the United States for educational purposes, such as to begin or continue tertiary education or university-sponsored research. Their presence in the university student body adds a level of diversity and alternate lived experiences as they contribute socially, culturally, and academically. The students benefit by securing academic credentials and research experience that will help them professionally.

The families of these students are just as diverse and unique as their countries of origin. This includes their experiences in their home country, their language and culture, documentation status, reasons for entering the United States, their socioeconomic status upon arrival, the location of residence, and their access to resources (Vesely, 2013). They are able to foster social networks for emotional, financial, and social support (Kao, 2004). This includes locating child care services and other resources, prior to or once they arrive at their destination.

Along with affording their educations, international students with families face many potential obstacles when they enter U.S. university communities as nontraditional students. Aside from searching for child care, most families must find affordable housing (either on campus or off campus), teaching or research stipends, and health insurance to supplement living expenses not covered by contributions from their countries and the university. With 90% of international graduate students provided funding by their host universities, those with families must juggle household expenses and balance support, education, and research of spouses as well (North, 2008).

Balancing Parenthood and Graduate Studies

Seventy-three percent of women enrolled as students at community colleges are mothers, with 30% of those being single parents and 38% with incomes in the lower range (Horn, Peter, Rooney, & Mallzio, 2002). Hoachlander, Sikora, and Horn (2003) found that 70% of students attending community colleges with one or more children failed to graduate after 6 years. Ninety percent were women. While the statistics seem better for graduate students, the struggle to balance graduate school and families is not

easy. Half of all doctorates are earned by women (Mason, 2009a), generally under stressful financial conditions. Adding family demands can strain the work-life balance. As aspiring academics, they must juggle relationships with faculty advisors, university politics, limited finances, career uncertainty, teaching classes, and engaging in their own research interests. Springer, Parker, and Leviten-Reid (2009) described similarities between mothering and academia as a balance of reverence and intensity, with both requiring long hours into the night as "labors of love."

With the median age for women who complete a doctoral degree at 33.6 years, there is a high likelihood that the tenure clock coincides with the biological clock (Frasch, Stacy, Mason, Page-Medrich, and Goulden, 2009; Hoffer et al., 2006). It is reported that 24% of women and 28% of men earning a doctoral degree and 42% of women earning a Master's degree have dependent children (Mason, Goulden, & Frasch, 2007). Women reported a lack of sufficient maternity leave, a delay in progress through their programs, and the perception of incompatibility of academia and parenting as reasons to forgo having children while in graduate school (Mason et al., 2007; Spaulter-Roth & Kennelly, 2004). Mason et al. (2007) found that mothers who were graduate students spent 102 hours per week on duties, compared with 95 hours for graduate student fathers and 75 hours for graduate students without children. Also, graduate student mothers cite work-life balance as a reason for deciding against professorships with research emphasis careers (Mason et al., 2007). Graduate student mothers also reported more difficulty with assistance in publishing, effective training, faculty mentoring, and fellowships than their nonparenting peers.

This difficulty is represented in the numbers. Among sociology doctoral students, 36% of men without children were in a tenure-track position 5 years later, versus 33% of women without children, 25% of men with children, and 24% of women with children (Spalter-Roth & Kennelly, 2004). Kennelly and Spaulter-Roth (2006) found that graduate student parents were less likely to be enrolled in high-ranking departments, probably due to the high demands and shortages of female faculty role models and mentors in those departments.

Federal investigators have focused on universities to determine whether Title IX violations occur for women faculty in science. The lack of women faculty occurs across disciplines, but most often occurs in the physical sciences, technology, mathematics, and engineering, where the number of female faculty members is already smaller (Mason, 2008).

The demands on graduate students are high, with pressure to "publish or perish." Duties often include being involved in their own coursework and research interests while also teaching, attending conferences, working with faculty on projects, and supporting faculty on their research projects. More than 75% of doctoral students are also employed (O'Connor, 2004). Adding parenthood to this list can be challenging for mothers who aspire to do well with all of those responsibilities.

Fifty-eight percent of women doctoral students in the University of California system reported being dissatisfied with the support received from their departments for career-life balance (Mason et al., 2007). Springer et al. (2009) conducted a survey of graduate program directors to determine what supports were available and provided to

graduate student parents at the departmental and institutional levels. Their findings indicated few supports for graduate student parents; one third of the directors had limited knowledge of available support and resources, and departments accommodated graduate student parents on a case-by-case basis as needs arose. While there was campuswide support, it did not trickle down to individual departments. Also, while the university touted flexibility in supporting graduate student parents, formal policies were vague. One example occurred when a student who successfully negotiated paid maternity leave was later asked by a supervisor to make up the time. Since a formal policy was not in place, the student did not feel that she could challenge the decision (Springer et al., 2009).

While universities applaud their efforts to be accommodating to nontraditional students, the students tell a different story. Seventy percent of men and 84% of women reported that the family friendliness of their future places of employment was of serious concern. At research universities, 70% of women and more than half of men did not consider their university to be family friendly (Mason, 2009b). At universities in which it was common for female faculty to have children, 46% of female respondents agreed that their university was family friendly; at universities where it was uncommon, only 12% agreed (Mason, 2009b). One graduate student parent explained her excitement and then her dismay as she learned that she could not bring her infant to a welcome barbeque at the dean's house because the dean's home included delicate items. The mother felt that this was not a good way to begin the degree program (O'Connor, 2004).

In review of policies for departments at the University of California, Frasch et al. (2009) found that faculty who were eligible to use benefits based on policies such as active-service modified duties, paid maternity leave, tenure clock extension, or unpaid parental leave chose not to take advantage for fear of hurting their chances at career tenure or promotion. Due to these findings, the University of California amended the message behind the policies from the ability to choose family accommodation benefits to the message that all faculty are entitled to use them. Changes were also made to the personnel manual to indicate that peer reviewers may not use prejudice in evaluations for promotion or advancement of faculty who use the policies. These new initiatives occurred with the assistance of a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation (Mason & Goulden, 2004).

Springer et al. (2009) developed a list of family-friendly strategies that universities should provide for graduate student parents enrolled in their degree programs. These included paid parental leave, need-based child care financial support, financial support for back-up child care or child care while attending conferences, part-time training instead of full-time requirements, departmental parent dissertation support, half-time tenure track options, job sharing, health insurance for dependents, departmental functions that include spouses/partners and their children with activities in which they can participate, parent resource centers, and lactation rooms with changing tables. Allowing new parents relief from teaching and work obligations for several weeks following childbirth or adoption would help student parents (Mason, 2009b). Mason (2009b) suggested that hiring committees make concessions for gaps in curricular

vitae when considering applicants who reduced their workload or time while childrearing.

Locating child care is a consistent problem faced by student mothers (Griffiths, 2002; Lidgard, 2004), as well as the emotional impact of dealing with their children's behavior as they spend more time away from them (Griffiths, 2002). Student parents reported the added burden of financial pressures due to paying for child care, everyday living costs and school costs, such as books, course fees, and travel (Astin, 1993; Duncan, 2000; Griffiths, 2002; Lidgard, 2004; Hennan, 2002), as well as a lack of time to spend with their children, partners, extended family, and friends or to study and complete assignments (Bay, 1999; Cantwell & Mulhearn, 1997; Edwards, 1993; Lidgard, 2004).

Hennan (2002) identified caring responsibilities and lack of career advice as obstacles for student mothers. Walkup (2006) identified time, poverty, feelings of exclusion, emotional stress about child care, and guilt regarding the conflicting role of being a mother and a student. In a New Zealand study (Lidgard, 2004), student mothers reported that key issues were juggling their student and parenting roles, balancing their studies with their family responsibilities, the clash of college time with family time (evenings), caring for a sick child, and child care and financial issues. Dewart (1996) found that student mothers experienced anxiety due to a lack of time, difficulties in meeting family demands, a fear of failure, stress, the need to set priorities, and integration of family life with studying.

Home-School Discontinuity

Scholars have highlighted discontinuity that can arise between the home and school environments based on factors such as culture or language. Referred to as *cultural discontinuity* (Lovelace & Wheeler, 2006), the concept acknowledges the lack of connection between the home culture and the school culture. Research has shown that home-school discontinuity can lead to misidentification for special education services, poor child adjustment in school, and poor academic achievements (Egan, 2014; Lovelace & Wheeler, 2006; Reese et al., 2000).

Home-school discontinuity affects young children in two ways. The first occurs when educators assume deficits and/or misbehavior in children and evaluate them accordingly without considering the cultural implications that could affect their assessment. The second occurs when children have difficulty in reconciling the home environment and what they have been taught at school. This can cause stress, confusion, and tension that may have lasting effects on cognitive and social-emotional development, as well as on academic success (Gonzalez-Mena, 2008; Reese et al., 2000).

Cultural Competence

While culture is a common thread, it is not a predictor of individual beliefs or behaviors. Culture and its impact on the developing child are complex because most people are a part of multiple cultures or identities. For example, one child can be middle class, Latino, and Catholic while another child can be middle class, Latino, and Muslim (Brunson, 1995; Hatano & Wertsch, 2001).

Cultural competence is the ongoing process of learning about one's own culture and the cultures of others. It involves a commitment of unlearning misinformation. It is imperative for educators who want to build a positive relationship with the children and families with whom they work (Gonzalez-Mena, 2008; Holtzman, 2000).

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Early childhood programs are charged with caring for and educating every child. This includes children who are culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse. Cultural awareness is highly regarded as an essential component in every early childhood classroom. Training instructs teachers on how to build connections in their classrooms to celebrate the uniqueness of every child. Cultural responsive pedagogy steers teachers from "cultural tourism," which in effect reduces the celebration of cultures through food and festivals without the true foundation of honoring and respecting values and belief that every family brings with them (Gay, 2000).

Engaging families, honoring each child's culture and home language, and including professional development that trains teachers in how to communicate cross-culturally are but a few of the strategies promoted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC; 2009). However, this undertaking has proved challenging for many programs as growing numbers of their children are from diverse backgrounds and experiences. According to the NAEYC's position on diversity (2009) and the challenge faced by programs in this specific and important area, the Emerging Diverse Families Project was developed to support and facilitate programs on partnering with diverse populations. Engaging families and encouraging involvement by parents in

the programs that their children attend benefits the children. Young children whose parents are involved early in their education and activities have higher school attendance, higher learning achievement, and formation of good habits with improved student outcomes (Eldridge, 2001; Wong & Hughes, 2006). To ensure the success of young children and their development, teachers are encouraged to allow children opportunities to interact and make friends with people who are different from them, ask families to share their traditions in the classroom, and expose children to role models that share their culture (Pulido-Tobiassen & Gonzalez-Mena, 2005).

Research suggests that teachers struggle to connect with immigrant children in their classrooms (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Possible disconnection occurs between an increasingly diverse student population and a homogenous teaching staff who generally represent the mainstream population. This disconnection is most likely caused by a lack of familiarity with the cultures of the students or a language barrier. Although language may be cited as a cause, parents may speak English well enough to communicate but still be identified by teachers as having a language barrier. Strickland, Keat, and Marinak (2010) conducted a study of immigrant families in which the teachers cited limited English proficiency and lack of English vocabulary of the parents as a reason for their inability to connect with students, even though the majority of the parents spoke English.

Strickland et al. (2010) described how a disconnection with the cultures of their students can cause confusion and miscommunication. In one study, a little girl from China entered the classroom wearing what seemed to be a new dress. When the teacher

asked the child several times if it was her Easter dress, she was met with blank stares. The teacher then explained to the researchers that the child more than likely did not understand her English. In reality, the child was more than likely not Christian and, therefore, was not familiar with the Easter holiday. The child acknowledged later that "this is just a new dress," which confirmed that the child was more unfamiliar with Easter than with English.

To avoid creating a "culturally assaultive environment" within a classroom, Gonzalez-Mena (2011) recommended that early childhood professionals become familiar not only with cultural terminology but with concepts that may be foreign to many families. One example is the concept of "individualism," "independence," or "alone" that many preschool programs encourage, with the expectation that their students will learn to sleep alone, soothe themselves, or go to sleep without assistance. Gonzalez-Mena emphasized that this misinterpretation of the sleeping dialogue, called "cultural tunnel vision," may be unfamiliar to some families and can be offensive because it takes into account only one perspective and ignores that of the family. Teachers may not understand that these have negative connotations for many families who believe in co-sleeping and having a close bond with their young child by assisting them in going to sleep or helping them to soothe until they are old enough to do so themselves.

Just as families have traditions in terms of eating and other ways of doing, so does each family have its own training and beliefs about bathroom procedures. Toileting practices can be seen in a cultural light that educators must face when educating and

caring for young children of diverse backgrounds. The children's bathroom practices as part of the curriculum are not included in the literature, aside from effective toilet training practices, medical difficulties, or proper hygiene.

Millei and Gallagher (2011) referred to this problem as the "null curriculum" in preschools. Their study engaged preschool teachers and their young students in discussions about the bathroom, as the children had concerns about lack of privacy. Originally, the teachers did not have concerns about the bathrooms being open spaces, since it helped them to observe the children for safety purposes. However, the children shared their need for privacy. The study then involved the children in the design of their ideal bathroom; the children constructed models, complete with pipes, on the playground (Millei & Gallagher, 2011). This clearly showed that children have their own ideas that should be encouraged and included in the curriculum and in daily activities. There are numerous references online regarding proper bathroom etiquette for Muslims, according to Islamic law from the Qur'an. These include which hand to use for wiping, not speaking to others while in the bathroom, how to cleanse properly after voiding, and even which foot to use to exit and enter. These practices are taught to young children, so it is likely that these practices may present at some time during the preschool years.

International graduate student parents face myriad obstacles to attend higher educational institutions. While balancing family, study, and research obligations, finding and securing child care for their child is an important and frustrating endeavor. The connections, resources, and networks take time to build but research has shown that these are important bridges to becoming acclimated to a new environment. This study

explored the process by which parents locate child care for their children, their experiences once they had located that care, and their experiences while their child was in care. It is important for an administrator to ensure that programs are caring for and educating all children well.

CHAPTER III

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used naturalistic inquiry methodology that was exploratory and descriptive with the intention of generating, as close as possible, an accurate portrayal of the perceptions of one group without searching for generalizable conclusions. The primary purpose was to seek the experiences of parents from countries outside of the United States in their search for child care for their young children once they arrived in a new community. Because familial traditions, beliefs, and customs may differ among countries, it is expected that families may have similar, differing, or opposing expectations related to their experiences before, during, and after their search for child care.

Qualitative Research Paradigm

Naturalistic inquiry, under the umbrella of qualitative research, is a form of phenomenological research that seeks to interpret, understand, or define the life experiences and focus of the way people behave when they are engaged in real-life experiences in their natural settings. Conventional researchers generally approach their studies in a rather straightforward manner, while the naturalistic researcher must take into account the uniqueness of the realities constructed by respondents in order to expand the knowledge of those realities (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). Unlike conventional studies in which the researcher arrives at the study "knowing what is not known," the naturalistic inquirer enters the study "not knowing what is not known" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, the researcher, being native to the United

States, was not familiar with the personal experiences that participants in this study would have faced in their journey to search for child care. In order to engage in a naturalistic study, essential elements guide the research practices in the field. A solid design spells out the plan of the inquiry and addresses the research questions, including an explanation of areas that may arise as difficult or concerning (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

This study belongs in the naturalistic, or constructivist, paradigm of inquiry because each participant's experience was used to give a voice to the experiences of parents in the search for child care. Based on an interpretivist epistemology, qualitative research design cannot be fixed and naturally assumes the multiple, complex, and unpredictable nature of what can be perceived as reality (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). Thus, new knowledge emerges throughout the study and develops through help from the participants. This choice was made based on the power of the story, the power of the voice, and the power of each individual experience as a transformative process.

Merriam (1998) explained the characteristics of qualitative research as an interest in understanding the meaning that people have constructed, as well as an inductive approach to knowledge generation. Thus, the purpose and focus of this research study was on the meaning and interpretation of these stories. At the very heart of this research lie the data of the participants, who used their words as a narrative of their experiences. Sarbin (1986) defined *narrative* as follows:

> a way of organizing episodes, actions, and accounts of actions; it is an achievement that brings together mundane facts and fantastic creations; time and

> place are incorporated. The narrative allows for the inclusion of actors' reasons for their acts, as well as the causes and happenings. (p. 9)

Once a problem was identified, research questions were developed, along with a design for the specific methodology. The goal was to understand lived experiences and to document each experience in terms of how it relates to early childhood environments and the process of choosing a suitable placement for their child, an important experience in and of itself.

Under a constructivist paradigm, five axioms or assumptions were naturally included in this study. The first assumption was that, by including parents from various countries, each individual experience could provide insight into the path that families embark upon to search for, and eventually locate, child care services. As in all naturalistic inquiries, this study also "automatically assumes the existence of multiple realities" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 72). These realities are critical for early childhood institutions understand the unique processes that families may encounter as they take into consideration possible challenges and cultural implications when navigating the preschool world.

The second axiom or assumption addresses the relationship between the researcher and each participant, as the knower and the known are both inseparable and interactive (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A natural role reversal occurs in the naturalistic paradigm in which the participant becomes the teacher and the researcher becomes the student. Since the researcher in this study holds a prominent position in the early childhood educational field and the university community, this position was fully

disclosed to each participant. Only pilot study participants had a prior connection or professional relationship with the researcher's place of employment. While full disclosure of the researcher's positionality occurred initially to build trust, participants had no direct or indirect benefit nor penalty for participation in, or withdrawal from, the study, and each was informed of such prior to inclusion in the study. The goal was for the researcher's positionality to have a limited effect on the participants' views; however, a relationship built on trust and full disclosure is necessary to gain the necessary knowledge for the study. It must be assumed that the researcher's position would have some effect on the participants and that merely seeking an interest in their search for child care could, in some small way, have some effect on the study's outcome. In meeting with families from various countries, especially in their homes, the researcher learned a great deal about the families, their perspectives on child care in the United States, and their personal beliefs regarding childrearing.

The third axiom or assumption discards the possibility of generalizations and states that "only time and context-bound working hypotheses are possible" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 37). Due to the adaptability of humans, there is no prior knowledge of time and context-bound social realities (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). In studying the perceptions and beliefs of individuals, these insights led to development of working hypotheses and the unlikelihood of generalizations with such diverse points of views and experiences. While it is possible to assume that many parents share similar experiences while searching for child care and that stories from families from other nations may not be dissimilar to their experiences, the naturalistic paradigm calls for the individual voice

despite the challenges that it may present in research. Context being heavily implicated in meaning, a human instrument is required, especially one that becomes fully adaptive to any indeterminate situation that is encountered (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is difficult to generalize, as differences among individuals are just as interesting as the similarities and generalizations are context free.

The fourth axiom or assumption involves action causality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For the purposes of this study, the researcher made educated inferences regarding patterns but no assumptions were made based on causality, as indicated in the naturalistic paradigm. Concepts of causality and causal relationships, although widely accepted in science, can be problematic. Within the naturalistic paradigm, mutual shaping is proposed as a better understanding of a situation in which "all elements in a situation are in mutual and continual interaction and is activated by virtue of other elements that may or may not occur with predictability again" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 38).

The fifth axiom or assumption relates to inquiry values (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The role of inquiry values is pertinent in naturalistic inquiry. Each participant holds value in the information and experiences that he or she shares, as well as the context in which these were shaped. The researcher holds value in the formation and framing of the problem, the paradigm choice, the context in which the study takes place, and the theories studied and used throughout the research study. Research should be heavily grounded in a local context in which the phenomenon occurs (Lee, 1999).

Research Design

Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed elements of naturalistic inquiry and named the paradigm *constructivism*, since it brings together "the interaction of constructors (not all of whom agree)" (p. 149). Foundational knowledge for this study enabled the researcher, as a career early childhood educator and administrator, to develop pertinent questions for the interviews. The groundedness of this study depended on that foundation and experience for the researcher to connect with the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Qualitative research methodology was utilized to gain an in-depth look at the personal experiences of a small population of international parents from various countries who lived in the university community. For the researcher, taking part in listening to these rich and insightful experiences validated many of her beliefs about parenting and child care and the many sacrifices that parents make for their child to ensure that the child is cared for in the environments that they seek.

The pilot study allowed the researcher to determine the appropriateness of the original interview protocol. Caelli, Ray, and Mill (2003) explained that a generic study uses a focus on understanding the experience or event using several combined methodologies or no specific approach at all, defining it as "that which is not guided by an explicit or established set of philosophic assumptions in the form of one of the known qualitative methodologies" (p. 2).

Participant Selection/Recruiting Procedures

Purposive sampling, a nonrandom technique use to identify and choose respondents, was used for this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Up to 20 respondents were desired for this study, a mother or father or both, who had emigrated to the United States within the past 10 years and who had at least one child who required a search for child care. Based on this study's emphasis on international families in the community, recruitment sites were selected based on the demographic profiles that would allow for examination of each participant's experiences. A public community educational center for families was the initial site selected based on their concentration of international families with small children. Twice monthly, the center opens its doors to provide stimulating play group activities to families with young children through the local Early Start and Head Start programs. The majority of the children are English Language Learners (ELL) and their home language is other than English.

Fifty local child care programs were identified via the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) website, which lists home care, preschools, child care centers, and Head Start programs that are licensed by and/or registered with their department. By contacting the directors of licensed child care programs, potential participants were recruited through flyers, word of mouth, and recommendations by center directors and administrators. Home care providers were initially excluded from recruitment pools due to their large number and the relatively small number of children that each serves (up to 15). They would have been utilized as a potential recruitment

base only if the larger recruitment pool from preschools, child care centers and, Early Start and Head Start locations had not produced an adequate sample.

Each of the center directors or families from the Parent Center, preschool, or child care center was provided a recruitment flyer in email form to distribute to families or other potential participants based on recommendations. Respondents were given the researcher's contact information if they were interested in participating. The pool of respondents who contacted the researcher then participated in a screening process in which they completed an intake form that asked for demographic information. This information helped to determine whether they met the criteria for participation.

Each potential participant scheduled an appointment to review the consent to participate and to receive specific information about the study. Each potential participant was provided possible locations for the initial meeting and interview based on personal preference. Interview sites included university libraries or annexes, the university apartment community center, or any other location that was convenient. Anticipating that many of the families would be connected to the university in some way, possible sites were chosen to accommodate the schedules of the families. Alternative location options included their homes or community playgroup sites, such as local parks, libraries, or indoor playscapes (at local fast food restaurants). This allowed for convenience for parents with small children due to the proximity to home or classes or to accommodate time periods that would best meet their needs.

During the initial meeting, each potential participant was provided information regarding the purpose of the study, the potential benefits and possible risks of

participating, the plan for protecting and securing the data, and protecting identities. Each potential participant was informed about the consent process and the request for permission to have their interview audio recorded. Each had the opportunity to request an interpreter in the home language. Each was informed that the child would receive a gift certificate from a popular book store at the completion of the interview.

Four directors from local centers provided names and contact information for 12 families. Of those 12 families, 8 agreed to participate in the study and 7 completed interviews. Three other families participated in the pilot portion of the study to test the interview protocol. While the sample size was not large, Morse (1994) recommended that such a research design should focus on "discerning the essence of experiences includes about six participants (p. 182). The final sample included 10 participants. Participants signed the consent form and schedule their interviews, which could begin immediately if desired.

Participant Profile Analysis

The sample consisted of 10 families from eight countries. The researcher met with each family in one of five places: an on-campus university library, in the researcher's office, in the participant's home, at the university child care center, or by telephone. The study was conducted either with Parent 1 or with both parents. Four families participated with the child or children present. Table 1 presents information on the families who were interviewed, which parent or parents were interviewed, the countries of origin, and the location of the interviews.

Table 1

Participant Families

Interview number	Country of origin	Parent interviewed	Interview location
1	India	Parent 1	Researcher's office
2	China	Parent 1	University library
3	Iraq	Both parents	Researcher's office
4	India	Parent 1	University library
5	Bangladesh	Parent 1	Family home
6	India	Both parents	Family home
7	Ecuador	Both parents	Community center
8	Italy	Both parents	University center
9	South Korea	Parent 1	University library
10	Nigeria	Parent 1	Telephone

Instrumentation

In accordance with constructivist methodology in qualitative research studies, the researcher was the primary gatherer of data as a human instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By entering each interview as a learner, "the researcher, by necessity, engages in a dialectic and responsive process with the subjects under study" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 44-45), which is directly in accordance with constructivist methodology. Previous training and experience in the early childhood field, as well as curiosity regarding the experience of international families, guided the interview protocol that enabled the researcher to evaluate and consider interviewee responses and interactions and keep the interviews moving forward.

Introducing the Study to Respondents

In contacting families and to complete the interviews, the researcher followed a series of steps.

First, an email was sent to families in the researcher's current preschool, inquiring about referrals for parents who did not attend the center but might be interested in participating in the study. The email explained the purpose of the research, the criteria for participation, the approximate length of the interview, and the researcher's contact information.

Second, an email was sent to 50 local child care programs in the area, inquiring about families that might be interested in participating in the study. The email explained the purpose of the research, the criteria for participation, the approximate length of the interview, and the researcher's contact information. The email correspondence sent to administrators and forwarded to families is in Appendix A.

Third, upon receiving an email or telephone call from a prospective participant, the researcher screened the parent to ensure eligibility to participate. Each parent was asked the length of time of residence in the United States, the country of origin, and whether there was a child in the family who had attended or currently attended a preschool or child care program in the community.

Three families were initially selected for pilot interviews in order to test the interview protocol. The researcher met with those families in January 2015; all were also included in the main study, since very few questions were altered. The protocol was principally semistructured and the participants provided rich recollections of their

experiences for the study. An additional seven families were included in the participant group. Interviews were held with the families in June and July 2015.

Developing Interview Questions

Initially, interview questions were developed based on the information need to address the research questions. The goal was to begin with concerns that had piqued the curiosity of the researcher, while allowing other topics to emerge as the interviews progressed. The interview questions guide the interviews to glean the most pertinent information. Questions were developed in an open-ended and conversational style to avoid leading to a particular response. This allowed for follow-up questions based on the responses, which was helpful in clarifying or elaborating on a particular topic that proved important. To determine whether the questions were appropriate, relevant, and thorough, a pilot study was conducted to determine the interview protocol's viability and to troubleshoot questions and make adjustments accordingly. This allowed for a more focused study with thoroughness and diligence. However, as each interview progressed, questions were asked on a follow-up to an idea, thought, or event that required further examination or clarification. The semistructured interview protocol is shown in Appendix B. Translation of the protocol to Korean was made available for a participant who requested a list of questions prior to the scheduled interview (Appendix C).

Study Components and Procedures

Interviews can be considered one of the best ways to receive the information desired (Merriam, 1998). A summary of the interview process is contained in Appendix D. Each interview was audio recorded. Interviews lasted from 32 to 85 minutes. The

researcher anticipated that more than one meeting would be necessary for further clarification or input from each participant or if the researcher believed that additional interview data were necessary. However, most follow-up questions were posed in a telephone follow-up without the necessity of scheduling another meeting. The researcher made handwritten notations during each interview. The interviews followed the semistructured protocol but, based on qualitative methods, additional questions were asked as follow-up for clarification. These notes proved useful in providing additional information, such as body language or hesitation that would not be apparent to the participant at the time of the interview. Audio recordings ensured completeness of responses and complete understanding of the participant responses. All audio recordings were transcribed by the researcher to connect with the data. Transcription of each interview session and organization of the handwritten notes took place immediately following each interview, which allowed for immediate recall. The researcher made anecdotal notes while transcribing the interviews.

Data Collection

Data in this study came from the following sources: (a) interviews that were open ended, semistructured, and mostly face to face; (b) observations of the participants prior to, during, and after the interviews; (c) analysis of handwritten notations, including nonverbal cues; and (d) field notes about conversations, interactions, and descriptions of persons and environments.

Interviews

Each interview session was unstructured, utilizing the human instrument in data collection, as well as an open-ended interview protocol.

> The primary purpose of gathering data in naturalistic inquiry is to gain the ability to construct reality in ways that are consistent and compatible with the constructions of a setting's inhabitants. This requires that the naturalistic researcher be able to experience what the "natives" experience and to see that experience in the way that they see it. Respondents are asked questions, but they are also encouraged to engage with the researcher in less structured conversations so that their hidden assumptions and constructions begin to surface. (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 81)

As the research progressed, interview questions were added or amended based on prior responses and/or subsequent follow-up questions. Demographic information was collected from each participant, including but not limited to number of years married, parents' ages, age and gender of the child(ren), country of origin, and languages spoken. The demographic information was an important analytic source in understanding the context, reality, and experiences of each participant and subsequent responses during and after the interviews.

Conducting interviews is an important technique due to its level of flexibility. The researcher observed the respondents' nonverbal behavior, such as interactions with their children, how they engaged the family in their natural home environment, and the ease or discomfort in the recollection of experiences. Based on the semistructured flow

of the interviews, the researcher identified each respondent's beliefs, opinions, thoughts, and experiences involved in their search for a suitable child care environment. At the conclusion of each interview, the researcher conducted an informal member check in which the respondent was asked to verify, make changes to, insert, correct, extend constructions, or reconstruct responses as needed.

The average length of the interviews was 59 minutes, although the longest interview lasted 1 hour 25 minutes. All interviews were conducted in English. The researcher followed up each interview with a telephone call of thanks and to confirm receipt of the gift card.

All interview responses were audiotaped. Informed consent was obtained prior to each interview. Each participant was offered a copy of the interview protocol prior to the scheduled interview; however, only two families requested that copy. The following information was specified on the consent form: (a) the research study purpose, (b) voluntary nature of participation, (c) the right to withdraw from participation in the study at any time, (d) confidentiality measures, (e) consent to be audiotaped, and (f) permission for later contact for clarification as needed. Appendix E contains the English consent form and Appendix F contains the consent form translated to Korean for one participant.

Full disclosure of the researcher's position in the community was made prior to each interview. This position, at times, proved challenging in certain instances, such as when participants mentioned the researcher's place of work in comparison to the center or program of choice for their child or their frustration over a lack of space in the

researcher's work place. It was challenging for the researcher to refrain from making personal or professional comments or expressing opinions during the interviews or "leading" the interviewees, especially when a question was not fully understood. The researcher wanted to allow each participant to answer questions or provide explanations without interference.

Observations

All interviews and observations were conducted at times that were convenient to participants. Participant observations occurred prior to, during, and after each interview. The observations of the parents whose children were present during the interviews brought to light significant information, as the researcher personally witnessed caregiving interactions, important dialogue, normal routines within the home, and relationships with the child and/or spouse. The observations highlighted any similarities and/or differences among families. Interviews and observations build understanding of a social context in an interactive way, as they have a reciprocal relationship similar to that by which language and experience structure and enrich each other in a way that allows the researcher to gain a partially independent view of the experience by which the respondent's language has constructed those realities. Thus, the interview provides leads for the researcher's observations (Erlandson et al., 1993).

Reflexive Journal

A reflexive journal was maintained throughout the process. It included detailed information about the observations, interviews, environments, interactions, dialogue, and engagements relevant to the families' culture and experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Detailed field notes were maintained during each visit in one notebook and in a reflexive journal to record feelings, thoughts, follow-up questions, or other related content that may have occurred before, after, and during meetings with families. Items such as descriptions of dress, body language, conversations, and interactions directly with their children and side notes, as well as specific reflections from the researcher, were recorded in the journal. A reflexive journal supports all of the elements of a qualitative study as it ensures trustworthiness, including credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability and becomes an important part of the audit trail for the study.

> According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), a reflexive journal is a kind of diary in which the investigator on a regular basis records information about him- or herself. The journal provides information about the researcher's schedule and logistics, insights, and reasons for methodological decisions. (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 143)

Assurance of Confidentiality

Each participant signed the consent form and was assured of confidentiality of all shared information (Appendix E). The researcher omitted identifying information in descriptions, notations, and quotations. These measures assured confidentiality of each participant and the freedom of each respondent to volunteer information.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was qualitative in nature and used an exploratory, naturalistic inquiry approach. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) noted that qualitative research data analysis is a method of organizing, effecting order and meaning to the collection of data

and is an ambiguous, nonlinear, messy, and time-consuming process. The complete data set included interviews and observations. Under the content analysis method, all interviews were transcribed from an audio recorder. The transcribed data were then unitized, or broken into smaller units. Each unit was assigned a code that included the participant number and date to allow the researcher to identify the source; the information was subsequently printed on index cards. The unitized data were then categorized and the researcher identified emerging themes.

The "emergent design" began during the interview process as each participant contributed information and adjustments were made during the data collection process. Seidman (2006) stated that the researcher cannot let preconceived beliefs affect analysis of the data; rather, the researcher must read the transcripts "with an open attitude, seeking what emerges as important and of interest in the text" (p. 117). All identifying information was removed from the analysis to maintain the confidentiality of all participants, to uphold Institutional Review Board ethical standards, and to maintain the integrity of the data. Chapter 4 presents results of the detailed analysis, using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), later refined by Lincoln and Guba (1985), including categorization, pattern identification, and unitizing data. Categorization is most efficiently accomplished when categories are identified in such as way that "they are internally as homogeneous as possible and externally as heterogeneous as possible" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 349). Pattern identification involves recurring regularities or themes that may suggest one or more shared realities.

Data collection and data analysis worked together, as the information collected in each interview became a guide for the succeeding one.

Ensuring Trustworthiness

In an effort to enhance trustworthiness and credibility in this research study and to ensure its integrity, numerous checks and balances were employed, such as peer reviewing, member checking, thick description, reflexive journal usage, and prolonged interviews. The process involved the four trustworthiness criteria of constructivist research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility

Erlandson et al. (1993) stated, "The credibility criterion is considered the most important aspect of establishing the trustworthiness of a study to the consumer" (p. 160). The credibility of a study is "essentially its ability to communicate the various constructions of reality in a setting back to the persons who hold them in a form that will be affirmed by them" (p.. 40). To ensure the credibility of this study, the researcher involved prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking.

First, the researcher spent 60 to 90 with each participant in an interview. Some were held in the participant's home at the participant's request. When children were present, the researcher analyzed the context of the interview.

Second, the researcher invited a peer who is a professional colleague outside of the context of the study but who had general understanding of the study to assist as

another way to build credibility (Erlandson et al., 1993). A fellow doctoral candidate in the process of completing her dissertation was the peer debriefer, based on her having taken several doctoral courses, including narrative analysis, being well traveled abroad, and willing to assist in this endeavor. Her knowledge of qualitative research and her experience in the field of education proved a good fit. The researcher and peer debriefer met initially during the decoding phases and continued discussions during the methodology writing. The researcher desired feedback in instances where coding categories proved challenging or unclear, to receive a professional opinion, and to authenticate the data. Meetings were face to face and included a review of the interview transcripts and a secondary view of the coding process by the peer debriefer. All debriefing sessions included discussions and each session was properly documented.

Third, member checking added credibility to a study. Member checks, also called respondent validation (Schwandt, 2007), should occur continuously throughout a study in both informal and formal ways to support the trustworthiness of the study (Erlandson et al., 1993). The researcher conducted member checking at the end of each interview, allowing the participant to clarify, expand, amend, elaborate, confirm, or retract any information and to gauge the overall acceptability of the interview (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004). After each interview was transcribed, the participant was sent a copy of the transcript for review. Six of the 10 interviewees responded and confirmed the data; none suggested any changes. Member checking supports the trustworthiness of a study (Erlandson et al., 1993).

Fourth, to ensure a deeper understanding of the data in the context of the study, the researcher used "multiple sources, methods, investigators, and theories" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 305). Triangulation included not only qualitative data from interviews but input from the peer debriefer and information from observations, documents, and notes. These were corroborated by at least one other source and discussions occurred to ensure "confidence in the findings" (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 139).

Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) contended that "an inquiry is judged in terms of the extent to which its findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents" (pg. 290). In order to determine transferability among contexts and applicability to other studies in terms of generalizability and degree of "fit," the researcher provided thick description of each interview and observation. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated, "The description must specify everything that a reader may need to know in order to understand the findings" (p. 125).

> Effective thick description brings the reader vicariously into the context being described. By description of specific sights, sounds, and relationships, the scene created in the reader's mind may be remarkably close to that which would be gained by direct experience. Often, we have found that an individual whose first encounter with a setting is through an effective thick description has a sense of déjà vu upon actually visiting the setting. (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 33).

Under the constructivist paradigm, truth statements are context bound; they cannot be shifted from one context to another. It will be up to future researchers and practitioners in the field to determine the transferability of this study.

Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability, the naturalistic inquirer's substitute for reliability, can be established by close examination of documents, records, notes, and memos. Also, the use of a peer debriefer ensured the researcher that interpretations and findings were appropriate and accurate. The researcher and the peer debriefer met to discuss aspects of the data from initial categorization and theme analysis to the findings, based on research-based qualitative methodology.

Another method of assuring confirmability, or objectivity, is through the use of a reflexive journal. A reflexive journal documents the researcher's experiences during the research project to ensure trustworthiness and to serve as a record of the researcher's journey (Erlandson et al., 1993). The journal in this study included researcher notations, information regarding each interview, participant, observations, personal reflections, feelings, beliefs, speculations, and detailed descriptions of the locations, persons present, and surroundings at each interview (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While the researcher must be aware of the voice and thought process of the participant, he or she must also be aware of his or her own thought process. Reflexivity allows for this within grounded theory and the journal was utilized throughout the study. All records were made available upon request.

Limitations

Scheduling conflicts and geographical restrictions made it impossible to interview one participant in person. She had moved out of the area by the time of her scheduled interview. Thus, the interview was conducted by telephone, which did not allow observation of body language or facial expressions; this may have altered interpretation of the interview.

Unitizing Data

Unitizing data is the transformative process of "disaggregating data into the smallest pieces of information that may stand alone as independent thoughts in the absence of additional information other than broad understanding of the context" (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 117).

This process included (a) transcribing interview data from audio tape recordings into computer files; (b) breaking the transcripts into units, or small sections, of data; (c) numbering and coding each unit by respondent and source of information; and (d) converting and printing the data on index cards. One thousand seventy-nine cards, or units of data, were created in this process. Data came from 92 pages of transcripts of the 10 interviews.

Coding

Each unitized index card (Figure 2) was individually coded to ensure confidentiality of each participant and to aid in location of each original source by a unique sequence to include the card number, interviewee number, interview number,

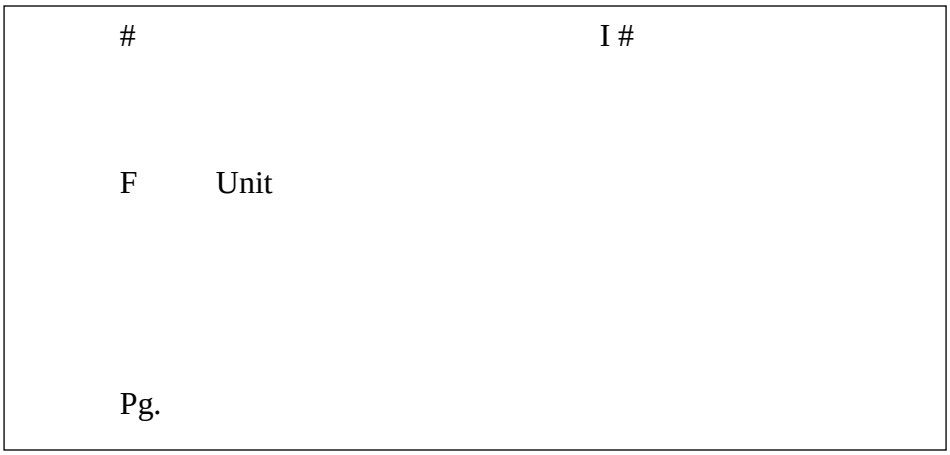


Figure 2. Example of a unitized card.

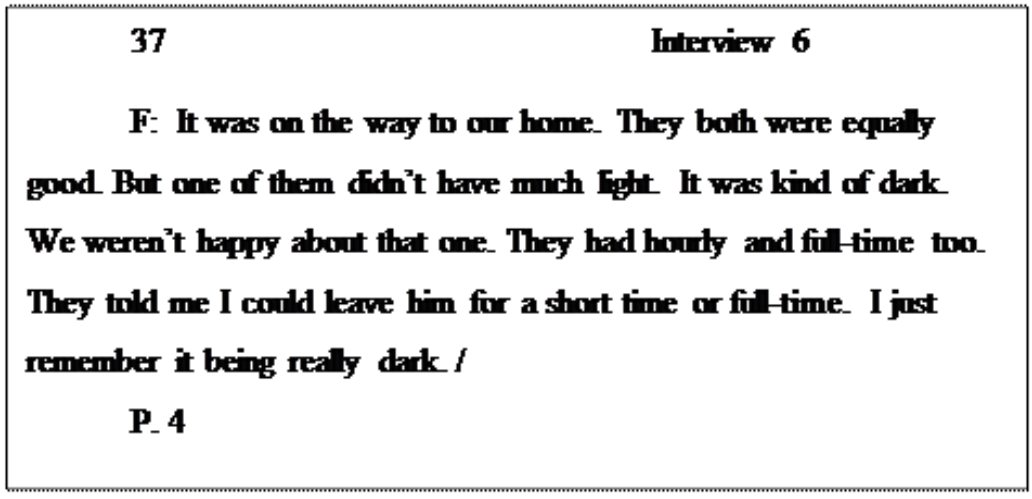
number of parent interviewees, (parent 1, mother, or parent 2, father), gender, the unit of information, and the transcript page number.

Emergent Category Designation and Discovering Patterns

Emergent category designation is the process of "taking all of the units of data and sorting them into categories of ideas" (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 118). This process of pattern discovery begins with the first card and then follows three steps. A study of the first card leads the researcher to place it as the first card to begin a category. The second card is also studied and the researcher either places it with the first card if the card fits the same category or begins a new stack of cards to begin a different category of information. This procedure is followed with each subsequent card until no cards are left. In cases where a card or cards have no related information, these cards are placed in a separate stack. The process repeats several times as the cards are ordered, reordered, arranged, rearranged, and then refined (Gonzalez, 2004).

The researcher used self-adhesive notes of different colors to identify the category for each stack. Then each card was analyzed again for determination of its place in the stack or in a new or different stack. If a card had no clear category, it was relegated to the miscellaneous stack. Once all cards had been analyzed, stacks of categories were compared for pattern identification and emerging themes. The first card for this data set included the demographic information.

Figure 3 shows a random unitized card from a completed category. This is card 37, interview number 6, a female interviewee, from pages 1 and 2 of the original transcript. This card was in a stack categorized "Negative Deciding Factors" because it explained the reasoning behind the decision not to place the child at a child care center. In Chapter 4, units are contained in the explanation, sometimes in full, to support the results. Figure 4 shows the 20 categories of units during the decoding process.


37 Interview 6

F: It was on the way to our home. They both were equally good. But one of them didn't have much light. It was kind of dark. We weren't happy about that one. They had hourly and full-time too. They told me I could leave him for a short time or full-time. I just remember it being really dark. /

P. 4

Figure 3. Example of a data card from the study.

1. Descriptive data
2. Parent languages
3. Languages spoken in the home
4. When child care search began
5. Identification of child care options
6. Expectations/requirements during search
7. Challenges during search
8. Perception of U.S. child care
9. Education on policies and standards
10. Acceptance of their culture
11. Fears
12. Child care in the home country
13. Family visits to/from overseas
14. Social networks: child
15. Social networks: parents
16. Support systems
17. Advice for families
18. Advice for centers
19. Future plans
20. Miscellaneous

Figure 4. Categories of units in the decoding process.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the child care search experience of international parents seeking child care for their child(ren). This included obstacles encountered, if any, and how they eventually found the best placement for their child, if this occurred. This study was designed to determine whether the families in this geographic location felt welcomed and accepted and how they were introduced to the unique structure, standards, regulations, customs, and traditions inherent in the American child care system in this region of the country.

This chapter begins with the participant profiles. Next, an analysis of the categories and themes and subthemes that emerged from the categories during the constant comparative analysis of the data is reported. Table 2 lists each participant's age, gender, years in the United States, country of origin, and educational level. Ten family participants were interviewed in this study.

Participant Profiles

Interviews were conducted with 10 mothers whose country of origin was outside the United States. Their ages ranged from late 20s to mid-40s. Seven participants were from Asian countries, one from Eastern Africa, one from South America, and one from Europe. The participants had been in the United States from 1 to 10 years. The participants had earned degrees ranging from Bachelor's to doctoral degrees. Each participant had a connection with the university as a faculty member, staff member,

Table 2

Demographic Data for the Participants

Interview	Age	Gender	Years in U.S.	County of origin	Educational level
1	45	Female	5	China	Master's
2	38	Female	7	India	Ph.D.
3	31/37	Female/Male	3	Iraq	Master's
4	29	Female	2	India	Master's
5	34	Female	1	Bangladesh	Master's
6	35/39	Female/Male	10	India	Master's/ Ph.D.
7	24/30	Female/Male	2	Ecuador	Master's/ Bachelor's
8	35/50	Female/Male[a]	5	Italy	Ph.D.
9	30	Female	6	S. Korea	Master's
10	33	Female	7	Nigeria	Ph.D.

[a]This parent was a U.S. naturalized citizen but accompanied his wife to the interview. He is included here only due to his participation in the interview.

and/or currently enrolled student. This chapter includes the actual words of the participants to share their experiences to provide a rich representation.

Participant 1: Chen, "The Hesitant One"

Chen is a 44-year-old mother of two, from China. Her daughter, 16, attends a local high school and her son, 4, is in preschool, Chen arrived 7 years ago to attend the university and earn a doctorate in education. Her husband remained in Shanghai to work.

At home, she speaks only Chinese/Mandarin but her children usually respond to her in English. We met on campus in a study room at the main library. I knew this participant because she had enrolled her son at the center that I currently directed. I also had taken one doctoral class with her at the university prior to her son entering the program. There were times in class when she inquired about her son's position on the waiting list or his chances of getting in. I always responded that this was not up to me. It was awkward to have this dialogue but I believed that she would be a great contributor to this study. I witnessed her drop her child off at the center very late after the day had begun. He would cling to her crying and begging her not to leave him, even though he had been in the program for more than a year at this point. She would get down on her knees and hold him and ask him to stop crying, which he never did. The teacher would hear him screaming and run out to assist her, sometimes engaging in a tug-of-war to get him into the classroom. I observed on the center cameras how, the instant the door closed, he would wipe his face and run over to play with his friends, while his mother hurriedly left the center, upset, to catch the university bus. He was one of the last children to be picked up each day and he would hand her all of his things (backpack, blanket, artwork) and she would carry it all while he left with his arms swinging from side to side. I observed them walk this way across the street to the university family housing complex, with his arms swinging and her carrying his belongings.

She texted me three times to ensure that we were still on schedule for the interview. I arrived first, checked in at the front desk to reserve a study room, and headed to the assigned room. I took down the four chairs that were stacked on the table

and texted her the study room number. She arrived within minutes, carrying a large brown leather bag, a tan purse, and a bottle of water. I greeted her and she sat across from me and immediately pulled out a notepad and pen. With long, dark hair falling past her shoulders and bound at the base of her neck by a gold clasp, she was visibly sweaty, as the hair around her temples was wet and pasted to her forehead. Wearing dark-rimmed glasses, a gold blouse with green flowers, and a gray skirt, she shifted her papers and did not make a great deal of eye contact initially. When I began to go over the consent form, she quickly waved her hand and took the paper to sign it and then I began with my questions. She contemplated each question carefully before responding. Speaking so quietly that I could barely hear her, I moved closer and closer to ensure that I heard her responses correctly.

Having been in the United States for the past 7 years, she lived in university housing on campus. As a post-doctoral student and the mother of two children, she described the challenge of being a pseudo-single parent while trying to locate child care while she was pregnant with her youngest child. After her son was born, she realized that her work load would increase, so she sent her infant son back to China with her husband to be cared for by her husband's parents while he worked. After discovering that he was placed in care that did not work well, she decided to have him return to the United States. She was offered a space at her first choice of child care centers but turned down the space because her son had remained in China and she believed that he was faring well there. Once she discovered that his care was "less than ideal and very bad," she returned to China to collect her son and searched once again for child care. She

eventually enrolled him in three separate child care centers, and described how guilty she felt each time that she left him crying. After a period of more than a year, he continued to cry and each time she removed him after one semester and tried to find a new place. When I asked her whether she felt that she had given the adjustment period adequate time, she responded that she had few options.

> It was hard to hear him cry every day when I dropped him off. Sometimes, the teachers did very little to comfort him. I didn't want him to, uh, be sad all day and I felt bad. My day was hard too. I did not know if he stopped crying or if he was sad missing me. So I kept trying, hoping that he would stop crying and he never did.

I understood this to mean that her guilt was too great. As a mother, I cannot imagine my child being upset for such long periods of time. This had to have been very difficult for her. It had to be a challenge knowing that her child did not "fare well" away from her in China, especially at a time when infant development and the attachment to a mother is great. Then to see him struggle with adjusting to his child care arrangements probably weighed heavy on her. Trying to complete her studies and parent two children, one of whom was very attached to her and who was not adjusting well, had to have been trying. However, as an early childhood educator and administrator, I wonder whether she did not allow him enough time to bond with his caregivers prior to removing him from each situation. By the time he had a chance to bond with one caregiver, she removed him and placed him elsewhere. This could be confusing to an infant and toddler who had

experienced multiple caregiving experiences (five in all) prior to settling in to the center where he ultimately remained for 3 years.

Her ultimate goal was to win a coveted spot at what her friends and colleagues described to her as the "best place in town." She spoke of her helplessness in finding a suitable child care spot for her son. Her search included research online, receiving recommendations from friends and colleagues, physically visiting five preschools and speaking with the directors, when they were available. She described how difficult her guilt and grief was with each failed enrollment.

> It is the mother's responsibility to make sure that her baby is well taken care of and I felt that I had failed when I learned that the arrangement did not work well. I decided to bring him back to the U.S. where at least he was with me and I hoped to secure a spot for him in a really good day care. Each time he went to a new center, he continued to cry and it never got better.

She explained that, in her search, she was looking for a place that would make her son happy. She believed that it is very important that a child like the school and enjoy attending and that the child also like teachers and friends. She looked for quality in everything: facilities, teachers, equipment, and curriculum. She also began to understand that a simple recommendation from a friend did not always mean that the school was the right fit for her son.

> [A school] was recommended by another international family that was not Chinese. She said the school was very cheap so I went there, but, you know, the

classroom was very, very small and there was not a lot of materials and the teachers did not look friendly, so I did not try to put him there.

When her son was an infant, she was concerned only with having a caring teacher and nutritious meals. As he got older, the curriculum, materials, activities and the amount of outdoor time became important.

She never realized that quality could be so different among the many schools that she visited but she felt that her son was placed in situations in which he was bullied and mistreated. When I questioned the racial make-up of the children, teachers, and administrators, she seemed almost embarrassed. Her face was without color and she avoided eye contact and giggled. However, she described an almost homogenous group of White children and educators, with her son being one of only two Asian children in the program. She felt that her complaints about a child who was "aggressive and mean" and who "scratched the other children" was not addressed, nor was the child in question ever disciplined, only hugged. Teachers did not pay close attention to the children, even in her presence, and they did not teach the children but allowed them to play all day. She felt that the hugs for the child in question was a way for the teacher to show her that she disagreed with her complaints about her son being scratched. She questioned the policies of schools that have a policy in place, such as dismissal of a child with behavior problems, but do not practice or enforce the policy. She explained that she and the other Chinese parent questioned whether they were being ignored because of their culture.

This is not uncommon in many situations with families from different racial and cultural backgrounds. Parents routinely seek my advice and expertise when they are at a

loss about what to do when there is a conflict in the classroom. The majority first apologize for bringing the complaint to light because they either do not want to offend the child's teacher or do not want the child retaliated against, should their complaints about the teacher come to light. It has left me in a precarious situation, because I often was asked to look into the situation but not to speak to the teacher regarding the incident. This left me in a challenging situation, as counseling the teacher meant that a conversation about the incident had to take place. Even when the child's name was not mentioned, the majority of teachers came to the conclusion about who was unhappy with their caregiving. I failed to inquire about the child-to-teacher ratio of her son's classroom at this time; it could be that they were at the maximum number of children that the state mandates. If there were only one caregiver, the perception that her child was ignored could have been because the educator was overwhelmed. It was natural for her to question whether her child's race had anything to do with her perception of her child being ignored.

Other discussions about policies had to do with the toilet training policy; she felt that American preschool teachers are very skilled in this area. In speaking with her Chinese friends who also had children in preschool, they agreed that the way that toilet training is handled in America, with timing when to go, being patient, and using stickers and praise, is better than the Chinese way, in which the parent is strict, starting very early and allowing the children to relieve themselves in a variety of places. In China, she explained, there usually is not a daily record or notes to families about how often the child used the restroom or ate or slept, and parents do not take diapers to the preschool.

Children usually do not begin school until they are trained in this area, wearing open pants or no pants at all, which is a common custom.

As a doctoral student, balancing school, work and her children was exhaustive but she was always grateful that her children were healthy and happy. Having spent her entire life in China and having raised her oldest daughter there for her first 9 years, she described the rigorous expectations of schooling and extracurricular activities that were demanded of young children in China. Her daughter had spent countless hours studying academics, music, dance, English, and tutoring in science and writing. For parents who did not allow their children such activities, she explained that the teachers made her feel guilty, and they reserved extra assignments and privileges for students who were engaged in all of the activities described. Her daughter was not happy in China but was enjoying school in the United States. In China, there was little time for "fun" activities or hanging out with friends, attending sleepovers, and so forth. While she claimed that Chinese students surpass American ones academically, especially in mathematics and science by 1 to 2 years, she felt that American students were more balanced and well rounded with academics and a personal life. She stated that, while all parents want their children to be happy, Chinese parents want them also to be more than successful: the top students.

It was not uncommon for many children from China, Korea, India, or Turkey to attend heritage or religious instruction sometime during the week or over the weekend. Some of these included academic instruction and tutoring in their native or home languages and others included activities of a religious nature to instruct the children on

aspects of their beliefs, such as learning the Koran, being instructed in reading and writing in their home languages, and being mentored and tutored by young people from their home countries. The opportunity to attend these activities allowed the children and their families to hold on to one major aspect of their cultures. The children were surrounded by peers who shared their backgrounds and cultural beliefs and the parents were ensuring that their children were proud of who they were culturally.

Chen shared how the one-child policy has affected her family greatly. While she, her husband, and her daughter are all Chinese citizens, her son is an American. Her goal is not to return to China but to build a life here in America; however, she is unsure of how this will happen. Currently, she and her daughter must adhere to visa requirements and return to China every 3 years. This is difficult when they also must apply for a visa for their son as an American citizen. China's one-child rule challenged their wish to extend their family; the citizenship issue is even more challenging. She hopes to remain in the United States long enough for her son to complete his education and long enough for her and her daughter to become U.S. citizens.

An update to this family: Chen completed her degree program and post-doctoral duties. She was unable to secure employment at a university in the United States, and her visa expired, forcing her and her son to return to China. Her daughter attends a university in the United States and is happy but her son is currently struggling as a fluent English speaker in a school that requires fluency in Mandarin. He is unhappy and asks her almost daily when they will be retuning to the United States. She has secured

employment with a local university in China and is hoping that her son adjusts to his new environment, now in the first grade in a country with which he is unfamiliar.

Chen was one of only two interviewees who refused the gift card. She responded, "I cannot accept this" and handed it back. After reviewing the tape and reflecting on the interview, I wondered whether her lack of acceptance of the gift had to do with positionality. However, she gave no specific reason for her nonacceptance.

Participant 2: Advika, "The Bigger-Than-Life Personality"

Advika had a bubbly and warm personality. Large in stature, with dark brown skin, Advika filled the space of my office both physically and with her bold, loud, and talkative nature. Each time she laughed, her entire belly shook and the sound reverberated throughout the office and made me laugh as well. With shoulder-length jet black hair, parted in the middle and thinning enough to see much of the scalp, she was dressed comfortably in a gray short-sleeved T shirt and capri-length dark gray cotton pants with black flip flops. Our interview took place in my office, a place she had requested as it was convenient for her after she left her two children at the university center where my office is located. She sat comfortably in the maroon leather sofa in my office facing me and she commented on the coziness of my office. She sat mostly throughout the entire interview with her arms crossed, aside from the times when she spoke theatrically with her hands. Then they returned, folded across her chest.

I routinely observed Advika as she dropped her two children off at the center. I always heard her before I saw her, as she spoke loudly to her children in the hallways on the way to their classrooms, speaking to the teachers, administrators, and other children.

She spoke to the children in both their home language, Tamil, and English. However, only her oldest child responded to her in a mixture of English and Tamil, sometimes within the same sentence. She was the room mother for both her children's classrooms and routinely called the center to ask whether it was acceptable to drop off donuts or Hershey bars for the staff. She threw elaborate birthday parties for her children to which I was invited but never attended out of fairness to all of the families at the center. I was shown pictures of one of her son's early parties in which the theme was the farm and she had a large petting zoo, ponies for the children to ride, popcorn, cotton candy, face painting, and a cow to milk. The other families at the center looked forward to her parties each year, as the treat bags were filled with the best items possible. It was clear that no expense was spared. Although I never attended a party, I have no doubt that she made each person feel special, as this was exactly how she made everyone around her.

She coordinated playgroups for her children's classmates and was very friendly to everyone whom she encountered at the center, including other parents. If she received an email from an administrator that was of a concerning nature, such as an outbreak of head lice or illness, or an apology for a change on the menu or a response to a parent complaint, she insisted on responding to each email thanking the staff for their dedication and hard work. She also insisted on purchasing pizza for the teaching staff each May for Teacher Appreciation Week. I saw the nice gifts that she gave to her children's teachers for their birthdays or the holiday season.

As faculty members, Advika and her husband, both engineering professors, had been in the United States for 7 years, teaching at another university in the Midwest.

Originally from India, they had met friends after moving to this community who had informed them of the long waiting lists for infant care. Since they were deciding to begin starting a family within the next 2 years, she began doing research online immediately. It was not until she had a confirmed pregnancy with her son, now 3 years old, that she began to expand her research to calls, visits, and recommendations from friends. Not knowing a great deal about accreditation or qualifications of quality, she was shocked to discover how very different one center was from the next and how few accredited centers were in the area. (Note: The town only has two accredited child care centers, one franchised center for preschoolers and the university center.)

After the demographic information was covered, Advika began with information on what child care is like in the part of India where she was raised. Growing up in a small city, she described child rearing as a community event in which family and even extended family members stepped in to care for the children while the parents worked or attended higher education. However, in the larger cities it is very similar to the United States with formal child care centers. She had not heard of child care arrangements for children under the age of 3 years. Not the first parent to mention benefits in her home country, she explained that the government made it easier for mothers to remain home with their infants as it provided paid maternity leave for 6 months and some companies provided it for up to the first year so mothers could remain at home to care for the child. This benefit greatly assisted companies and universities to retain the very best employees. She explained the shock that her family, mostly in India, expressed when they discovered that her 3-month-old daughter would be attending child care for the first

time so Advika could return to teaching and research. This is unheard of in India but. with no family close by in the United States to care for her children, there was no other choice and she had to explain this to her parents, to their disbelief.

The only participant who had searched for child care for 2 years prior to being pregnant, Advika wanted to be fully informed of the available options. Once she became pregnant, she joined a university mothers group for faculty parents, although she found herself to be one of the only working mothers, as the group consisted of mostly faculty wives who remained at home with their children. The group met weekly for play groups and conducted monthly Mom's Night Out events for mothers to get together with their children in tow. One mother shared the state website list of child care centers and other information. She expressed how invaluable this site was as it allowed her to discover each center's hours, the ages that they cared for, the number of children for whom they were licensed, their locations, and contact information. She compiled a list of centers that she wanted to research further and cross-referenced this list with recommendations from friends.

Advika emphasized one thing that she had noticed in the mothers group, which was that many of the mothers went by only the recommendation of the consensus of the group in selecting a preschool. She was hesitant and wanted to see for herself. She found that the schools that they recommended were not right for her family. Most were church-based preschool programs. While she noted that many had higher-quality programs than independently operated schools, she was uncomfortable in choosing a school that held its beliefs and foundation based on religion. When questioned further about this, she

explained that she and her husband were not raised in an overly religious household and had agreed before they were married to raise their children the same way. In comparison to schools in India, she said that there are not many religious-based schools due to the multicultural belief systems in India.

> It kind of makes me uncomfortable because . . . the culture in India, there are very, very few schools that are religion-based and people strongly believe religion doesn't have a place in schools or, if it does, given India's multiculturality, you know, you have a lot of Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Seeks, Jains, so if there was a religious prayer, there will be two or three different [ones], you know, you'll say a prayer from every religion. And when you got off school, you'd celebrate all the holidays, not just the Christian holiday. You got off for Hindu holidays, Christian holidays, Muslim holidays, so that was a very big difference coming here to the U.S.

Advika said that she was not opposed to a church-based program if the quality was the best, but she was still unsure and uncomfortable with that being one of the few choices available. She acknowledged that being in a more Christian, conservative, and religious area of Texas, it was not surprising but still unsettling. She mentioned her nervousness upon discovering that the extensive wait times for infant care were a year or more for the top preschool programs in town. Ultimately, she chose a church-based program for her oldest son and had very positive results. Initially, she was concerned about how heavily religion would play into the program, curriculum and activities.

There are 51 child care centers in this community, 30% operated by local churches. Since the church-based programs are sponsored and often subsidized by the church, their budgets are larger due to lower overhead and costs of operating. The costs are often passed along to parishioners; all of the schools are nonprofit based on the churches' nonprofit status. This allows these programs to offer higher-quality service and often lower rates. When I was director of a church-based program, a few Muslim families chose the Methodist program based on its quality, even though they were raising their child in their own religion. One parent did not want the child to attend the weekly church and Bible lessons in the chapel, so the parent watched the child on the playground for the 30 minutes when the other children attended chapel. The parent remained early in enrollment to ensure that the program did not teach specifically about Jesus Christ but that the prayers and lessons included God or god, emphasizing a universal god.

Her major frustration was in locating an actual rating system for child care centers, aside from the online site by the TDFPS. Advika explained that, while the website listed the various violations that were reportedly found at the centers, she was seeking information on the positive things about the centers and what they specialized in, or were known for, such as teaching sign language, a foreign language, or a progressive academic curriculum.

> I don't think there's a good website that kind of gives the pros and cons. If you go to the Texas Department site and if you read the reviews, they are only if there have been problems. You know, it doesn't report what was good about the

> center. All you read is everything negative but there are nice things, too and I wish there was a way I was able to see what their rank was. There is no objective way to find out information, but that was kind of frustrating.

Advika had several suggestions for parents who are searching for child care. She noted a lack of support for pooling resources in the community, such as pediatrician and pediatric dental offices, labor and delivery hospital units, obstetrician offices, and child-friendly places. She said that these places would benefit from having information regarding child care options. She explained that new parents do not consider their options early, believing that they have time. Pamphlets in areas around the community could provide parents with information that they may need after delivery and information about long infant wait times.

Of all of the parents interviewed, Advika seemed the most informed about her child care options prior to placement. She described how she went through the online list of centers, came up with a list of nonreligious programs, then religious ones, and, last, those recommended by others. She took into consideration the hours, the costs, the class sizes and the proximity to their home and work. She and her husband visited approximately 15 programs. She was also interested in centers that had a certain philosophy, including two that she remembered distinctly: a Montessori program and one that focused on physical education as the basis for their program. With each program tour, she learned much more. If the teacher spoke about something, she noted to look for or ask about it at the next location. If the center was at the top of her list, she called back and asked follow-up questions.

In terms of culture, Advika explained that the centers that her children attended ignored culture, except maybe a Christian identity. She explained that her children were "the only non-White children" and that, until recently, she had not thought of cultural relevance until her son began to recognize differences between his Korean and Chinese friends because of the close relationships and the education that he is receiving at his current center, which is largely diverse. She noted a difference in class in this community. When she enrolled her daughter in a local child care franchise, she compared the costs with privilege.

> Of course their fees were exorbitant. It cost us almost $1,200 a month to send [her] there and, in the beginning, I kind of equated that, like, if you pay more, you get good care, which is, I don't know, not a sound argument but I started realizing that people who can afford to pay those high fees are together in that school so I started seeing [her] growing up feeling more privileged and I didn't want that. When we do that, they are appealing to a certain kind of crowd and your kids are only going to socialize with that crowd and I didn't want my kids growing up, you know feeling privileged. And, you know, even their parties were like, more rich people oriented (laughs).

Advika was the only parent who acknowledged her family privilege. As tenured faculty members, she had choices that other families did not have, based on their incomes. When she discovered long waiting lists for her infant daughter, she found that there was not a waiting list at the local franchised center that she cited above. In excess of $1,200 per month for infant care, and having had 3 months off from work as tenured

faculty, she was able to afford to place her child in this high-cost, high-quality program. Since the final center was largely diverse, perhaps she would not have recognized the lack of diversity in the first two programs if she had not experienced diversity in the third program.

Advika credited her children's teachers with helping them to adjust in two of the three child care arrangements that she had selected. She described the transition periods into day care as more devastating for her than for her children, as they readily reached for their caregivers as she dropped them off. This made her feel better about leaving them, knowing that they seemed to enjoy the environment and had bonded well with their caregivers. This is not uncommon for many new mothers who are using child care for their young children for the first time. While she did not elaborate on her feelings at that time, she almost choked up reminiscing about this vulnerable time in her life.

At the end of our interview, she was amazed that she had contributed so much. She readily accepted the gift card and remained to chat about unrelated topics.

Participant 3: Shaymaa, "The Reserved One," and Mohammed, "The Supportive One"

Shaymaa was very hesitant to participate in the study when I first contacted her. She wanted to know details about the questions that I would be asking and requested that her husband join her. I offered to send her the interview protocol via email but she declined, asking me simply to describe the questions over the telephone. I obliged. On the day of our interview, she and her husband, Mohammed, were 30 minutes early. She requested to meet in my office at the center, as it was across the street from where they

lived in university family housing. Wearing a black and tan *hijab* with gold flowers, she was covered in a black long-sleeved tunic that had a gold V-neck with a black shirt underneath. Her long, tan pants seemed to end at the end of her toes, as she was wearing tan socks and tan lace-up shoes. Her slim fingers ended in well-groomed, manicured nails that were shiny. She had pale skin and bright gray eyes. Slender and a couple of inches taller than her husband, Shaymaa walked behind him without looking up until they entered my office. Mohammed had a plump face in a shade of golden honey and a bright smile. His hair was thinning, as he was balding on top but had much longer hair that fell past his collar and ended in large curls. Wearing a bright blue buttoned-up shirt and dark pants, his jacket had a rip on the sleeve where white stuffing could be seen.

Mohammed entered first and, when I extended my hand, he waved and moved toward the sofa. Based on his reaction, I did not extend my hand to his wife, who smiled and sat next to him on the sofa. I began by explaining the purpose of the study and had them sign consent forms, which they readily completed without reading them. This may have been due to my emailing the consent forms prior to the interview. I asked whether they had questions before we got started and they replied in the negative.

I was familiar with the family, having observed them drop off their children every morning at the center. Arriving well into the academic hour of preschool, their children often missed circle time, morning meeting, and morning rotations with their teachers. They arrived just in time to play outdoors, which suited the children well, as they were always excited to join their friends to line up and play.

With two children, they had arrived in the United States from Iraq to study engineering 3 years prior. As faculty members at the university in their home country, they had been granted a sabbatical to study and in Texas. She explained that her employer at the university in Iraq required additional doctoral studies and encouraged her and her husband, studying civil engineering, to further their education with the intention of returning to assist in educating Iraqi engineering students. They were instructors and her husband was also an advisor. Married for 7 years, with a 6-year old daughter and 4-year-old son, they began their search for child care via the Internet 6 months prior to their arrival in the United States. Shaymaa answered most questions, with her husband contributing occasionally.

Initially, all of their child care information was discovered online. They searched for schools in the U.S. community, read reviews, and gained information on the process for getting on waiting lists. They emailed schools as a follow-up if they required additional information, especially schools that did not have websites, which were many. They were surprised at how many places had space for their daughter, who was almost 4 years old at the time, but not for their son, who was less than 2 when they began their search. She discovered that the university had a child care center when their acceptance package arrived in the mail with a flyer. They were quickly discouraged when they read online when they read that the wait time for the university center, especially for infants, was more than a year. Preparing to leave for the United States in 6 months, this was disheartening and they were not sure how they would handle the child care situation since school was to begin and they had not secured a space for the children to be cared

for while they attended classes. They were relieved when they were informed that they had been accepted into family housing and they did not need to secure transportation but could use transportation services provided on campus. Seeking a solution to their child care situation, they applied for the waiting lists of a handful of preschools online, willing to separate the children, if necessary, so that they could attend classes.

After settling into their new environment, they were disheartened to learn that there were no spaces available for both children together at any of the top schools that they wanted. The two schools that could accommodate both children did not have good reviews and the parents declined those spaces.

> For like when we were searching, we saw some horrible things. I really don't want to say the names of the schools but it was like, I'm sorry to say, but really, really dirty, the environment, you know.

They considered separating their children but the father decided to alter his enrollment and to sit out for a semester while his wife attended classes. This was not the best arrangement and one that made her nervous for her husband to be with the children all day. In Iraq, while they had worked at the university, her father had raised their children while they worked and taught and her husband had not been responsible for their care. They were happy when they were informed that both children received a space in the university center after one semester and the father was able to begin his studies. Originally, I mistakenly assumed that her hesitancy to have her husband care for the children was due to a common gender norm in their culture in which the females cared for the children while the males worked. However, after learning that her own

father had been the primary caregiver for her children while they worked, I checked my own and assumptions about this family and others like them.

In discussing the comparison of child care in Iraq to child care in the United States, Shaymaa explained that there were major differences based on cultures. In Iraq, children traditionally do not attend school until late preschool, at the earliest. Childrearing is relegated to family members while the parents work. This is the case only in progressive cities such as Baghdad, where they resided. In the rural areas, women mostly do not work but tend to all things for the home. The cities were much more progressive than traditional and it was not uncommon for both genders to work outside of the home, with grandparents and other extended family members caring for the children. Work ended daily no later than 3 pm which helped to balance family and work responsibilities. Child care was very cheap as it was subsidized by the government. However, there was not a focus on education and the children were mostly allowed to play all day. In terms of child care in America, Shaymaa remarked that the education system is good because children learn early. This was important to their family.

In 2014, after 2 years in this country, Mohammed decided to take the children back for a visit to family in Iraq over the summer, while his wife remained here to take summer classes. Unfortunately, visa restrictions prevented their return for almost 4 months, forcing them to remain in Iraq. Speaking of this situation only briefly, Shaymaa stated that she was happy to continue to pay for the current space at the child care center. even though they were away for so long, because the education and care they were

receiving was so good that she did not want to forfeit the spaces for the children when they returned.

In terms of seeking a quality education for their children, they did not realize how important early child care experiences were for their children until their daughter entered kindergarten well ahead of most of her classmates. Shaymaa questioned why the current kindergarten teacher for her daughter seemed to keep the children on the same level without challenging them. She said that her daughter's school year had been disappointing because she was repeating many subjects that she had mastered in preschool. When I asked what school her daughter currently attended, they declined to respond. This was very similar to their earlier refusal to state which preschools they had considered unfavorably. They are planning on finding another living situation so that their daughter and, eventually their son, will go to a better school. Based on a new home address, they will be zoned for what they believe is a better school. They are planning to move out of the on-campus housing and into a rental apartment near a better school so their daughter will be challenged in school.

In terms of language acquisition, they cited this as a positive in their choice to come to America to study. Originally, Shaymaa was nervous about her daughter's ability to learn English, as she was already 4 years old, but she was amazed at how fast she learned at the center. When the children visited Iraq, many people commented on how well they had mastered English. Her daughter communicates well in both languages, but her son prefers English, although he does understand a few words and phrases in Arabic, their home language. She was slightly embarrassed when her parents tried to

communicate with her son and he did not understand them. She translated and try to give him the explanations and compare them to English but it did not help him to learn Arabic.

When asked about their support system in the community, they stated that even though they had friends, they did not rely on them for support with the children, not even in emergencies. They preferred to rely only on one another. I switched the subject to the changes that have been happening in Iraq and each was hesitant to say much about their homeland. Shaymaa explained that lack of security is their greatest concern in returning. While they believe that the situation in Iraq will improve one day, they feel that the country has greatly decreased the rights of women and was progressing in the right direction prior to recent insurgencies and changes in government leadership. They mentioned that terrorists and bombings had greatly affected the quality of life for many but predicted that it would improve. When I pressed for more information in this regard, they smiled and looked at one another. She dropped her eyes and stared into her lap as he continued to smile without saying a word. This was the second interview in which the participant declined to accept the gift card. It likely had to do with positionality, especially when all remaining interviewees accepted the gift.

This was the only family that was hesitant to say anything negative about any topic. They declined to speak about the preschools that they did not like and they remained silent when asked about the struggles in Iraq. They did not want to elaborate on what they perceived were shortcomings at their daughter's current school. They were

more positive about their son's current school. I wondered whether this was because of my connection to it.

Participant 4: Deeksha, "The Shy One"

Deeksha had been recommended by a local center director in town. We agreed to meet on campus at the Medical Science Library because it was convenient to the lab where she worked in the College of Veterinary Science. I waited in the lobby, the comfortable chairs facing a row of glass and metal doors. I was slightly early and she arrived on time a short time later. Wearing a yellow shirt with a colorful print of reds, greens, and browns with tan pants and gold sandals, she made eye contact immediately. I stood to greet her and noticed how small in stature she was. At least two inches shorter than me, she wore her long dark hair in a ponytail, parted on the side. Her sandals were shiny and I noticed that she had mud on her toes. The second toe on each foot had a single gold ring. We found an empty room for the interview. She sat across from me in a chair that seemed too large for her. It swallowed her up and made her look like a small child. After my explanation of the consent form, she signed it and I began the questions.

Arriving in the United States 2 years earlier from southern India, Deeksha had moved to the university community to pursue a doctorate in veterinary science. She and her husband, Malayalam, spoke a mixture of English and their home language. Her husband had preceded her into the program 1 year earlier. When I asked how early she began to search for child care, she explained that she became pregnant fairly early, only 4 months into her program. She told her advisor that she was expecting and the first thing he recommended that she do was locate a good child care program in the

community and immediately place her unborn baby on a waiting list. She was overwhelmed by this suggestion because she was unfamiliar with the process and was surprised to learn that a parent was expected to do this so early. Becoming pregnant so early in the first semester of her program and then discovering this news was disheartening, especially since she had not yet even seen the doctor for her first appointment. She thought that the advice was "absurd," as the birth was so far away. However, after being reminded repeatedly by her advisor, she relented and began her search for a suitable child care program for her baby.

> I was shocked, you know, because I just got to know I was pregnant. So he [my advisor] said you need to immediately start searching for day cares. I found it initially very funny because thinking that this is such a long duration but he was adamant and said I should get this done so he kept pestering me. Every day when he saw me he asked, "Did you call? Did you call these people? Did you find somewhere?" So, eventually, we did during those first few weeks.

Deeksha's advisor gave her a recommendation of a local child care center in town that was popular among faculty. However, when she called, she was stunned to learn that the wait was almost a year for infants. This worried her greatly.

> So, that's a very long wait. And being from India, it was really difficult for me to understand why there was such a long waiting period. So then I was not sure of what I would do. My parents did come and help me out in the beginning but I was not sure whether there would be anybody in the beginning to help me out.

Deeksha related that it was helpful that members of her family could travel from India to help her care for her baby. Her father came first and remained for 1 week, followed by her mother for 2 months and then her husband's mother for almost 3 months. I noticed the look on her face as her voice trailed away as she described her worry since her mother-in-law had left the day before our interview. Her mood lightened when she explained that she had found a back-up child care center in case her family was not able to stay longer, which did occur. She stated that her family was upset by the notion that she would place her baby in day care so young. I recalled similar comments by Participant 2, as she had received the same reaction from her family from India.

> And my parents were, you know, how grandparents are. Especially Indian ones are really protective, so they were kind of freaked out like, you know, being 3 months old, they were like "no" to putting the baby in day care so young, especially my husband's mom. She's a homemaker, so she's never worked, so she was very difficult to convince, let me put it that way. I had to initially start with a half-day alternate program to appease her.

Deeksha located her program of choice after searching the reviews of centers online, beginning with those in proximity to their home. After her disappointment about majority of programs offering only full-time care, she was relieved to locate a program that allowed for a flexible schedule. She was able to take her baby for half days for the first full month until she slowly moved to full-time care 2 months later. She credited this arrangement as suitable due to the help by her family from India, both of their student

schedules, the kindness of her supervisor to allow extra time off when needed, and the flexibility of the child care program to adjust tuition based on part-time attendance.

Her greatest surprise came when she inquired about the maternity leave policy at the university. She compared her university to those of friends in a very similar program in India who are granted maternity leave by their universities. She called the human resources department for verification and found that nothing was offered by the university, not even a month. This is one reason that the child care situation was so bothersome. She understood the urgency to search so early because there were few resources for mothers who wished to return to work or study without family nearby to help raise their child for the first 2 years, as is traditional in India. When I inquired about comparisons between formal child care arrangements in India and the United States, Deeksha had a great deal to share.

She shared her recollections of attending child care herself in India when she was about 3 years old. Her parents were medical professionals and she was told by her mother that she was given only about a month of maternity leave before she returned to work. Her mother had the help of family members to care for her and her brother. Her brother never attended child care but was cared for only by family members. By the time she was born, Deeksha's mother had been promoted and so Deeksha was cared for by family members until the age of 3, when her brother entered formal schooling. Her mother then placed her in a preschool. She described how many women in India do not work formally and, if they do work, tend to resign or take a longer leave of absence until

the child is older. She said the government encourages women to continue working by providing maternity leave and flexible work schedules.

Prior to arriving in the United States, Deeksha had witnessed her nieces and nephews attend child care, but not until they were old enough to eat solid food or later, so child care in the United States worried her, with her son being so young. She felt that child care services in many parts of India, especially in the cities that offered child care services, were not very "developed." As she elaborated, I realized that she was referring to specific child care policies.

> I don't think the system in India is all that much developed, per se, because everything here has a protocol, so that there is no unexpected things, for example, you need to give a permission slip for everything that you need them to do. For example, the baby had a small rash. In the beginning, it was some kind of dryness so the doctor had asked us to put some kind of lotion, Eucerin I think, which is an over-the-counter lotion and moisturizer. So I took it to the day care thinking that since it's not a drug, but they said, "No, you have to get it signed by a doctor," so we had to get that signed so that's pretty nice. At least I know that they won't give him anything without me knowing or giving my permission.

Deeksha described her initial experiences with the day care center as challenging. She explained that she did not understand the schedule and policies when she assumed that she could remain with her infant son at the day care location for about 3 hours on his first day. They informed her that she would not be able to remain for 3 hours but they felt that 30 minutes was sufficient. She disagreed but felt that she did not have the right

to object since it was her first experience, assuming that this was how things were done. The center allows the babies to participate in a splash day. While she was hesitant, as she is afraid of water, her husband disagreed and felt strongly that their son should participate with the other babies. He felt that the center teachers would know what was developmentally appropriate for the children. When she explained the activities to her mother-in-law, who also disagreed with his participation, feeling that he was too young, she observed the water activities and said that her son seemed very happy, so she felt that it was the right thing to allow him to continue to participate.

While describing her personality as "reserved," Deeksha explained that this made her relationships with the other parents difficult, awkward, and initially strained. While she enjoys meeting new parents, she is shy and has trouble in mingling. When her husband move from student to resident, his increased workload meant that they had to rely on the day care for services more often that in the past. She made friends in the community, also mothers, who informed her of how to handle many unfamiliar situations, such as breastfeeding. They shared that she could maintain her milk for her son if she purchased a breast pump and pumped regularly. They also suggested that she freeze milk to send to day care so he would not have to be placed on infant formula.

Deeksha said that her greatest challenge currently is their move to a neighborhood south of the university. Traveling to his current day care center is taking more time but she has been unsuccessful in finding a center closer to her home, as their wait times are a year or more. She had received recommendations from friends and many of them shared unpleasant experiences at centers in town, so she avoided those.

When I asked about the negative experiences reported to her, Deeksha explained that their concerns were about mistreatment of children or a lack of cleanliness. She quickly realized that this is a matter of perspective. With further research, she discovered that even the child care center that her son currently attends had negative reviews online, and that some of the occurrences may not have been the fault of the center. While the current center is not culturally diverse, she feels that her family's culture is respected and not treated differently from that of other American families. She said that her son is happy, which she considered to be "the most important thing."

As a new mother, she struggled in placing her son in a center while he was so young. She was jealous of the teachers when she dropped him off his first day, especially since he was not upset to leave her. She said that she was envious that they got to spend more time with him than she did, which upset her initially. Now that he is happy, Deeksha understands that it was a process and that she can further her education because of the care that he receives. She is not the first mother to describe feelings of vulnerability over leaving her son in child care nor the only one who cited the importance of her child's happiness.

When I inquired about future plans, Deeksha explained that she and her husband greatly disagree about plans. She would like to return to India, where her parents and his mother resides. However, as a U.S. citizen, her husband does not feel ties to India, as he was raised in Dubai. Her son, a U.S. citizen, also has citizenship in India. She believes that one benefit of raising her son in India is the lower costs of education and health care. She was shocked at the costs of health care in the United States, costs that she had

not experienced in India. She spoke of concern that persons with limited means had less access to quality health care. When I inquired about this disparity in India, she said that this was a matter of perspective. The U.S. government provides far fewer resources than the Indian government. Deeksha stated that a pregnancy in India would have cost her one fifth of what she paid to deliver her son in the United States She was surprised to learn about additional fees for emergency or sick care visits. In India, there are no additional fees for hospital visits, such as afterhours or emergency room visits, which she experienced with her son here and received a large bill for the services.

When we continued about future plans, she explained that she would like to have more children but, since her first pregnancy was very difficult, she would like to wait until they have finished school and are more settled. She said that her husband has mentioned job prospects in either Canada or Australia, but with her parents' advancing age and the lack of siblings in India to look after them, her ideal would be to return to India. Her older brother has been in the United States for some time and recently relocated to Dallas, Texas. Although she described her parents as "very independent people," she worries about what would happen in an emergency. In the meantime, they have learned to use Skype so that her parents can see and hear their grandson.

When the subject moved to home language, Deeksha explained that this was one area in which she and her husband have argued. Her husband knows how to speak only in their "mother tongue" but does not know how to read or write in it. She can do all three but her husband feels that only English should be spoken in the home. When she asked my opinion, I shared what the research says about acquisition of language. I noted

that, since he spends a great deal of his day using English, they need to speak their home language at home only for him to be familiar with both. She laughed and said that she was relieved to hear that they should continue to speak in their mother tongue to him, as she feared that he would lose it. Deeksha explained that, prior to their son's birth, she and her husband spoke only Malayalam (their home language in India) to each other. Once their son arrived, her husband convinced her that speaking only English was the best way. Since that time, she disagreed but questioned how babies actually learned multiple languages and hoped that he would become fluent in both. She stated that she would go home and happily quote me to her husband and that this had put her mind at ease. We ended the interview on this note. She was smiling and more chatty than when we began the interview, so it was clear that she had warmed to me and was no longer shy or hesitant to speak. She was appreciative of the gift card and said that she was excited to choose books to read to her son before he goes to bed.

I wondered whether, over time, she became more comfortable in speaking with me by learning that I agreed with her to continue to speak in their home language in the home to their baby. This may have formed a special bond that helped her to feel confident in her parenting ability. Throughout the interview, she had seemed to lack confidence and questioned many of her choices. Recalling the events of her early search and experiences with her son may have brought up uncomfortable feelings that she had initially forgotten.

Participant 5: Bishakha, "The Patient One"

I met Bishakha at her family's apartment in town two blocks from the university. I had great difficulty in finding their apartment as the building numbers were not clearly visible from the street. I circled the block twice and decided to park and walk. I found that I was on the opposite side of the complex, so I got back in my car to park near her apartment. The apartment was on the second floor of a two-story red brick building. The railings and stairs were covered in cobwebs and debris. The peeling paint on the door and rusted doorknob matched those on the other apartments. There were no numbers on the apartment door, but there was a number to the apartment on the left and another three doors down. I knocked on the door of the one that I thought would be their home. I was correct. I could immediately smell strong spices through the door.

Two children, a boy and a girl, were in the living room area sitting on a salmon-colored sofa with green flowers, watching a Dora the Explorer cartoon. The living room was so covered in toys that the tan carpet was hard to see underneath. The dark brown wooden coffee table had dolls, books, crayons, sippy cups, Lego blocks, Matchbox cars, and trucks. Even the television had toys on top of it. Through the living room and to the right was one bedroom and, to the left, a hallway. Directly to the left of the front door was the kitchen, where Bishakha invited me to sit down. She apologized and said that it was time for her to begin to prepare dinner for her family and she began to pull down plates and placed them on the counter. There were several pots on the stove, with steam coming from the tops.

The tan carpet in the living room was brown and worn at the front door and continued into the living room and the hallway. I could not see beyond the turn to the hallway but noticed that it continued into the kitchen. The kitchen was small with a light brown counter, white sink, and white cabinets. A white refrigerator sat in the left corner and a small kitchen table with three chairs sat up against the wall under a window. Throughout most of the interview, the children routinely interrupted. Each time, Bishakha took care of their question, concern, or need. She asked me to have a seat and to give her a couple of minutes to start dinner. I took this time to record my observations.

Her daughter was wearing a pink set of pajamas with Disney princesses on the shirt. She was barefoot and wore her dark hair cut short halfway to her neck and with bangs. When I walked in, the children were engrossed in the television and did not pay any attention to me, never looking away from the screen. The boy wore a blue short-sleeved shirt and jeans. He was barefoot. She called to them often from the kitchen, first to ask whether they were thirsty and then to ask her son to leave her daughter alone when she heard them arguing. She finally sat down to the interview and her son walked over to hand me a Spiderman action figure. I acknowledged him while asking my first question. He asked me who I was and why I was there. When I began to respond, she answered for me, informing him that I was from the university and that I was there to speak to her about her experiences. He seemed confused by her answer but did not respond. He simply stared at me and then returned to the living room to watch television with his sister.

Bishakha was a junior faculty member of a university in Bangladesh, where the chemical engineering department required additional faculty with a doctorate, so she traveled to Texas to further her education. Accompanied by her husband, a post-doctoral student in the same department, she traveled with their two young children about 1 year ago. Originally, she was accepted into the program but her husband was not. Her supervisor said that, if she traveled on a spouse visa, he could find a position for her husband as well. It took nearly 4 months to process his visa to get a work permit but eventually he enrolled in the program. They were both granted leave from their universities in India: she for 4 years and her husband for 2 years.

In Bangladesh, Bishakha had a friend who had come to the university prior to her acceptance into the program. When she inquired about child care options, her friend informed her that it was very difficult, so she decided to begin her search prior to their arrival. She received her admission letter 6 months prior to their travel, so she searched on the Internet and placed her children on the university's child care center waiting list. The university child care program had a waiting list of more than two hundred children and an average wait time of approximately 18 months. While this was her first choice, she decided that she had to locate other options because she would arrive within the next few months.

Her friend had enrolled her child at a local preschool that allowed parents to use the center by the hour. Since she was not comfortable with this idea and wanted something more stable for the whole day, she collected information to visit all of them upon her arrival. She chose their current residence due to its proximity to the university.

However, since they did not own a car, transportation to and from most of the child care centers on their list proved to be problematic. Once they arrived, Bishakha immediately began to visit the centers at the top of her list. She said that she had heard about abuse in American child care centers, such as "caregivers talking on their cell phones while the children were crying." However, her two greatest concerns were her children's lack of understanding of English and adherence to their diet based on religious beliefs. The family does not eat pork or pork products, and other meats only prepared *halal*.

In terms of language, Bishakha feared that they would not be able to communicate with others. She described how she initially began to work through this.

> I used to talk English at home at times just to get them used to it. My son used to understand a little bit of English but my daughter had no idea what English was. So that's what I was worried about—whether the day care would accommodate them in the beginning with the language. That was one concern.

Bishakha also found in her search that another problem would be the center's menu and the food served to the children. She found pork on many of the menus at centers that she visited. For Muslims, pork is strictly forbidden. While she allows the children to eat chicken, beef, turkey, and fish, she prefers that it be *halal*. She was pleased to find a child care center that did not include pork on their menu. Although they do not provide *halal* foods, she allows her children to consume meats that are not *halal* prepared. However, she strictly practices this at home and serves only *halal* foods. The center was open to allowing Bishaka to provide her children with alternate foods if they

could not have what was scheduled to be served that day. It took 2 months for a space to open for both of her children at this center.

When asked about how child care differs in Bangladesh, Bishakha was very forthcoming.

> In Bangladesh, we don't really have child care like here. It's a very recent idea. Recently, it has started but kids in my country don't start very early. They start at, uh, you get them enrolled at two and a half years and they start school at three and a half years. [Before this] they are with family.

She spoke of the familial system of child care in her home country, just as had many of the other participants. She shared that it is not uncommon for family members and extended family members to reside together in one home compound.

> In my case, my children were with their grandmother, she lived with us. We also had two maids in our house along with my mom-in-law. So the maids basically looked after my children and my mom-in-law would be overlooking the whole thing when I wasn't there. They were very relaxed at home. They wouldn't get up early in the morning. They were kind of doing things the way they wanted to do at home. Pampered, I mean.

Being at home and cared for by nannies in Bangladesh was challenging for her children initially. Bishakha explained that, even though her children were 4 and 2.5 years old, they had not had the opportunity to feed themselves. With constant assistance from maids or nannies, her children were spoon fed, which is not uncommon in their culture. She explained that it is important to ensure that young children receive proper

nutrition for proper growth, health, and development and that assistance by an adult is essential to accomplish this. Although her children were toilet trained, they received a great deal of assistance in this area as well. The children were used to having nannies who completed the clean-up process after toileting.

Other than the menu, Bishakha chose the current center after meeting the center director. She found the director to be a disciplined woman and she trusted her after her tour and after speaking with her. She was impressed with the facilities. She saw the classrooms as favorable and the staff as very friendly; their ratings on the Internet were mostly positive. The center enrolled several children from other countries and they were, as she described "blended in," which led her to feel good about her choice.

As an administrator who has developed close professional relationships with several child care center directors in the area, I will comment on the specific center that Bishaka chose for her children. The owners, partners for many years, had opened an independent child development center in town. They contacted me regarding how to attract and retain international families. Initially, they provided tours but did not hear from potential applicants; when they called, they were told that the parents had located another center. Families that enrolled sometimes left without notice or explanation. The families were always kind and polite but would not provide information for improvements. The owners identified possible communication problems and practices that could have prevented them from retaining families.

We had several conversations about how to be sensitive to the needs of families that were not their typical family (White, Christian, conservative). I recounted my

experience with many families who considered it to be impolite to criticize a program that had provided care to their child, even when the care had not met their needs or if the experience was negative. I was impressed with how open the owners were to making changes to their policies, taking the time to provide detailed explanations of the policies while investing in professional development that would help their teaching staff to understand and communicate with all types of families. Today, their center is attracting more diverse families. This has been a very positive outcome of collaboration with other center directors in town. Unfortunately, this is not the norm, and many centers are challenged by the experience of families who do not feel welcome.

Bishaka described separation anxiety after placing her children in child care. She expressed the emotional challenge of leaving the child in someone else's care. She said that she had not experienced this in Bangladesh, where the society of childrearing and working was a very supportive one, with a shorter work day and a shorter child care day. She spoke of the very long school days here and expressed concern about it.

> Back home, my office work was only like 2 or 3 hours per day so I was with them a lot. I decided to put my son in a school back home prior to coming to study here because generally the trend is to put kids in school at three and a half, so he went there for 6 months but the school was for only 2 hours a day so I was concerned because here they would have to spend a lot of time here like 9 to 5 they would be separated from me for a long time. So this concerned me a great deal.

Bishakha was pleased to find that the school was helping the children to be more independent and less reliant on adults. Her greatest concern had to do with meal times, since her children had never fed themselves but were used to being spoon fed by adult caregivers. Initially, the teachers explained that, with so many children, they would be unable to feed her children and that it was not their policy to feed children who were old enough to feed themselves. The teachers explained that, once her children were sitting with friends, and if they were hungry, they would learn to feed themselves. This concerned her greatly, as she worried about how her children would adjust. In the beginning, and for the first few weeks of their time in the new center, she took time out in the middle of the day to have lunch with her children and feed them herself. She enjoyed this time with them as she was able to learn who their friends were and to get to know the teachers better. She also noticed that her son, who was 4 years old at the time, was learning to feed himself. She was able to do less with him, while her daughter continued to want her mother to feed her. After a while, she and her husband agreed that the children would learn eventually, although she continued to feed them their meals at home: breakfast prior to school, a late afternoon snack when they returned home, and dinner. She acknowledged that things turned out great, but this was an initial concern and one about which she had anxiety for a long time.

Bishakha explained that she eased her children into the day care experience with the help of her parents, who visited with them for 6 months. This allowed her to send her children to the center for up to 4 hours per day. Now that her parents have returned to Bangladesh, and due to her and her husband's increased work and school loads, her

children attend close to 8 hours per day. She admitted that this is too long and that she wished that circumstances were otherwise. While she contended that her children seemed happy and well adjusted, the long days were problematic for her. Although they have been in the United States for only a little longer than a year, her parents have visited twice and have remained for close to 6 months each time.

Her children have acquired English, although she was initially concerned because she was under the impression that they would learn it more quickly. In the beginning, her daughter would not play with the other children and would cry. Even with the addition of speaking English in the home, her daughter had a difficult time in adjusting. This caused her great stress in the initial period of their enrollment. Now her daughter understands a great deal of English and enjoys going to the center daily.

Bishakha said that she wished that she had received information on the Head Start program provided by the local independent school district. Her friend who had arrived earlier had a very young child (less than 2 years old) and did not require these services. However, she learned this information from a colleague and went to enroll her son. Unfortunately, the program was for only 2 hours per day; without transportation, they were not able to utilize these services. Therefore, child care was necessary. She recommended that this information be made available to all families through the child care centers. I explained that many centers do not advertise this as an option is that, if they inform families that their child is eligible for the local Head Start program, a free, subsidized, federally funded program, then they lose the tuition that parents were paying for child care. She did not understand why, if this would benefit the children. I agreed

but also acknowledged that the program is for such a short time (about 3 hours per day) that many working families are not able to take advantage of the program. There is transportation available that is not used by some families because they feel that their child is too young. They also have to pay for child care for the additional hours.

When I inquired about the transition period for her children, Bishakha was reflective. She described her son's adjustment as fairly smooth and without incident in the beginning. However, her daughter's adjustment was very different. She acknowledged that this was a very stressful time for her. "Yeah, my son was alright with it from the beginning, but my daughter, she cried for the first 2 months straight. She would grab my leg and wouldn't let me go."

Bishakha explained that the holiday break in winter was the hardest. Because the children were home for extended time (2 weeks), returning to child care was challenging. Her daughter began to cry even more. It took her about 3 months to fully adjust again. She noted that this was around the time when she began to speak and understand more English. At home, she speaks a mixture of Bengali and English, but her husband speaks only in their home language.

One concern that has recently arisen for the family is the issue of public school. Recent zoning changes have caused her son to be slated to attend a different school from that of his best friend. They debated whether to move so that they could ensure the choice of the school but decided against doing so. Now her son will be separated from his best friend. They are planning a possible move next year before kindergarten begins. They have close friendships with four couples with children. Bishakha is the only

mother in the group who is a graduate student. The other mothers are all stay-at-home moms with husbands who are involved with the university in some way.

Bishakha elaborated on what she found to be the differences in the educational systems in America and India.

> The teaching approach there [in India] is very different. [My son] went there for 6 months. Their syllabus is very wide but it's all book based. Like, they teach through the book and not practical experience. Like here, if they are learning about flowers, they would see the flowers, they would draw the flowers, and they would see videos [of flowers]. But back home it's more like "Look at the book. The book says this. Go to page number this and you'll see a flower."

Bishakha had decided that the educational system in terms of how children are taught is much better in the United States but she disagreed with how long children must attend school. She considered that their days are too long. She will have to place her son in aftercare when he attends kindergarten because she has no other options while she is teaching. She does not like the lack of parental interaction resulting from picking them up so late, having dinner, and then preparing them for bed. In India, they have a more relaxed life, since the school day is much shorter and family members help with caregiving.

In terms of future plans, she explained that this greatly depends on what job offers they receive after completing their programs. If they do not receive acceptable offers in the United States, they plan to return to India to resume their positions, with promotions.

When I informed her that I had asked all of my questions, she seemed distracted and looked toward the door to their apartment. I did not understand at first. I handed her the gift card and thanked her for her time and informed her that I would be sending a copy of her transcript for her to look over. She stood suddenly, shook my hand, and ushered me to the door. As soon as she opened the door, her husband was standing there. She quickly bid me farewell and closed the door behind her husband as he entered their apartment. I realized that she must have been consumed with the interview and had lost track of time. She realized that it was time for her husband to return home and, like clockwork, he was coming through the door as I was exiting.

Participant 6: Aisha, "The One Who Shines Brightly," and Pradeep, "The Cosigner"

I had previously emailed and then spoken on the telephone with Aisha. We agreed to meet in the evening at their apartment in the town next to the university. I to entered the parking lot through a gate. The inside of the complex was very well maintained, with lush landscaping. I observed many luxury cars parked in the numbered spaces, many of them covered. Their unit was on the ground floor, easy to access. I knocked on the door and heard the chatter of a small child inside. Aisha opened the door and welcomed me warmly.

Upon stepping into their foyer, I noticed a long line of shoes near the door. Pradeep, the father and husband, his wife, Aisha, and their son were all barefoot. I immediately slipped out of my shoes and placed them by the door. Pradeep smiled, remarked that I was a very observant guest, and thanked me for removing my shoes. The

apartment was beautifully decorated with many gold and colorful artifacts on the walls and on tables. There were several pictures of their son in the room. The temperature was cool and the shades were drawn to allow sunlight. The front door opened to a kitchen area that had light-colored cabinets in a pale shade of rose. The floors were in a white tile with dark grout and the appliances were white, with cabinets located on the top and bottom of one side. An opening in the cabinets allowed one to see into the adjoining living room. There was a brown leather sofa and love seat in the living room area and light beige carpet ran throughout the apartment. There were two bedrooms visible from the living room, one to the right and one to the left behind the kitchen area. Their son ran to the room to the left and brought out balls and other toys throughout the interview, so I assumed that this was his bedroom.

Both husband and wife offered me a seat on the love seat facing the window, with my back to the kitchen. Pradeep sat with the son on the sofa while I heard dishes clanging in the kitchen. He apologized and said that his wife would be right with us. She joined us and offered water, which I accepted.

Nearly 10 years ago, Pradeep and Aisha arrived in the community to pursue doctoral degrees in biology. From southern India, Pradeep arrived first, with Aisha arriving about 1 month later. They have traveled to other countries, including Japan, Switzerland, and Italy and they speak three languages fluently: Kannaba, Hindi, and English. Married for almost 7 years prior to expecting their first child, they planned to send the baby to child care after his first birthday.

Being in the community for a much longer time than most of the participants, they had experience with friends whose children attended child care in town, so they were not surprised during their search when they were informed of the long waiting lists.

> We are living here for like 10 years so probably we already know what to expect so that makes a difference than someone new here. So that probably makes us adapt easier. If it were different, then that would make a difference. And that's the thing, we knew about the long waiting lists in day cares here so it was no surprise.

They explained that they had first looked into child care options with the university but, once they found that they were not available due to a long waiting list, they received recommendations from friends. "At first, we checked out the university [center], and [space] wasn't available at that time. It was a limited number of people there and we looked around and then one of our friends told us this [day care] was good."

They decided to check out six options. They toured each of them. They were interested in good care so that they would not have to worry about him. Their final decision was made after learning that a friend had a child at a particular child care center that they liked. They found another one that was equally good and located on the way to their home but they noted part of the building was not well lit. Their friend was helpful in explaining the policies and they knew what to expect prior to enrolling their son. They located additional information on the Internet.

> We wanted, sort of, good care because once we leave him, and we don't want to worry about him. I think before deciding, we knew this one day care. Our friend was going so we knew. We liked one more near HEB. That one was really nice. We liked it equally as [the one we chose]. We chose the one that was on the way to our home. They both were equally good, but one of them didn't have much light. It was kind of dark. They had hourly and full-time too. They told me I could leave him for a short time or full-time. I just remember it being really dark.

When the subject moved to how child care in the United States differs from that in India, Aisha explained that it used to be that in India, the child did not attend school or care until the age of 3 or 4 years, but she noted that things have changed greatly. Many women now work in India, so care is needed much earlier. She explained that her brother has a daughter whom she placed in care at age 6 months because both parents were working. In the smaller cities in India, many people live with their parents or extended family who provide supplemental care. Aisha's parents came for 3 months shortly after their son was born and Aisha and her husband have returned to India to visit family and to celebrate their son's first birthday.

In describing their home town in India, they said that the community in the United States is very similar to where they grew up in India. They described it as a small college town with a close-knit community. There was very little traffic. Many of their friends who grew up in larger cities in India complained of being bored in this community but they did not share those feelings. They were initially worried about how

their son would adjust to child care, which began at age 14 months. They found that he adjusted well to his new surroundings.

They described themselves as very different from many of their friends. They noted that many of their friends choose foods for their children because they do not eat meat but they described themselves as more liberal in this area. While neither consumes meat of any kind, they do not placed that restriction on their child, allowing him to consume whatever foods he likes. They believe in allowing their son to make that choice when he is older. They said that their friends complained about finding a school that will cook or serve separate foods based on culture or religion but they felt that such action would be difficult and unnecessary and they choose differently for their son.

> Also, many of them try to choose what type of food they want to give for their kids. Because we are very liberal. We are not worried. We are vegetarians but we asked them to give anything to him. He can choose. All kinds of meat and he eats everything. We don't make any meat at home but in the day care he can choose later on, if he doesn't want to eat it. He can choose.

Aisha said that they have close friends and colleagues who are also from their home country who serve as a support system when needed. They socialize with them and plan play groups for their children.

When asked about plans to remain in the United States or return to India, they responded that they would like to remain in the community, if not with the current university, then with another in the United States They would like for their son to continue his education in the United States. Being here for such a long time, they were

comfortable and considered the United States to be like home. They mentioned that they heard from friends who live in larger cities that there might be more to do in terms of educational, social, and sports opportunities for children, as well as greater job opportunities for the parents.

When I received the recommendation list of families to contact, the director of their center highlighted them as a family that they greatly enjoyed having at the center. She described them as the "sweetest family that I have ever dealt with in all my years of working with families." At the conclusion of the interview, the family invited me to share dinner with them; I was very disappointed that I could not stay, as I had scheduled another interview immediately following theirs. I noted the disappointment on their faces but they asked me to come another time and assured me that I was more than welcome to do so. They were very appreciative of the gift card. I handed it to their son, who gave me a big hug.

Participant 7: Emilio, "The Interpreter," and Alejandra, "The Observant One"

I met the next family, Emilio and Alejandra, at the university community center for families. Housed in what was traditionally known as the married housing complex, it is a popular choice for international graduate students and their young children. The community center serves as a space for students and their families. There is a play room, a computer room, and a library. There are also rooms for hosting small events. The family agreed to meet me in the play room because their son plays in the room regularly and is familiar with the surroundings. Emilio explained that the location was perfect for them because they lived in the community and it was a very short walk for them.

I entered through the double-doored side entrance. I met Emilio, who smiled and escorted me to the playroom area. He introduced me to his wife, who was sitting on the floor in an infant enclosure area, helping their son with a toy. She smiled and said hello and Emilio explained that she did not understand a great deal of English but that he was happy to translate as necessary.

We began the interview at a circular wooden table with two chairs. He pulled over a third chair, even though his wife remained in the play area with their son. Emilio explained that they moved to the area from Ecuador 2 years earlier to begin his doctoral program in chemical engineering. He wanted to ensure a safe home with good medical care for his son because his wife was pregnant at the time. The doctors discovered that their son would be born with serious health issues. A few months after Emilio's arrival in the university town and being enrolled in school, he sent for his wife. Soon thereafter, their son was born. We joked that, because his son was born on December 31, he narrowly missed being a New Year's baby.

Emilio described new parenthood as good and interesting but noted that it had changed everything in their lives. Since his son was born with a rare medical condition, things have been challenging for them. Born with Microtia-anotia syndrome, the boys has required ongoing therapies and two surgeries to date, with follow-up surgeries required. Emilio noted that the worst is over, as the remaining surgeries will not be as difficult. The condition is described as the absence of part of the ear. Testing determines the extent of the syndrome and what therapies or surgeries are needed. He explained that his son was born without his left ear and that the auditory canal is not developed. He said

that his son's case is less serious than some that can affect the kidneys, the eyes, and the inner ear, as well as other areas. His son has none of these issues and is able to hear well in his right ear.

Emilio and Alejandra plan to be in the United States for at least a few more years so she can complete a Master's degree. She has not been able to apply or enroll until she masters English well enough to pass the Graduate Management Admissions Test. She has been taking English language courses and must pass two English exams to be labeled as proficient in English. They are hoping that she will begin studies in the next school year. Through therapy, their son is also learning American Sign Language (ASL) and will be fluent in that as well as English and Spanish. Although he hears, this will allow him to express himself better as he grows.

They have traveled to South America to visit and vacation in Columbia, Peru, and surrounding areas. Both are fluent in Spanish and Emilio speaks English well. While his son is only at the point of saying a few words at 18 months old, these are mixed in both English and Spanish.

Nearly 2 years old, their son currently attends a bilingual child care program part time based on their schedule; the program provides care and instruction in both English and Spanish. They plan to be in the community for up to 6 years for his program and eventually return to the United States later so his son can pursue his own graduate studies, just as his parents are doing. Emilio explained that his son holds dual citizenship in Ecuador and the United States.

Emilio explained that they had not thought about child care until their son was around 5 months old due, to his medical condition. By 6 months of age, with most of his challenging surgery behind him, they decided to look into child care options because he was beginning to crawl. They researched centers and discovered the university center across the street from their apartment. They were disappointed to learn that the center offered only full-time care, which was not an option for them at the time, and tuition costs were too expensive for their budget. They chose the only center in town that offered a drop-in care option. They found that it was also a bilingual child care with instruction and care in both Spanish and English, which pleased them. Based on the child's medical needs, the therapist informed them that he should be enrolled officially into the local school system for special services. The therapist assisted with completing the enrollment paperwork and their son receives therapy, mostly at home. There are special field trips, such as visits to a museum or a local playground; however, he receives individualized therapies at home. Eventually, he will attend classes part time so being enrolled will help in accessing services.

While searching for child care options, their main concern was to find a place that would take good care of him and to him to "make contact with other kids his age so that he would be more comfortable around people." Their son does not attend in the summer because Emilio is not in class for the summer semester; however, he will attend a couple of times a week, based on his father's online course schedule. They described their initial disappointment with learning about the expense of child care in the United States.

> I think prices is the most disappointing for us. Since where we come from not even the highest or most expensive high school there is not even near average child care here. Just to give you an example, we were planning on spending $300 for fees back in Ecuador for one of the best schools there. So that for us is really expensive.

When I inquired about child care in Ecuador, Emilio had a great deal to say, especially about expenses. He explained that the cheapest child care in the country is provided for free by the government. It is of good quality, overall, but the main negative aspect is that so many families would like their child to attend that it is necessary to enroll when the child is born. The highest cost of child care in their home country is about $100 per month. They were disappointed to learn that child care for infants in the United States cost about 10 times that amount, more than they were expecting. He explained that, in their home country, government departments provide child care for employees for a small fee deducted from paychecks. Department employees are eligible to enroll the child automatically. The most expensive child care programs are no more than $400 to $600 per month, and these are the best centers available. They described these types of centers as equipped with cameras so parents can view their child for the entire day.

He commented that their culture had been accepted in the child care center and in the community. They enjoy the community and the university garden apartments. They noted that there are other families like them. They share with other international families with children similar in age and they enjoy that they can get to know other families from

other countries with different cultures. They have discovered that they have more in common than they realized, even though the families are from so many countries.

The had feared their son might not be accepted because of his medical condition. They feel lucky that he will have surgery to reconstruct the ear by the time he is 4 years old. Emilio described the procedure as a natural option in which they will use his son's own skin and an implant, possibly plastic, and wrap the skin around the implant to construct the ear. They are concerned about having his auditory canal reconstructed because there could be major issues, such as the body's inability to recognize it as part of the body. If this occurs, the body's cells may grow over the new canal and cause later rejection. Their plan is to reconstruct the ear and connect a cochlear implant to the skull externally. They feel lucky that the condition is only on one side but they have been warned by doctors that he may have difficulty with discerning the orientation of sounds.

In terms of advice for other families, Emilio said that the U.S. government does a good job with health insurance for children with special needs. Their son qualifies for Medicaid and all of his medical care is covered, as well as his therapies. They receive food stamps based on their income and their son's medical impairment. Their goal is to remain in the United States until their son has received all of his surgeries.

Their support system is other Latino families that they have befriended based on common language. Although he has befriended others who are American, Asian, and European, he said that the commonalities of his Latino friends makes the relationships easier. They feel fortunate to be raising their son in an academic environment.

Emilio owns a structural engineering company with his brother back home in Ecuador. He could have remained but he received a government scholarship to study in the United States after passing qualifying exams. Her parents work and are unable to visit due to the cost. His father visited for a short time after their son was born. His single brother also recently received a scholarship and is currently living and studying in Dallas. When they have finished studying, they hope to return to Ecuador and continue to run the company together. Eventually, they would like their son to earn graduate degrees in the United States, based on their positive experiences here.

At the conclusion of our interview, they seemed almost disappointed that it was ended. Since Alejandra was sitting on the floor with their son, I went to play with him as well. He was pushing a riding toy across the floor as it made sounds. He slowly moved the toy close to me to bump my leg. When I looked up, he laughed shyly and then hid his face. He ran to Alejandra and giggled as she tickled him. Emilio informed me that it was time for them to prepare dinner for him, so I bid them farewell.

Participant 8: Mia, "The Optimist," and Charles, "The Texas Native"

I met Mia and Charles at the university child care center. Mia emailed and asked to bring her husband and their daughter for the interview because they had few babysitter options that evening. I agreed. Those chose to meet at the university child care center on campus because it was on their way home. Both work for the university system in roadside safety in an engineering department, Mia as an engineer and Charles as a technician. We met in one of the classrooms for 2-year-olds because their daughter was 2 years old. The classroom was filled with developmentally appropriate toys to maintain

her interest during the interview. We settled into the small blue chairs around a child-sized rectangular table while their daughter, a petite blonde child, played with toys.

I began by asking them to tell me about themselves. Originally from Italy, Mia had moved to Texas 5 years ago and had Charles at work. She did not have transportation and he volunteered to take her to and from work and other places as needed. After getting to know one another, they fell in love. They were married, had one child, their daughter, and are expecting another baby girl in the fall. With all of her family living in Italy, she said that she likes living in Texas and now has a new family with a different culture with which she has become familiar. She sees things from a different perspective and has no idea what she did prior to being married and having children, now that her life is filled with love. Well traveled throughout Europe for both business and vacation, she noted that spaces are much smaller in Europe and larger in the United States,, especially in Texas.

Speaking fluent Italian and English, Mia said that her daughter understands a few Italian words but speaks and understands mostly English. She said that her daughter does not seem interested in speaking another language and so she does not force the issue. Mia speaks a little German and French, although it has been some time since she has communicated in either language.

Mia and Charles began the search for child care as soon as they found out that they were expecting their first child. Most of the recommendations came from word-of-mouth advice from friends and colleagues. They saw that people had clear opinions regarding the best options but they decided to contact several places and attend tours

prior to making a decision. Their ideal program was one in which the place was very clean and in which the children were being treated well and were being entertained with a variety of offerings. They wanted the place and the neighborhood to be safe. They also sought a place that was close to their home. They were disappointed to find that some of the centers that they visited were not very clean and were cluttered or dark. Although they knew about regulations, they considered that some places had too many children, which concerned them greatly. One center in particular had one large room with "classrooms" separated by small gates. They noticed that the outside toys did not seem safe and that the materials were old or very limited. They passed on such schools.

Their daughter began care at just 2 months old. They made their choice based on the fact that the center was very clean, the location was close to home, and the class sizes were acceptable. They learned about policies and procedures via from he Internet and information that the center provided. They were initially afraid of their infant being accidentally dropped or un attended. They feared that she would cry all day without anyone paying close attention to her. They also did not like the stackable cribs that the center used. It was fine for them while she was an immobile infant, but they feared that she would bump her head once she could pull up to stand, since there was another crib stacked on hers. Now that she is older and toilet trained, they are more concerned with how well she is cleaned after a bathroom visit. Her daughter has at times been irritated; while they do not blame the center, they want to avoid this as much as possible.

Their support system was limited. Mia explained that her family has not been able to visit, mostly for economic and health reasons. She said that it is expensive to

travel and their sickness poses additional challenges. Charles's sister is their main support system. With both of his parents deceased, his sister acts as pseudo-grandparent to their daughter. Aside from his sister, they have few interactions with others. They are happy that their child is in a good program during the day because Mia noted that she does not have the patience to remain home with her children. She described the challenges of entertaining her daughter in the evenings and on weekends and said that she likes the fact that her daughter is able to learn from other children, is learning to socialize, and enjoys attending school. Although they see that child care is expensive, especially with a new baby attending the same center soon, they are happy that their child is happy.

When the conversation turned to comparisons to child care in Italy, Mia recalled attending child care in Italy at about 4 years of age but could not recall details. She said that she does know the costs of child care in Italy but noted that it is very competitive to enroll in the top child care centers, not unlike here. She said that the school system is set up so that children attend the same school for years, often from preschool until high school. Many schools are privately operated. She has cousins and extended family in Italy, and almost all of their children attend child care there.

Both Mia and Charles had advice for parents searching for child care: to search as early as possible and to visit as many centers as possible. They noted that new parents may not have much information regarding child care and may need to make comparisons of several places.

> Look at a lot of places to have an idea because until you can compare, you don't understand what is best. You can go to one school and think it's nice but then visit another school and think it's nice but then visit another school and notice that it is even nicer or the opposite even. That it is much worse. So you learn.

They recommended that parents look for a clean and safe place. They said that an ideal center has cameras, ensures that the staff members are fingerprinted, and has good security. They explained that their initial fears were that someone could walk in and take their child. They also have great hopes for her and believe that she could be President one day. They want her to get a good education, be independent, take care of herself, and make the correct decisions in life.

At the conclusion of our interview, they encouraged their daughter to clean up her toys. This took a short while to convince her that it was time to go but we all pitched in to put away the toys. Charles picked her up and, when she saw me reaching for the light switch, she yelled, "I want to do it!" She switched it off and I escorted them to the front, where they signed out.

Participant 9: Junseo, "The Worrier"

I met Junseo after corresponding via email and text. We chose a study room at the main library on campus at her request, after one of her classes. Wearing her long dark hair pulled back into a ponytail, she wore black-rimmed eyeglasses that framed her wide, round face. Her gold buttoned-down blouse and green khaki capris matched her relaxed and friendly personality. All of her movements were very swift. She moved fast, spoke fast, and routinely surveyed the room with her eyes. She also stopped at times to

apologize and to make sure that I was following her. I found her English to be very well understood and remarked that to her, which made her smile.

Born in Austin, Texas, of Korean parents, her family came to the United States for her father's doctoral program. After her father had earned the degree, they moved back to South Korea when she was just 5 months old. She remained in South Korea for 22 years and returned to the States to pursue her own graduate studies. Junseo described returning to the United States as a U.S. citizen and an international student unfamiliar with life in the United States as very unsettling and scary. She met her husband on a blind date with encouragement from his uncle. Raised in South Korea, her husband had arrived in the United States to begin college. He has earned a Master's degree and is currently pursuing a doctorate in electrical engineering. While they were dating, she was working on a Master's degree in education and was accepted to Iowa State University to earn a doctorate in neuroscience. In the program for 2 years, Junseo returned to the community to marry and start a family. They chose one of the oldest apartment complexes near the university because it had trails for walks. At the time, they planned to have a family and considered the area to be a good location for strolling with a baby. She and her husband have a son whom they gave both a Korean name and a Christian name.

> We wanted him to have a Korean name because he's the first grandchild of my husband's family because on my side there are a lot of babies, so I wanted him to follow family tradition on my husband's side. And we are a Christian family so we also wanted him to have a Christian name.

Junseo elaborated on the challenges that she faced on returning to the United States after have been raised in Korea. She said that it took her more than a year to learn English; while she could read and learn simple vocabulary, she had difficulty in communicating in English. When I inquired about how long it took her to master English, she laughed, blushed, lowered her head, and replied that she had not yet mastered English. She spoke of her struggles in many classes. She described how challenging it is to understand what people are saying in English. She said that people generally speak too fast or mumble, making it difficult to decipher what they are saying, as processing meanings in English takes time. This is one reasons to want to raise her son here so he can acquire skill in English.

Junseo has visited Hong Kong, Thailand, and Japan on vacation. She speaks Korean, English, and Japanese. Her son spends a great deal of time in child care and is beginning to say more words in English but can say a few Korean words as well. They speak Korean at home; she mixes languages when naming objects so that he learns the names in both languages.

When the subject turned to their child care search, Junseo had a great deal to share. She said that she was a planner prior to her marriage but changed based on her husband's nature, which is more laid back and spontaneous.

> Here's the thing. I was really a planning person before marriage but after marriage he doesn't do planning at all and he just makes his decision when needed so I became more likely that kind of type because I need to adjust myself for a new relationship and a new environment.

She reported that she had missed an opportunity to search early due to studies. Between spring and summer semesters, Junseo had 2 weeks to search for child care. She was due in July and required care before the fall semester but was immediately disappointed to find that the child care programs with the best reviews had a waiting list of 9 to 12 months or longer. She conducted her initial search via the Internet. She made lists of centers that had immediate openings. She received recommendations for the on-campus child care center and was told that it was clean, organized, and very educational. Recommendations came from other Koreans in the community. Junseo noted that Koreans value education and recommended the university center. However, she and her husband did not necessarily consider that educational pressure was a good thing, especially for babies and young children. She found only one center that had no waiting list and she visited it. The center did not have a high rating on the Internet but was near their apartment, on their way to classes; there was no waiting list for infant care. Junseo enrolled her son at age 8 weeks. She said that she likes that the staff are constant and that her son is familiar with current classmates. She was later called by the center of their first choice but is having difficulty in deciding whether to move him.

Junseo said that consistent caregiving was important because she had learned a great deal about developmental psychology by taking a course that informed her of its importance. She was most surprised by the long waiting lists but felt that this was mostly her fault for waiting too long to begin her search. She had thought that she would have more time. She learned about the policies of the center via the parent handbook, although some information was relayed via direct communication from the teachers. For

instance, she learned that the infant room had a “no blanket” policy when babies are in cribs. She had not had have high expectations when she began her search because of general information from others, mostly friends who had children in child care.

When the subject moved to the cultural population of children at his current center, Junseo reported that two other infants in his classroom were international, both from India. Her son is the only infant from Asia. While she noted that her son’s culture is respected at the center, she reported a couple of instances when she thought that cultural importance was possibly dismissed by her son’s teachers.

> Yes, for instance, all babies are in the same room where he is but we asked the staff to make him wear only shoes outside because we want him with bare feet or with socks inside. I know it is culture, but some don’t understand. It’s kind of a big difference. It is very important to take off shoes once you are inside, even in our home or at the center. We find that very important. Not only the culture but they need more development. If he’s 3 or 4 years old, we will make him wear shoes like the other kids. He needs to know the culture of American and he needs to follow rules here. I feel like some staff feels uncomfortable because there is more of a risk for kids, because they need to make their toes safe. But now in developmental perspective, we need to make them take off their shoes most of the time.

Junseo said that, prior to her son being enrolled in child care, she had some fears. She learned that the infants remained in swings for long periods of time. She remarked that she still does not understand this and that it continues to make her uncomfortable.

While she explained that she understands that they cannot hold her baby all day, she allows him to continue to be left in the swing for long periods of time. She was also nervous about the rocking chair, which she described as "American culture."

> I guess it is American culture, but there's a rocking chair in the infant room, in our current room, and I feel it's really dangerous because some babies are laid out like 8 weeks old but most of them are crawling but there was no accident like that but I just felt it was so dangerous.

She described a difference between American and Korean culture, noting her respect for American culture despite the differences.

> But I guess it's also American culture, and cultural difference but from our viewpoint, if your baby cries then your baby should be answered or soothed by mom and holding a baby is not a bad thing. I also respect American culture and I know how it's really busy in day care so we tried to hold him at a lot to give him more soothing and stable emotions.

Junseo described her feelings about Korean culture and noted that she has little choice in decisions about her son in child care, whether she is absent or present.

> Actually, most of the Korean moms, I don't know about the other cultures so I'm just talking about Korean moms but many Korean moms have really high expectations about day cares I believe, so they feel like all the corners should be really soft and not curved and should be protected by a sponge or something like that. But I let my baby just chew or suck toys there because I have no control of

that. But I felt the toys over there were kind of dirty because all the babies are chewing and sucking, but I have no control over that, right?

At this point, I explained how sanitation of toys can occur to avoid cross-contamination of germs among the infants at the center. I described the three-bucket system with which I was familiar. Each bucket is a different color. The first bucket is empty but the second and third buckets are filled with infant toys. While the infants are playing with toys, as they drop them and move on, the teacher picks up the toy and drops it into the empty bucket. As the first bucket is filled with toys that had been in the infants' mouths, the teacher places the toys from the second bucket on the floor or on the shelves. As the first bucket is filled, teachers fill the bucket with water and the cleaning solution and sanitize the toys and allow them to dry. During rest time, the teachers place the cloth toys in the washing machine and dryer and then return them to the classroom. Junseo thought that this was a great system. When I suggested that she mention this to her son's teacher, she smiled and shook her head no. Since she had not spoken up about previous concerns, I can only assume that she is hesitant to communicate anything perceived as negative to the teachers. Since her son is happy, and this is her priority, she is not likely to "make waves" with the child care center.

The food served at the child care center is also a concern. Junseo said that her husband believes that Korean food is most healthful for their son. At home, they feed him sushi, rice, vegetables and any non-white fish, such as salmon or trout.

I guess this is also a cultural difference but I was surprised that the day care would give "goldfish" snack, an adult food. It was interesting. [In Korea], food is

not all soft but less salt and not artificial things. And we give them a kind of bread. Most Korean moms bake here for their babies because they don't trust bakeries. I'm not that type. I did [give it] several times but when I saw the expiration dates, I'm kind of worried about the preservatives so I try to get some bread who expiration date is kind of shorter. That is a kind of indicator about their chemicals but my son's favorite is the Sam's Club croissant but it's still really high in sodium and sugar. But he's 1 year old and he's fine.

When I asked how many infants were in her son's classroom, she lowered her head as well as her voice. She seemed to be trying to talk herself into the situation being better than she had thought it was and felt that she had little control over his day. "Now there is a lot. In the previous room, there were two teachers and eight babies. It wasn't that bad. Now there are more. I know it's really busy and my baby was ignored but it wasn't that bad."

Junseo continued to answer questions with a withdrawn body language. She answered the next set of questions with less enthusiasm and greater hesitancy. When I inquired about her parents and their ability to visit, she looked down at the table and not directly at me, although she continued to answer the questions completely. She said that her parents were working and had visited once for about 6 days. She and her husband visited them in South Korea for about 2 weeks but she was not able to see much of them, as she spent the majority of the time with her husband's family. When asked about friends and a support system, Junseo responded that only she and her husband were one another's support system and they had learned how to balance school and work if there

is an emergency with their son. They have had to reschedule exams and meetings in order to care for their son and rotate responsibilities.

Her advice to international parents was to ask questions in person and not to be afraid to ask for information that they do not understand initially.

> Most international parents are not used to the vocabulary or terms or jargon used in day care and they are kind of, they are not, I'm just trying to find good words for that. I know that day care is not intimidating but the situation can be intimidating because the cultures are different.

One example was word usage for various items. She explained that nicknames can be confusing to parents. She cited terms such as "binky," "blankie," "stinky," "poopy," "smelly," and "fussy." When her son's teachers used these terms, she did not ask for an explanation but left the center feeling that she had missed information regarding her son. It frustrated her as she was gaining a deeper understanding of English.

> Even I didn't know what binky was. I mean, they were saying "binky, binky" but I knew *pacifier* but not binky, that kind of thing, also "fussy." We didn't know what fussy was. There was whiteboards and they would put fussy, but we didn't know what that was. We took an [English] jargon class but we really don't know the words in reality.

Junseo expressed her desire to remain in the United States for her son to be educated. She described feelings about the South Korean educational system compared to the American educational system and her preferences. She had a great deal to share, and her enthusiasm returned when she spoke of this.

I really want my baby to get an education here because I have been suffering from the language problem for a long time and the second thing is that, I'm not saying that American middle school or high school students are kind of lazy. I'm not talking like that but in Korea we are spending too much time only for study.

She also described what she had experienced with schooling in South Korea, explaining why she would like her son to be educated in the United States.

Staying at school from 7:30 in the morning until 11pm, it's not . . . . And I don't think it's necessary for people. I want my baby to learn how to balance his life. Like, there will be so many things like study, club activities, extracurricular activities and even house chores. For instance, I hadn't done dish washing until marriage because my mom raised us like that. She would say, "You need to study. You need to be successful." But I don't want my baby raised like that.

She has high aspirations for her son but said that her parenting style will not mirror that of her mother.

I hope my baby will do everything, of course, he will need my support but he will need to manage his life. And I believe American culture is more like that. For instance, my mom was like, "You need to be the top in your school, or you need to get 100" so I spent the entire of my time only for study but you have your choices. You can spend 10 hours of study and get an A+ and number 1 of your school or the option of spend 2 or 3 hours and get a B+ and then do other things. I prefer this way now. I mean, I want this way because that is why I want my

baby to be raised here now. The American system requires people to show that they are a very well-rounded person.

The questions regarding siblings brought up the issue of citizenship. Junseo discussed the challenge that her twin sister in South Korea is facing with two children who are having citizenship issues.

> We grew up in South Korea and even though [my sister] is a U.S. citizen, her son cannot have a U.S. citizenship because, according to the immigration law, her existence in the United States was too short to let her baby have U.S. citizenship. It has to be more than 5 years but they only take into account school days. So she did her Master's here but there were vacations and breaks so she couldn't make the minimum days to make her son have the U.S. citizenship. So she's mad about that because we are also thinking about the military in South Korea. It is mandatory for all young men to serve.

Schooling is also an issue for her sister in South Korea. She described the tier system in South Korea in which educational options for schools are based on English language acquisition and U.S. citizenship, which allows children to attend foreign schools where instruction is mostly in English.

> She placed her oldest child in a foreign school in South Korea because she wants her to be an English speaker but she cannot do that for her second child because he does not have a U.S. citizenship. And if he had chance, he would be third tier. Even her first child had a problem in getting into a really good foreign school because the child is growing up in a Korean-speaking family so she couldn't

> speak in English so she couldn't get into the top foreign schools in South Korea so she got into the second one. So that is the biggest concern of my sister now. The proficiency in English is a big merit that is a really big competitiveness for individuals.

Junseo identified benefits to raising children in South Korea, such as free child care by the government to encourage families to have more children. She explained that educational expenses are incurred later on in the formal schooling years. She was raised in an educational system in Korea in which parents who had children enrolled in school were charged high fees. She said that the best child care programs are those sponsored by large companies to encourage women to continue working and to work extended hours.

> The best day care in South Korea is by Samsung, but only for the employees of Samsung because they work super long hours. But the day care of Samsung is the best. My cousin was working in another company whose day care was nice but she forced herself to get a job with Samsung to put her baby in Samsung day care because it is the best, the staff and environment and everything. According to the Public Health and Welfare Department of South Korea, day care can be legally open from 7:30am until 7:30pm and for Saturdays, it is 7:30am until 3:30pm. Parents sometimes complain that this is too short, and the parent cannot work late.

Junseo readily pulled up her phone for additional information on child care in Korea to answer many of my questions. She expanded pictures of child care centers,

specifically those run by Samsung Electronics in Korea, so I could view the child care settings. She noted that the government encouraged technology and innovation, encouraging a healthy and strong work force. Unlike in the United States, most parent complaints in South Korea stem from child care center hours not being long enough, as parents have more support from their families and are able to work longer hours and even on weekends. Junseo prefers life in the United States, based on her experiences here of a better work-life balance.

At the end of our interview, she took a deep breath and sat back in her chair, breathing as though she had run a marathon.

Participant 10: Nnedimma, "The Direct One"

Nnedimma and I had a difficult time connecting to meet. By the time we thought we had it scheduled, she had moved to the closest metropolitan city and her new schedule prevented us from meeting. Therefore, I conducted this interview (the only one of the 10) via telephone. We settled on a day and time and I called her at her home office on a Saturday from my office. I could hear the chatter of a young child in the background.

Moving to the university community almost 7 years ago from Nigeria, Nnedimma was working on a doctoral program in economics at the University of New Mexico. A project with a group of professors from the local university had led her to move there continue her research. Her husband is currently pursuing a doctorate in chemical engineering in the community and commutes from the local university to the closest metropolitan city, approximately 90 minutes away.

Nnedimma completed her program, graduated, and moved recently for new employment. They plan to remain in the city, as both of their career fields can be found in the area. Their daughter is currently 20 months old and has been attending child care since she was 3 months old. Although their home language is Yoruba, they speak only English at home and to their daughter.

They moved to the community when Nnedimma was just 4 months pregnant. She remarked that she had no idea that she was supposed to be searching for child care so early. She began her search just before she was due to deliver and found that all of the centers that she had located had no available spaces. She began her search by locating child care centers on the TDFPS website. She collected a list of about 30 centers and then read reviews of the centers. She excluded many of them, resulting in a final count of 12. She visited all of them, excluded four, and found that seven had no space for her baby. The last center on the list had space for her daughter, so she enrolled her there. She said that she has no idea what she would have done if the center had had no space, as she and her husband were expected to return to work and to their studies only 3 months after her daughter was born.

Nnedimma said that her greatest surprise came when she called centers that told her that their infant slots were reserved for babies with older siblings currently enrolled. This puzzled her because there was a space reserved, but the babies were not yet born, while she need space immediately. Most of the centers quoted a wait list of 6 to 12 months for infants—time that she did not have. She was disappointed to find that schools with websites looked nice online but on visits were not as clean as she had been led to

believe online. I explained reasons for the sibling policy and informed her that it was a courtesy for families with more than one child since it was easier for them to take children to the same center than to travel to different locations for child care. She understood but felt that this was unfair and placed her and her family at a disadvantage.

Nnedimma described a troubling situation at one particular child care center where her daughter was enrolled for a month. The was closed by the government for multiple violations, with no notice to the parents. They refused to return her deposit, as she had paid in advance for the month and her daughter had attended only 1 week of that month. She was left with only 4 days to find space for her child. She had had initial concerns about this center.

> So, like on the first day she started at that school that was shut down, I went back to check on her maybe like six times a day and every time I went to check on her and pick her up, I didn't like the way I would see her, like she would be just in one corner crying and there wouldn't be anyone attending to her. That's why I was so upset but I couldn't take her away because I didn't have any other choices.

This is when she found her current center prior to her move. She reported that her infant daughter and her family are accepted by the center, which has a multicultural theme and is a dual language program, with English and Spanish spoken to the children. She visited this new center to ensure that her daughter was well taken care of. She described the teachers as very nice and she was happy with all that she observed.

Nnedimma said that her advice to new parents, especially international ones, is to search at least a year prior to needing care. She warned parents not to be accepting of everything that they see and not to choose a center based only on cost. She initially thought that child care was very expensive and then found that quality was tied to tuition costs: the higher the tuition fees, generally the higher the quality of the program. The most expensive schools had higher quality and the schools that charged the lowest tuition had the lowest quality.

In terms of future plans, they would like to have at least two more children. In a new city, Nnedimma recently had to find child care again in a new city. She repeated the process and research that she initially had done and located a popular franchised child care chain to care for her daughter. She used a popular child care locator service and received a discount on care for using their services. She said that the school has high quality and remarked that the high price of tuition was well worth it. She listed her top three priorities for child care for her daughter.

> Number 1, the day care must be very clean. I am a stickler for something being very clean. So if I see a day care and I see that there is a very dirty place like off to the side or maybe the walls, I am not going to go there. So, Number 1, it must be clean. Number 2, like any time my child comes to class, she must feel a sense of a welcoming feeling. Like, there was a school I went to check. I came into the class with my baby and the teacher was so busy to even say hi to me. I was like, "No, I don't want this." I want to have the feeling that my baby is getting the best attention. Then I think number three, rules and regulations. They must actually

> follow their own rules and regulations. Like if you tell me that this teacher should be here from 8 until 2, I should not come in and see someone else taking care of my baby. I would like to know all of the teachers who are taking care of my baby when I am at work or in school. I don't want to come in and see strange faces in the room at all. I don't like that at all. But like I said it must be extremely clean, too.

Nnedimma said that she has moved to a larger city and now has a large group of Nigerian friends who are like extended family. They provide support when her husband is not with her and her daughter during the week due to his studies and research. He comes home only on weekends or during extended breaks at the university. She relies on friends in emergencies, some of whom live about 5 minutes away. Because she lived out of town, her participation gift card was mailed to her.

Overview of the Findings

This chapter has reported the experiences of parents in the study through their eyes. The actual words of participants described those experiences and provided a rich representation of their ideas. Their stories were told through data from interviews, observations, and notes. The purpose of this study was to describe the child care search experiences, obstacles, if any, that parents encountered, and how they eventually found the best child care placement for their child, if this occurred. This study also determined whether the families in this geographic location felt welcomed and accepted and how they were introduced to the structure, standards, regulations, customs, and traditions inherent in the American child care system. Three research questions guided this study.

The remainder of this chapter addresses these questions individually. The data included 10 participant interviews and observations that produced 1,079 units and 92 pages of transcripts. All data units were sorted into categories and subcategories. A detailed analysis that connects these answers provides new insights and understanding, discussed later in the chapter.

Themes and Subthemes

Upon analysis of the data and input by the peer debriefer, themes and emerging patterns were identified by the researcher. Using constant comparative analysis, the findings were captured in five themes: (a) the search process, (b) policies, (c) culture, (d) positive center characteristics, and (e) negative center characteristics. Five themes and 20 subthemes identified in participant contributions are summarized in Table 3.

Theme 1: Search Process

According to the findings, the participants related experiences with (a) the resources that were available, (b) the timeliness of their search, and (c) enrollment procedures. The participants described the search process as "a big problem," "disappointing," and "challenging."

Available resources. All but one family stated that there was a lack of resources available to families during their search, especially for families who began their search prior to arrival in the United States. Every family reported using the Internet to begin their search, either in their home countries or in the United States. The online searches were for specific school information such as location, telephone number, and possible website. Only two mothers, Advika and Nnedimma, used an additional online resource,

Table 3

Themes and Subthemes Identified in the Data

	Theme	Subthemes
1	Search process	Available resources Timeliness Enrollment procedures
2	Policies	Follow policies Learned regulations Comparisons to home countries
3	Culture	Routine care Meal and feeding accommodations Bathroom practices and training Language
4	Positive center characteristics	Cleanliness Proximity to home Safety and security Adequate supervision Academics
5	Negative center characteristics	Expensive Extensive wait times Transportation Insufficient information

the Department of Family and Protective Services website, for specific information on schools, including number of children the school cared for and citations for violations.

> Somebody in the Mom's group showed me the Texas Child Protective Services website which lists the directory. You can look at what they have done and at least get an idea if they cater to infants, what age children and all that information and you can get a comprehensive list, so I looked at that. That was

my big source of information for starting. They at least gave me a list of schools that I would at least go and talk to. (Advika)

Based on my experience as an early childhood administrator in this community, it is not uncommon for the administrator to receive numerous inquiries via email asking for information about child care from international families in other countries. For this reason, it is advisable for child care center websites to list all of the information that a family would need to know, such as hours, monthly menu, tuition costs for all age groups, and even individual photos of the staff. Placing this information online saves time to focus on other tasks, since as many as 30 emails are received each day during the peak enrollment season at the university child care center.

Parents reported fear, anxiety, and stress during their search for child care. Most were first-time parents. They were unsure about parenting skills and felt the pressure of being a new parent, making important decisions for their new baby and possibly feeling judged by their parents and others who provided advice with which they might or might not agree. Pairing this with having to trust strangers with their child and being unfamiliar with the new system of caregiving led to very understandable emotions.

As a mother of five, I could identify with these parents. I recall the fear about leaving my first son as an infant with a caregiver whom others had assured me could be trusted. I was also saddened that I was unable to care for him myself because I had to return to work. I recall being extremely tired at the end of the day when picking him up but excited to see him. I had missed him during the day and was jealous that the teachers had been with him all day. I never felt that there were enough hours in the evening to

spend time with him after traveling home, feeding him dinner, giving him a bath, and reading him a story. At the most, we shared 3 hours in the evenings. I looked forward to weekends and now look back on that time as going by too fast. He is now grown, with an infant daughter of his own.

All of the families had received recommendations from friends, colleagues, and neighbors and utilized those recommendations in some form or another, either by adding them to their list of schools of interest, visiting, or eventually enrolling their children in the schools. Chen learned quickly that all recommendations are not best for your individual child.

> There's one preschool not far from my department that was recommended by another international family not from China. She said that it's very cheap so I went there but the classroom was very small and there were not a lot of materials for the children. Also, I communicated with other parents, especially some Chinese parents if I had some questions or concerns. (Chen)

Another mother spoke of the importance of recommendations from other parents whose children had not had good experiences.

> Especially when we first came here, sometimes the website doesn't explain everything. We hear from some persons we asked about how the kids were not treated well at some schools so that was disappointing. And I'm sorry to say this, but we also saw some horrible things when we decided to visit, like the environment was dirty. For the school that we chose, when we asked anyone who went to the center, they said it was perfect. (Shaymaa)

I have often been asked by parents touring our center to recommend other child care options in the community when they learned that our center had a long waiting list. This became a challenge. I was always hesitant to provide a recommendation, as not every center would be a good fit for every family. I never wanted to be responsible if things did not work out for the family. As a matter of policy, and to avoid any issues, we always referred them to the state child care resource website with a list of child care centers available to them. However, I recommended that they read the listed violations on the website so that they could be informed on what state investigators had found during annual unannounced inspections. This remained challenging as many families considered the university program to be knowledgeable and consistently requested recommendations. This was reasonable, since the list of options can be overwhelming for families whose goal is to find the very best center for their child. On the rare occasion that a family is having difficulty in locating care, especially for infants, I have made calls to local center directors with whom I had a relationship to inquire on the family's behalf.

Deeksha used various methods to locate possible choices. These included a church group from her home country, the Internet, and friends in the community.

> I saw this handbook for a listing of several day cares. I didn't see that in my first search. We also searched in our local community, like our community Malayalam group since it's a church but they didn't have any recommendations. I also looked on the website for the parks and recreation. I also looked for information from new families that had moved in. I asked Google but like with

> all Internet base searches some of them could be a lot fabricated because even in one of the Google reviews for the school we chose, they had mentioned really negative feedback so I guess you have to be careful and maybe cautious but not overlook them so that's why I mentioned friends and family. Some of them have had negative experiences but I guess it's just being a parent makes you be a lot more cautious and some of them might not be even the day care's fault. Things just happen. (Deeksha)

Timeliness. All but two families recounted surprise at the long waiting lists encountered during the search. Most had no idea that they should have begun their search prior to, or soon after, the child's birth. Since the majority had infants, most responded that this was the longest waiting list at all of the schools in which they were interested. Schools that did not have a waiting list for infants raised their suspicions, as this was not normal. Visits to those centers confirmed their suspicions, as they found the quality of the schools to be lower than their standards. Mia explained what she witnessed during one tour of a center that had an immediate opening.

> The cleanliness, it seemed like, I don't know. I know there are regulations on how many children are in a classroom but it seemed like some [classrooms] might have been more than others. It looked crowded and cluttered and dark. And it didn't seem clean and we wanted better for her, so we passed on this school. (Mia)

Most reported having to place their names on several waiting lists in anticipation of a space for their child. Their wait times averaged 3 months, with most excluding

centers that had wait lists of more than a year, even when these schools were their first choices. They chose alternate programs in the meantime and all but two families remained at the first center that admitted their child.

As an educator and administrator and knowing the schools that some of the families chose, I was saddened about the quality and reputation of those schools in the community. The parents were forced to use programs that were not their first choices, based on availability and low tuition. Due to the great demand and long waiting lists for the most popular programs, none of the participants had placed their children in a program that they had initially considered to be best for their family. Still, most reported that their children were happy in their current programs and many remained at those centers. It would be informative to follow up with these families to discover know whether they remained in those programs once their children were older and whether they had any regrets about doing so.

Enrollment procedures. All of the families reported that they had visited many centers prior to enrolling their children in local programs. They learned about each program's uniqueness, observed classroom environments, met the director and teachers, and decided on a program for their child. Their decisions on enrollment were based mainly on availability, as most were forced to return to work or their studies and a quick choice was essential. All of the mothers discussed their initial apprehension and worry about their child's adjustment and rated this time as one of the most difficult for them. Bishaka described the challenge of her daughter's adjustment.

> My daughter cried for the first 2 months straight. She would grab my leg and wouldn't let me go. I remember right after Christmas break when I left her she had been crying. I went to pick her up at 4 o'clock. I was a bit late and the day care said that she had been crying from 12 o'clock until 4 all the way through. So that break was really bad for us but she took a very long time, I would say like 3e months. (Bishaka)

Early childhood educators can ease the transition from home to child care by being sensitive to the needs of the parents, communicating with them often during the adjustment period, and keeping them informed of the child's adjustment (Gonzalez-Mena, 2008). I routinely urge teaching staff to gauge how a parent is dealing with the adjustment period. If a parent leaves upset or shows signs of emotional stress when leaving their child, the teacher is advised to call, email, or text the parent soon after drop off to inform the parent about when the child stopped crying. Just as Bishakha explained above, many parents often leave for work and wonder whether their children continue to be upset. In reality, most children calm soon after parents leave. Sending a picture via email or text of the child being happy, eating breakfast, playing with friends and adjusting allows the parent to continue the day with the assurance that the child is fine.

Theme 2: Policies

The second major theme that emerged was the participants' experiences in learning about policies of the center and regulations mandated by the state, including (a) regulations, (b) center policies, and (c) comparisons of U.S. center policies to those in the participant's home country. In recalling child care in their home countries,

differences in policies were highlighted as a major factor in choosing an appropriate center and understanding how regulations were explained to them.

Regulations. The participants described receiving information on specific state regulations that the center had to follow. Sometimes these were verbal, such as in explaining classroom ratios, or pointed out when an incident occurred that required further explanation by staff. The participants' experiences varied in who relayed the regulation information and how it was relayed. For instance, Advika was already well versed in the regulations, having researched child care for 2 full years prior to expecting her first child, while Junseo conducted research on standards on the Internet but found the terminology confusing and required further clarification from the staff.

> Everything was available through the Internet. Well, here's the thing. It was there but we needed to get more information in person like labeling. In day care, there are strict state rules for labeling and we got that kind of information in person. There was information about a "no blanket" policy in the infant room, so they had to explain that to us. (Junseo)

In Texas, minimum standard regulations for child care centers can be found online on the TDFPS website. However, these regulations require 222 pages of detail, such as frequency of hand washing, instructions on sanitizing surfaces and equipment, procedures for handling incidents, classroom schedules, indoor and outdoor activities, and so forth. After more than 20 years an administrator who has worked with these regulations, some of these regulations can still be unclear to me. It is no wonder that this is confusing for parents, who may be new not only to parenting to child care regulations.

Center policies. Policies adopted by centers can vary greatly. The center policies explain the structure and operations of the center. All of the participants acknowledged receipt of a handbook, either on paper or online. The majority reported that the center director reviewed the policies with them or directed them to the online handbook and was available to answer questions. Nnedimma was frustrated when she discovered that one center did not follow their written policies, which she felt was very important.

> Then I think, rules and regulations. They must actually follow their own rules and regulations. If it is their policy that certain teachers remain in the classroom with the infants and if you tell me that this teacher should be there from 8 until 2, then I should not come in and see someone else taking care of my baby. I would like to get to know all of the teachers who are taking care of my baby when I am at work or in school. I don't want to come in and see strange faces in the room at all. I don't like that at all. (Nnedimma)

It would be wise for child care programs to update their parent handbook routinely to ensure that they remain consistent with policies, which may have changed. This practice should be done annually at a minimum, especially during the summer prior to distribution of the policies to new families each fall. Policies should also be revisited when a change will be made by (a) informing families in writing of the proposed change(s) electronically and in paper form, (b) scheduling a meeting to discuss the proposed change(s) and inviting parent feedback, and (c) announcing the final change(s) by placing them formally in the handbook. Administrators should make available a new copy of the edited handbook, or at the very least the new policy in the handbook.

Comparison to policies in the participants' home country. Several parents explained how child care differs in their home countries from that in the United States. The majority, except for Mia, explained that the regulations in their countries differed greatly from those in the United States. It is understandable that Italy's early educational system is similar to that in the United States. Two notable programs renowned in Italy—Montessori and Reggio Emilio—made their way to the states decades ago.

Many participants expressed appreciation about policies that reflected attention to detail related to the care of young children. Deeksha spoke of how the policies were important to her in terms of protecting her baby.

> I guess the one thing that I appreciate about the day care center is I don't think the system in India is all that much developed per se because here everything has a protocol. For example, you need to give a permission slip for everything that you need them to do. So the baby had a small rash or dryness and the doctor asked us to put some over-the-counter lotion or moisturizer on him. I took it to the day care thinking that since it's not a drug but they said no and I had to get it signed by the doctor. At least I know that they won't giving him anything without me knowing or giving my permission. (Deeksha)

Texas child care standards mandate that all centers have a policy for administering or applying any medication, ointment, lotion, sunscreen, or insect repellent. Parents who would like these given to or applied on their child must produce a physician's statement authorizing such, including the child's name, the name of the medication, the dosage, and the time period to be used (TDFPS, 2017).

Theme 3: Culture

The third, and most significant, theme dealt with the role of culture in experiences of searching and ultimately finding child care. These included how culture affected (a) the routine care of children, (b) meal and feeding accommodations, (c) bathroom practices and training, (d) language, and (e) academics. These families from around the world brought unique cultural experiences with them. Many spoke about what is important in their cultures but also stated that they wanted their child(ren) to be accepted in the American culture and in the child care environment.

Routine care of children. The majority of participants mentioned the importance of the care that their child received while at the center. Caregiving in their home countries is generally familial and intimate. Parents often trust caregivers to help to shape the child, which can ease the anxiety and stress of parents (Gonzalez-Mena, 2011). Participants mentioned their immediate observation of, and reaction to, staff friendliness, the care of their child and other children in the classroom, the ability to soothe, and how well staff communicated with parents. Chen cited the friendliness of the teachers twice in her interview, indicating that this was very important. “They need to like their teacher, like the other kids, like the classroom. At one preschool, the teachers did not look so friendly” (Chen).

Meal and feeding accommodations. The majority of participants cited meals served at the center as a very important component of a good program, particularly as they related to cultural preferences. Some mentioned the importance of adherence to diet and religious preferences, including *halal foods*, no pork and wholesome, nutritious

selections. They cited differences in their diet at home, where they receive foods from their culture, and at school, where American foods are served. This was questionable for Junseo, who had a great deal to say about the differences in foods fed to babies in South Korea and those that are acceptable in the United States.

> I guess this is also a cultural difference but I was surprised that the day care would give Goldfish snacks to the babies, which is an adult food. I thought that was interesting. In Korea we serve not soft foods but foods with less salt and artificial things. And we also give them bread. Most of the Korean moms I know here bake their own bread for this reason. I gave my baby bread from the grocery store but when I saw the expiration dates, I'm now kind of worried about the preservatives so I try to choose bread with shorter expiration dates. That is an indicator about the chemicals in the food. My son's favorite is the croissant from Sam's Club [laughs] but it's still high in sodium and sugar. My husband believes that Korean food is the healthiest. We feed him sushi rice and at least five different kinds of vegetables and they need meat for iron, but my baby doesn't like to eat meat. No pork but chicken and he likes salmon or trout or any non-white fish. The food is surprising to see the kind of food the day care gives my son. (Junseo)

Bishakha discussed the meals as challenging in her search due to their strict adherence to diet at home. She said that she makes allowances for the children in day care but still maintains their traditional way of eating at home.

> There was one thing that was a problem for us. It's still a problem, it's like we choose our food a little bit. Like we are Muslims and we try eating *halal* food which is not available in the day care. We don't eat pork at all. So when I put them in the day care I knew that there was no option [for *halal* foods] so we got lenient with that so we asked the day care not to give them any pork, so luckily the day care doesn't give them pork. But as for chicken and the beef and the turkey, I allow them to have that at school but it's still something I myself do not practice in the home but I allow the children to do that. At home, our chicken, beef and turkey are processed in a way that is *halal*. (Bishakha)

Bishakha expressed about how her children were cared for in Bangladesh. She was not sure that they would receive similar treatment at their new center, since they were used to having servants care for them, spoon feeding them and ensuring that they ate well.

> One thing was that at home my kids were spoon fed actually because we had a maid. The school said that once he's sitting with other kids he will learn to eat it himself, which I agreed with and which his father agreed with. So we kind of let them go. I would feed them at home like give them breakfast and then send them and they had an 11:30 lunch. I used to talk to the teachers about what he was eating and they would complain that he was very picky about the food and he would pinch it and he wouldn't eat so when I brought them back at around 2:30, I would feed them again. That was my concern, like whether they're being fed or not. (Bishakha)

In the United States, babies are encouraged to feed themselves as soon as they can pick up food. This is discouraged in many countries where food is revered and taken seriously, especially where food insecurity and health issues are a daily reality and where caregiving is considered an interdependent skill in which caregivers provide a great deal of support. Culturally, some parents may disagree with the concept of "playing" with food or food items, such as using it as part of art projects or activities in the classroom (e.g., painting with pudding, beans, and rice at the sensory table, sorting types of noodles). Gonzalez-Mena (2001) explained that major differences in American values may clash with values in other cultures, particularly the concept of independence. In many cultures, interdependence is valued over independence. Cultures such as Japan and many other Asian cultures practice feeding assistance of young children, sometimes even into the elementary years.

Aisha, from India, had a different perspective related to foods served at the child care center and foods served at home.

> [Many families] try to choose what type of food they want to give for their kids. We are very liberal. We are not worried. We are vegetarians but we asked to give anything to him. All kinds of meat and he eats everything. We don't make any meat at home. He can choose later on if he doesn't want to eat it. He can choose. But not many parents are like that from India. Most of them try to choose day cares that will cook something separately. (Aisha)

This is one example in which generalizing among families from the same cultural, ethnic, racial, or religious background can prove problematic. In my experience

working with many families, I have learned that no two families are alike, even accounting for the same country, same religion, similar beliefs, and similar family make-up. In the case of Aisha, who is Hindi and eliminates all meat from her and her husband's diet, they allow their young son to consume meat and meat products and believe that their child should one day choose for himself. Advika, also from India, characterizes herself and her family as nonreligious. The family eats the typical American diet. While there are many similarities between the families, it is unfair to generalize about families from the same country or culture.

Bathroom practices and training. The mothers spoke about differences in bathroom training in their home countries and the United States. Chen discussed differences in China and increased parent involvement in toilet training children in this country that is not evident in China.

> I was impressed by the training, the potty training. I think American teachers are quite skilled at that. In Shanghai, normally, for very young kids, parents will do that at home and also in China every classroom has lots of spots for kids to pee or poop. It's much more dependent on kids' individual needs here. So I appreciate that. The teachers change diapers at certain times, they keep a record. This does not happen in China. It's very laborious for the teachers so it's a positive side for me. In China, my parents started my son very young, after several months old and when they are older the type of clothing we use is different. The pants are open in the front. (Chen)

Bishakha was also concerned about how her children would fare in child care, as they were used to having help at home from servants. “Especially, I was worried because they were potty trained but they needed help cleaning themselves. So those were the things that I was worried about.”

Just as assistance with feeding may occur later in certain cultures, assistance in the bathroom also occurs later, leading to concerns for many parents. Three parents expressed this as a concern. Perhaps others would have expressed this concern as well; however, because their children were infants and not at the toilet training stage, this is appropriate based on the variety of ages of the children represented in the study.

Language. Several participants spoke about the impact of language in their experiences with the search for child care. This ranged from anxiety over language acquisition by the child to debating which language was best to speak in the home. All of the mothers described their children as learning a language other than English prior to enrollment in child care. Shaymaa described how surprised she was to see how quickly her children acquired English.

> For my oldest one, I even didn’t imagine they would learn English. When they came here they do not know any word [in English] then after 3, 4 months they start to learn to communicate. Even the teachers, they know the situation for each child, so they treat him in a way so that he is not scared. We have a friend from Iraq who is studying English and he’s has studied for almost a year and it is still not good. He saw the kids at a picnic talking with each other in English and he asked how did they learn this and I told him that they go to day care and he wants

to go now [laughs]. They don't know how to write in our language, only speaking. The oldest one is good in both languages but the youngest one, he came here when he was a year so when we go back to my country he did not understand the words in Arabic. He would say, "You mean this?" When my grandparents talked to him they said things he did not understand so I had to repeat it in English for him to understand. (Shaymaa)

Deeksha was curious about what language was best to use in their home, English or their native language. She and her husband had struggled over what would be best for their infant son and had been debating this for some time. After our discussion, she was relieved to learn that she need not worry.

So you don't think it would be too confusing for the child to have two languages spoken? Because this is constantly been the argument with my husband. My husband knows only how to speak our mother tongue. He doesn't know how to read or write. I was nervous about that, about what is best. Should we only speak English or our mother tongue. Now I feel good to know that he does not need us to speak English. I like that. (Deeksha)

Bishakha was concerned about her children's acquisition of English, especially her daughter, who was young and was not learning it quickly.

But I was really worried about how my child was going to communicate with other people because they didn't know English much. I thought they would pick it up quicker because everybody said it takes only 1 month. My son was understanding everything by like 3 weeks' time but my daughter took a very long

time. Initially, she wouldn't cooperate. She wouldn't play with the other kids or she would cry a lot. But recently, like 7, 8 months into it, she kind of picked up the language. She started understanding so now she enjoys going there. (Bishakha)

Nine of the 10 families spoke their home language, in some form or another, with their children in the home. This ranged from speaking only their home language to speaking a combination of English and their home language. This was a common thread among the families. Several families were concerned about the level of acquisition of their child(ren) and how this affected adjustment at the child care center. I have always encouraged families to continue to communicate in their home language and to speak as little English in the home as possible in order to preserve their home language for as long as possible. This advice has always been welcomed by parents, who struggle with the correct choice for their child. Research shows that young children begin to lose their native language skills by the middle of their elementary school years and rarely learn how to read or write in their home language (Gonzalez-Mena, 2008).

Academics. Several mothers spoke about the high standards and expectations that some international parents may place on education once they arrive in the United States due to the emphasis on education in their home countries. This subtheme arose under the major themes of culture and positive center characteristics. Several parents spoke of the importance of their children continuing their education; however, both Junseo and Shaymaa spoke of academics as related to their cultures. Junseo compared the higher educational levels of students in South Korea compared to the United States.

Shaymaa spoke of the limited educational opportunities for children in Iraq due to recent insurgencies.

Theme 4: Positive Center Characteristics

The majority of the participants described positive characteristics that led them to choose centers for their children: (a) cleanliness, (b) proximity to home, (c) safety and security, (d) adequate supervision, and (e) academics.

Cleanliness. All 10 participants listed a clean center as one of their top requests when searching for child care. Center contenders were not chosen due to a lack of cleanliness more than for any other reason. Nnedimma was adamant that cleanliness was her priority in her search.

> Number 1, the day care must be very clean. I am a stickler for something being very clean. So if I see a day care and I see that there is a very dirty place like off to the side or maybe the walls, I am not going to go there. So, Number 1, it must be clean. (Nnedimma)

Child care centers that have older, outdated facilities that they have not maintained are challenged by the new centers, mostly franchises, opening in communities with large population growth. In the study community, three new franchised centers entered the community within a 5-year period, providing additional child care slots for infants. Unfortunately for many families, these centers charge weekly tuition fees that are higher than their competitors and many families are not able to afford their services. As Advika pointed out in her observations after she had placed her infant daughter in a new, local child care center, the only families that could afford their

offerings were privileged families, which caused the center racial makeup to resemble a mostly homogenous group of White, conservative, Christian families. The diversity that many families sought was not seen in these centers.

Proximity to home. One important component in the search was proximity of the center to their home. Participants began their search by choosing centers that were closest to home and then extending to other areas on the way to work or school. Asked why she chose the center that her son currently attends, Junseo responded,

> There was a short waiting list and it was near our home. Because the other day care centers was kind of really far from our home and we didn't want to make that long kind of trip to put our kid there and pick him up. (Junseo)

Bishakha also stated that close proximity to her home was important during her search. "I really wanted them to go to [one school] because it was near my house. But they couldn't get in but when I started looking at other day cares, it was very difficult."

Mia listed closeness to home her top choices for a center during her search as well. "At the minimum, that it would be close to the house, not that we had to travel too much between day care and work because we both work together."

The university child care center is located in a part of the campus community directly across the street from the graduate student housing that traditionally and historically has housed families with young children. Many families found the location ideal, as it was also directly on the campus transportation route, which was convenient for new international families who had arrived and had yet to secure their own transportation. The strategic location of child care centers meets the needs of families

who seek places that are either close to home or close to work, allowing for easier travel times.

Safety and security. Participants commented that they felt that the center that they chose should be safe for their child. Mia expressed fear of having something happen to her child and she felt that cameras at a child care facility were a good indicator of a safe center. “Look for a clean place and safe, like all the cameras and fingerprinting, even to get in with security, all that kind of stuff. That’s another worry, too, that someone comes in there and takes your child.”

Shaymaa also discussed video monitoring, noting that it was not a feature at other centers. She felt that it was a positive advantage over other centers.

> I searched specific day cares and I hear that there’s like the camera and those kind of things. I couldn’t find this in other centers. As I searched no one said that they had this kind of thing in their reviews I read online, so this made me really like to [choose this center]. (Shaymaa)

In my experience, technology permits many common conveniences that many parents appreciate. Security entrances and exits, video monitoring, emergency communication features such as text messaging, and online assessment programs allow teachers to observe children’s developmental milestones easily. Centers that fail to invest in these technologies may be missing out on the ability to compete with programs that take advantage of these features. Especially with video monitoring, the utilization methods are endless. Not only can administrators view developmentally appropriate

practices in the classroom; they can share footage with parents if there are concerns or with teachers as a professional development resource.

Adequate supervision. Participants discussed the importance of their children being cared for by adequate caregivers who provided a safe environment. Mia was disappointed when visiting one center prior to finding a suitable placement for her infant daughter. “I know there are regulations on how many children are in a classroom but it seemed like some might have been more than others.”

Nnedimma was concerned when the caregivers who were present at drop off were not present at pick up. Her main concern was that she had not even been introduced to the caregivers, which made her uneasy.

Adult-to-child ratios are mandated in the standards; however, these are only minimum recommendations and centers are free to take their classrooms to the maximum number of children allowable. This may translate into one caregiver with 18 4-year-olds in a classroom with the minimum square footage allowable. Parents who are concerned about the number of children in a classroom should learn how many children are allowed in each classroom per age and what the allowable number of caregivers should be in the room to supervise children. In my experience, an increase in the number of adults in the room leads to reduction in the number of accidents and allows for more individualized attention for the children.

Academics. This was the second time that academics was mentioned: regarding culture and as an indicator of a good child care center. Parents of children older than 2 years indicated that academics were extremely important to their child’s development

based on what they value as a family. Parents with infants did not indicate that academics were important; if their children were older, this would have ranked higher on their list of positive characteristics.

Theme 5: Negative Center Characteristics

The participants identified deterrents to choosing child care centers for their children: (a) expensive options, (b) extensive wait times, (c) transportation issues, and (d) insufficient center information.

Expensive child care options. Eight of the 10 participants searched for child care prior to the birth of their child. All were surprised by the high cost of child care.

> I think the prices was the most disappointing for us. Since we came from not even the highest or most expensive high school [in Ecuador], there is not even near the average child care here. Just to give you an example, we were planning on spending $300 for fees back in Ecuador for one of the best schools there. So that for us is really expensive. (Emilio)

When Nnedimma was asked what surprised her the most during her search but was eventually worth it, she replied,

> At the beginning, when I heard the price for a week, I was like, "Really? Seriously?" But then after talking to some more people, I realized that it was the norm, which I didn't know. So, like I didn't find out about anything before we had our baby. Even though I was surprised by the cost, back in Nigeria, I don't know the costs for day care but I know that for the schools my parents always chose the best of the best, which was expensive. So I was surprised but I think if

> you want something really good, you have to be willing to pay for it. So that is why I put her on the waiting list, like even though it is $100 more per week, I really don't mind. (Nnedimma)

Child care costs have risen steadily for years and now constitute one of the largest costs for new parents. International parents who described subsidized government care in their home countries, were shocked to discover the cost of child care in the United States, where only parents below a certain income would be eligible for subsidized child care, while governments in many other countries provide free child care.

As a mother with four young children, I concluded after my second child was born that it would be more cost effective to remain at home with my children than to pay for child care for two small children. At the time, I was also pregnant with my third child and realized that child care for three children would cost more than the mortgage on my home. Parents in this study realized during their search that child care tuition was often indicative of the quality of care. Lower-priced tuition was charged at centers with many lower-quality.

Extensive wait times. Searching for child care close to the time when it was needed was cited by the participants as the most frustrating part of their search experience. All of the centers at the top of their lists had long waiting lists, especially for infants and for siblings being placed together. When asked about her greatest frustration during her search, Junseo exclaimed, "Long waiting lists! Well, it's my fault because I didn't know the waiting lists were so long like that."

Long waiting lists made Advika nervous, even though she had searched in advance of expecting her first child.

> I knew from the get-go that it was going to be hard to find a good child care center and then to get into one, I had to wait at least, you know, a few months or a year at least to get into a good one. So that kind of made me nervous. (Advika)

When asked what advice they would give to new parents searching for child care, every participant stated that parents should search early.

When I worked as an administrator for two popular child care programs, one had a waiting list of more than 50 infants and the university child care center had more than 300 children on the waiting list. It was devastating to explain to new parents that they would have to wait for up to a year for their child to be enrolled in the program due to the sheer demand for quality child care in the community. In many cases, parents with no other choice located care elsewhere and continued to wait for a space. Unfortunately, the wait could extend significantly if the child was an infant, since the center reserved only 17% of its places for infants. Also, parents who already had one child enrolled in the program received a sibling preference, which greatly reduced the likelihood a child from a new family would gain one of those coveted spaces.

Transportation issues. While searching for a school in close proximity, those participants who relied on the university transit system cited transportation as a major issue in locating child care programs that would allow them to pick up and drop off their child with ease. Relying on the bus system was inconvenient and the routes were not always convenient to child care programs.

Bishakha arrived without a car for a few months, which limited her choices of centers.

> We had few options in hand when I got here and we didn't confirm any schools because we wanted to and have a look at the day cares itself. So we soon after got a car at the end of September and we started looking for day cares. (Bishakha)

The community has the university bus transit system as well as a city bus transit system. University routes are limited in the area south of town. Cabs and car sharing programs such as Uber and Zipcars are available for a fee. Securing child care in proximity to home was a priority for all of the participants in this study.

Insufficient center information. Participants shared their experiences in the search process for child care. All of them used the Internet to learn about centers, including location, hours of operation, and contact information. All of the participants noted a challenge in locating information online, as many child care centers do not have websites or their websites do not have complete information.

Both Shaymaa and Bishakha searched for child care soon after they were accepted as graduate students. Both used the Internet extensively since they were not able to visit or search in person. Both complained about the lack of information online. Shaymaa explained, "It was before we come here. On the Internet. We searched a lot. Through the application and everything even before we came here." Bishakha had a similar experience.

> We checked the ratings on the Internet. And I know some families say that. Most parents search before they come here. They said that there are a lot of child care centers that don't have websites. That you can't find anything except their name. There's no website link. Like there's a picture or Google map but nothing inside. And then also if you do find reviews, we did check a few and they were generally negative reviews like "the caregiver was talking on the cell phone while my son was crying" and stuff like that so those things like really, it was a very worrying phase. Like I didn't know what I was getting. (Bishakha)

The importance of an online presence for a business is obvious. Exposure and advertising allow interested customers and clients to find information that will help them to make informed decisions about utilizing the services of the business. For families who are searching while overseas, it can be frustrating to discover a lack of online information. Parents in this study described their feelings about not being able to learn pertinent information to make arrangements prior to their travel to the United States. With more than 60 programs in this community, it can be expensive and time consuming to locate the telephone number of each center and call for information from overseas. At the very least, being able to exclude centers based on tuition costs can help to narrow the search and alleviate the stress associated with securing child care in a new community.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of international parents seeking child care for their child(ren). This included obstacles, if any, that were encountered and how the families eventually found the best placement for their child, if

this occurred. This study was also designed to determine whether the families in this geographic location felt welcomed and accepted and how they were introduced to the unique structure, standards, regulations, customs, and traditions inherent in the American child care system in this region of the country.

There were 10 participants in this study: Chen, Advika, Shaymaa and her husband Mohammed, Deeksha, Bishaka, Aisha and her husband Pradeep, Emilio and his wife Alejandra, Mia and her husband Charles, Junseo, and Nnedimma. The participant ages at the time of the study ranged from the late 20s to mid-40s. The chapter began with a summary of participant interviews, including a thick description of each. Each participant shared experiences in researching and ultimately selecting a child care program. From the analysis of the interviews, five themes and 20 subthemes were identified.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research questions are listed below.

1. How do parents of children who attend preschools or child care centers in a small university town in southeastern Texas describe their unique experiences?

2. What experiences influenced the parents' view of the American child care system?

3. What impact did their experiences have on the services that local preschools provide or offer to families? How can centers work to become more inclusive of families that are economically, linguistically, racially, and ethnically diverse and celebrate the differences in a diverse student population?

Results Related to the Research Question

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked, *How do parents of children who attend preschools or child care centers in a small university town in southeastern Texas describe their unique experiences?* The participants' described their experiences as "surprising," "frustrating," and "disappointing." One of the main points that the majority of mothers raised concerned the high levels of stress and anxiety during their searches due to having waited until they were expecting, during their maternity leave, or immediately prior to returning to work or school. None of the participants described challenges related to race or ethnicity, except to note that some of the centers that they visited or used were not diverse. It was not noted as problematic, except that they noticed that their children were

the “only” ones of their race or ethnicity in many of the classrooms or even in the entire center. All felt accepted at the centers that they had chosen and they appreciated that they and their children were embraced and included. Many of the participant concerns occurred prior to locating a suitable center and during the initial enrollment period and subsequent weeks when their children were adjusting to the programs. Some attributed this to “new parent jitters” or general worry about introducing their child to a new environment with new caregivers. Concerns were related to meals served, the lack of English proficiency of their children, or the children’s slow adjustment.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked, *What experiences influenced the parents’ view of the American child care system?* The mothers discussed a range of instances that influenced their view of child care in America. First, they cited cultural differences between their home countries and the United States. They described instances in which caregivers listened to their concerns and tried to explain their way of caregiving but a few mothers claimed that explanations were lost in translation, especially when the teaching staff did not use the proper terminology. While the mothers appreciated the explanations of center policies, they considered it to be impolite for them to question authority unless they felt that their child was not being cared for properly. In a few instances, the mothers were advised by their husbands to yield to the center’s authority because the center staff were considered to be the experts. This view can be problematic because it is important for parents to realize that they are their children’s first and most important teachers.

Second, all of the mothers reported some emotional response or reaction to leaving their children in child care programs, including fear, worry, guilt, and regret. Many mentioned the reactions of their families in their home countries when they explained that they were placing their children in child care, especially when their children were infants. Since child care was very different in their home countries, their families expressed shock and surprise about the mothers leaving their infants so early. All of these emotions disappeared when they saw their child adjusting well to the programs, being well cared for by teachers, and developing normally.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked, *What impact did their experiences have on the services that local preschools provide or offer to families? How can centers work to become more inclusive of families that are economically, linguistically, racially, and ethnically diverse and celebrate the differences in a diverse student population?*

Two mothers described their relief upon locating a child care center that would accept infants on a part-time basis. As graduate students, they had flexible schedules that allowed them to take their child to the centers for partial hours of the day or certain days of the week. This also allowed them to ease their children into the day care environment, since both enrolled their children at less than 5 months of age. One of the mothers had her mother-in-law travel from India to help care for her child until a space opened at the center of her choice and then enrolled her son part time. This nontraditional arrangement began when the owners of the center received more requests for part-time care and decided to accommodate these requests. One mother noticed that other mothers used this

arrangement as well. Many of the parents described having extended family members visit at some point within their initial move to the United States. For some, the visit coincided with the child's birth or occurred shortly thereafter. For others, the visit was made within the child's first year.

All of the mothers contributed suggestions on how centers can become more inclusive of families that are economically, linguistically, racially, and ethnically diverse, celebrating the differences in a diverse student population. First, many of the families are conducting research via the Internet. One major complaint by the participants was that there was a lack of information online, which increased the difficulty in locating care prior to travel to the United States. Center websites with information such as costs, ways to access the waiting lists, basic information on the curriculum, class sizes, and photos of the center would be more than welcome by the families and would ease the search process.

Mothers described learning about meal offerings either at enrollment or shortly after their children were enrolled. Foods with artificial ingredients, salty snacks, and foods that were not part of their natural diets were prevalent. Apparently absent for them were discussions about their home diet. Centers that survey parents prior to their enrollment regarding home routines, diet, language, and other important information may ease the transition and the mothers' anxiety levels. These mothers emphasized the importance of having their preferences honored, which would build a positive bridge very early in the parent-center relationship. The mothers spoke positively about a center that did not serve pork or that offered more healthful meal options.

The participants reported that they and their children were included and celebrated at the centers that they ultimately chose but they noticed a lack of diversity in those programs. There were no cultural celebrations at the centers and the mothers only rarely met other parents through occasional birthday celebrations. While they mentioned that lack of diversity was not a major concern, they appreciated diversity in classrooms.

Discussion

Included in the literature review was the concept of graduate student parents who faced pressure to produce while also bearing responsibility of searching for child care options that suited their individual family needs. However, only one mother mentioned employment or school stress as a factor in this process, which was puzzling. Junseo described the challenge of balancing her and her husband's studies and work commitments with little support outside of their immediate family unit. The main concern for all of the mothers was the best possible child care solution for the young child, as though everything else was secondary and less important. This makes sense if "stress-free" child care would lighten the burden of other responsibilities.

Another observation related to the acculturation, or adjustment, of the mothers. Research on the acculturation process was included in the literature review but did not present fully in the interviews. The mothers described their children's adjustment but did not report challenges with "fitting into" the campus community. Aside from language, a challenge cited by only one mother, no other challenge based on identity was indicated by the mothers. All eventually chose child care centers where they felt that they and their children were accepted and celebrated.

One very important aspect noted in the study is that Bishakha chose to visit her children's child care center to feed them daily to ensure that they were adjusting well. While she described the experience as positive, she also expressed fear concerning their possible maladjustment. This raises the question as to whether the center was, in fact, sensitive to the cultural needs of the family. While Bishakha praised the center, the question remains whether the teaching staff were meeting the individual needs of the children in care if their care included taking the time to feed the children until they could do so independently. This also highlights the possibility that a parent is hesitant to criticize the children's caregivers.

Recommendations

A desired outcome of this study was to provide recommendations to child care centers based on the experience of the participating parents. With an increasing population of students from a range of social, economic, linguistic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds, child care centers will have to incorporate inclusivity practices in order to adapt to the changing landscape. The parents in this study sought characteristics of child care centers that were similar to those of their European peers. This is positive, as centers will not have to make many changes to provide high-quality care for all children, based on the results of this study. Three recommendations arose from the findings.

Online Internet Presence

A major finding was a lack of information online. Since all of the parents described Internet searches as their first means of research, it will be very important for child care centers to ensure that they have a visible online presence. This was imperative

for parents who researched child care options prior to their move to the United States. While the website maintained by the TDFPS was appreciated by some parents, the ones who utilized the site found that it lacked information on individual centers, such as maps or specific information regarding the centers, including curriculum philosophy or cost. According to the findings, child care centers that increased their online presence with a website that included detailed information such as the teacher-to-child ratio, class sizes, tuition rates, meal options, a distinct map of the area, photos of classroom environments, and enrollment and waiting list procedures would attract families in this new information age. This would benefit not only international families but all families as they move to the community.

Pooling Community Resources to Inform Expectant Parents

According to the findings of this study, the parents were in agreement that all parents should search for child care as early as possible. They provided such suggestions as creating pamphlets of child care information to be distributed to local obstetric and pediatric offices, hospitals, schools, community centers, and churches highlighting child care options and the importance of early searching due to long waiting lists for infants. Since expectant parents are often provided a wealth of information on prenatal visits or shortly after giving birth, this early material could assist new parents in their search.

Professional Development Opportunities for Staff Working With Diverse Families

The parents in this study emphasized the importance of caregivers' sensitivity to the needs of their child. Research shows that, in many educational environments, teachers do not share racial identity with their students. The parents described their

children's adjustment issues and related them to differences in diet, language, and childrearing practices. Early childhood educators should be periodically educated regarding diversity, sensitivity, inclusivity, communication, and bias. Currently, all early childhood professionals working in licensed and registered homes must complete 30 hours of professional development annually. Courses on cultural diversity are suggested but not mandated for this licensing unless the centers are nationally accredited (TDFPS, 2017).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the child care search experiences of international parents. This included obstacles, if any, that they encountered and how they eventually found the best placement for their child, if this occurred. This study was also designed to determine whether the families in this geographic location felt welcomed and accepted and how they were introduced to the unique structure, standards, regulations, customs, and traditions inherent in the American child care system in this region of the country.

Ten parents shared their experiences in searching for child care in a university community in southeastern Texas. Nine of the 10 participants described their search experiences as frustrating and disappointing, detailing the arduous task of researching online, visiting in person, calling for information, speaking with directors, and ultimately enrolling their child in a center. In most cases, the child adapted well and there were no additional searches. In two cases, the child attended more than one center due to adjustment or closures.

The parents described their experiences as a learning curve as parents with newborns or very young children in a new community. They noted that they had access to limited information online and that they had not been informed early enough in the search process.

Three major recommendations based on the findings were presented to assist early childhood centers in meeting the needs of all families that seek their services. These recommendations were to have a strong online presence with a wealth of information about their program for potential families, to involve community partners in distributing information to allow families early search options, and to ensure that early childhood professionals receive professional development opportunities that address working with diverse families.

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APPENDIX A

RESEARCH EMAIL TO LOCAL CHILD CARE CENTER DIRECTORS

Sent: Tuesday, June 16, 2015 5:25 PM

> Subject: Families Needed for Research Interviews

> Howdy!

> You are receiving this email because you are a director of a program that may have families that can assist with the completion of my dissertation. I am in need of at least ten (10) additional families to interview and am not able to use families at my current center location due to the conflict of interest of my position. I am asking for your help in order to identify international families in your program. They may be connected to the university for research, study or teaching or they may be a member of the community or business owner. My research seeks to understand the path that many international families take in order to search for and locate childcare services as newcomers to the Bryan/College Station community. The interviews so far have taken anywhere from 40 minutes to 70 minutes and any country of origin is acceptable. Thus far, I have interviewed parents from India, China, Korea and Iraq. I am willing to conduct the interview at any location that is convenient for the parent(s). At the end of the session, each family will receive a $15.00 gift card to Barnes and Noble to purchase books for their child.

> You may provide potential families a copy of this email, ask them in person and pass along my information, ask them for permission to share their contact information in case they have questions, or (which is the best option) do all three. Likewise, if you have any questions or would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact me further. Thank you so much in advance for your assistance.

> _____

> Kisha Lee, M.Ed.

> Director |

Identifying information removed

APPENDIX B

SEMISTRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Tell me about yourself and your family.
2. Where do you and your family live locally?
3. How long have you been here (in the U.S.)?
4. What country are you from?
5. Have you traveled to other countries? If so, which ones? Purpose(s)?
6. What language(s) do you speak? Your child(ren)?
7. What brought you to the U.S./this area of the country? (student, research, employment, family, etc.)
8. When did you begin searching for child care (prior to coming, shortly after arrival, etc.)? For which child(ren)?
9. How did you identify what child care options were available? (such as through friends, coworkers, fellow students, university resources, neighbors, etc. – please explain)
10. How were you able to find an option that was suitable for your family? Did you call, visit, ask others, etc.?
11. Did you have any expectations prior to your search?
12. Describe your experiences during your search. (Was there anything that you liked about the choices? What surprised you? What frustrated or disappointed you? How long did it take you to find a preschool/child care?)
13. How does child care in the U.S. differ from [your home country]?

14. What made you choose the center that your child(ren) currently attend(s)? (such as cost, location, recommendations, etc.)
15. Were there any policies, practices or procedures that you did not understand prior to enrolling your child(ren)?
16. How did you learn about these?
17. Did your perception of the preschool/child care system change over time during your search? When you first began in the program? Did it change while your child(ren) attended? Or afterwards?
18. Did you feel that you, your child and your culture were accepted and celebrated? How?
19. Are there or were there things that the school(s) could do, or could have done, to ease the transition of your child(ren) into their program(s)?
20. Did you worry about how your child would adjust to their new schools? What was their adjustment period like?

APPENDIX C

SEMISTRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL: KOREAN TRANSLATION

1. 당신과 가족에 대해 말해주세요. Tell me about yourself and your family?

2. 당신과 당신 가족은 어디에 살고 있나요? Where do you and your family live locally?

3. 미국에 온지 얼마나 되셨나요? How long have you been here (in the U.S.)?

4. 어느 나라에서 오셨나요? What country are you from?

5. 다른 나라에 가본 적이 있나요? 있다면 어느 나라인가요? Have you traveled to other countries? If so, which ones?

6. 자녀와는 어떤 언어로 대화하나요? What language(s) do you speak? Your child(ren)?

7. 미국에 온 동기는 무엇인가요? (학업, 연구, 직장 등) What brought you to the U.S./this area of the country? (student, research, employment, etc.)

8. 언제 어린이집을 알아보기 시작하셨나요?(도착 전, 도착 후 바로 등등) 어느 자녀를 위해서인가요? When did you begin searching for child care (prior to coming, shortly after arrival, etc.)? For which child(ren)?

9. 어떤 어린이집들을 선택할수 있는지 어떻게 아셨나요? (예를 들면 친구, 직장동료, 동료학생, 대학정보, 이웃 등을 통해서 - 자세히 설명해주세요) How did you identify what child care options were available? (such as through friends, coworkers, fellow students, university resources, neighbors, etc. – please explain)

10. 어떤 옵션이 당신의 가족에게 적절한지 어떻게 찾을 수 있었나요? 전화, 방문, 또는 다른 사람들에게 물어보았나요? How were you able to find an option that was suitable for your family? Did you call, visit, ask others, etc.?

11. 어린이집 조사전에 특별한 기대가 있었나요? Did you have any expectations prior to your search?

12. 어린이집 조사과정의 경험을 서술해주세요. (선택들에 관해 좋으셨던 점은 있으신가요? 놀라웠던 점은 무엇인가요? 실망스럽거나 좌절스러웠던 것이 있었다면 무엇인가요? 어린이집이나 유치원을 찾는데 얼마나

걸리셨나요?)Describe your experiences during your search. (Was there anything that you liked about the choices? What surprised you? What frustrated or disappointed you? How long did it take you to find a preschool/child care?)

13. 미국의 어린이집은 한국의 어린이집과 어떻게 다른가요? How does child care in the U.S. differ from [your home country]?

14. 지금 당신의 자녀가 다니고 있는 센터를 선택하신 이유가 무엇인가요? (예를 들면, 가격, 위치, 다른사람의 추천 등) What made you choose the center that your child(ren) currently attend(s)? (such as cost, location, recommendations, etc.)

15. 아이를 어린이집에 등록시키기 전에 이해하지 못했던 정책, 관례, 또는 절차들이 있었나요? Were there any policies, practices or procedures that you did not understand prior to enrolling your child(ren)?

16. 이런것들을 어떻게 배우셨나요?How did you learn about these?

17. 어린이집을 알아보는 동안 유치원이나 어린이집 시스템에 대한 인식이 바뀌었나요? 처음 프로그램을 시작할 때인가요? 바뀐건 아이가 어린이집을 시작하고 나서인가요? 아님 후인가요? Did your perception of the preschool/child care system change over time during your search? When you first began in the program? Did it change while your child(ren) attended? Or afterwards?

18. 당신, 당신의 자녀, 그리고 당신 나라의 문화가 받아들여지고 누려지고 있다고 느끼시나요? 어떤 면에서 그렇게 느끼시나요? Did you feel that you, your child and your culture were accepted and celebrated? How?

19. 당신의 자녀들이 해당 학교 프로그램으로의 변화에 잘 적응할 수 있도록 학교에서 해줬으면 하는 건의사항들이 있나요? Are there or were there things that the school(s) could do, or could have done, to ease the transition of your child(ren) into their program(s)?

APPENDIX D

SEMISTRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROCESS

I. Preface

   a. Potential participants will contact the investigator to arrange for an informed consent meeting and/or interview. The date, time, and location will be agreed upon by both parties.
   b. The investigator meets with each participant, thanking them for the time and willingness to participate in the research study. Introductions are made and an explanation, in detail, is given regarding the consent documents to be signed, the purpose of the interview and their rights to cease the interview at any time they wish or to withdraw their interview at any time as well.
   c. Informed consent documents will commence at this time.
   d. Permission to audio-record the interview will also commence as well as an explanation of its purpose (i.e., for investigator recall for transcription purposes).
   e. Interview will commence.

II. Demographic information

   a. Parent name(s)
   b. Occupations or Field of Study (if students)
   c. Children name(s) and age(s)
   d. Years in the U.S.
   e. Country of Origin

III. Semistructured Interview Questions (changes shown in blue)

   a. Tell me about yourself and your family?
   b. Where do you and your family live locally?
   c. How long have you been here (in the U.S.)?
   d. What country are you from?

e. Have you traveled to other countries? If so, which ones? Purpose(s)?
f. What language(s) do you speak? Your child(ren)?
g. What brought you to the U.S./this area of the country? (student, research, employment, family, etc.)
h. When did you begin searching for child care (prior to coming, shortly after arrival, etc.)? For which child(ren)?
i. How did you identify what child care options were available? (such as through friends, coworkers, fellow students, university resources, neighbors, etc. – please explain)
j. How were you able to find an option that was suitable for your family? Did you call, visit, ask others, etc.?
k. Did your child attend only one program?
l. Did you have any expectations prior to your search?
m. Describe your experiences during your search. (Was there anything that you liked about the choices? What surprised you? What frustrated or disappointed you? How long did it take you to find a preschool/child care?)
n. How does child care in the U.S. differ from [your home country]?
o. What made you choose the center that your child(ren) currently attend(s)? (such as cost, location, recommendations, etc.)
p. Were there any policies, practices or procedures that you did not understand prior to enrolling your child(ren)? Were there any policies or procedures that you disagreed with?
q. How did you learn about these?
r. Did your perception of the preschool/child care system change over time during your search? When you first began in the program? Did it change while your child(ren) attended? Or afterwards?
s. Did you feel that you, your child and your culture were accepted and celebrated? How?

t. Are there or were there things that the school(s) could do, or could have done, to ease the transition of your child(ren) into their program(s)? What advice would you give to new families to the U.S. searching for child care?

u. Did you worry about how your child would adjust to their new schools? What was their adjustment period like? Did this adjustment period change over time? What type of struggles, if any, did your child(ren) experience, if any?

v. As a parent, how did you adjust to your children being in child care?

w. Who is your support system here in the community (family, friends, co-workers)?

x. Does your child participate in play groups or have friends outside of school?

y. Have you been able to travel back home (to visit family)? Or have family members traveled here to visit?

z. What are your future plans? Are your plans to remain in the U.S. or to travel back to your home country?

APPENDIX E

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Consent to Participate in Research

The Experiences of International Families in American Childcare/Preschool Programs

You are being asked to take part in a qualitative research study examining the experiences of International families in their search for, and enrollment of, their children in childcare programs within a small college town. We are asking you to take part in this study because you indicated on a recent survey that you were interested in participating. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

What this study is about: The purpose of this study is to examine a range of unique experiences that International families are a part of when searching for childcare for their children in the U.S. You must be at least 18 years old or older, an international parent of a child who is currently attending or has attended a preschool or childcare program after arriving in the U.S. within the past ten years.

What you will be asked to do: If you agree to participate in this study, a face-to-face interview will be conducted with you. The interview will include questions about your family, your experiences in your search for childcare, your experiences and understanding of policies, procedures and practices as well as your reasons for choosing a particular childcare program. The interview will take approximately ninety (90) minutes to complete and will be completed at a time and place that is convenient for you and in which you are in agreement. With your permission, we would also audio record the interview and take one photograph for recordation purposes. If you would like the assistance of an interpreter, one will be provided for you. Please request one at this time and inform us of the language the interpreter should be fluent in.

Potential Risks: There are no anticipated risks to you by participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. However, you may choose to share sensitive and confidential information during the course of the interview. All efforts will be made to ensure confidentiality. In the event of physical and/or mental injury resulting from participation in this research study, Texas A&M University, nor anyone associated with this study, does not provide any medical, hospitalization or other insurance for participants in this research study, nor will the University provide any medical treatment or compensation for any injury sustained as a result of participation in this research study, except as required by law.

Potential benefits: This study will not provide you specific benefits outside of an opportunity to share your experiences, opinions and views on the subject. Your participation, however, will be of considerable benefit for educational purposes, for it will provide information to preschool and childcare programs on a population of families that they serve. By participating in this study, you will receive one $15 gift card to Barnes and Noble booksellers to purchase books for your child.

Your answers will be confidential. The records of this study will remain private and confidential. If the research study is published or made public in any way, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. A pseudonym will be used instead of your name when transcribing the interview. All research records, notes, pseudonym keys and audio tapes will be kept in a locked file and only the researchers involved with this study will have access to them. All audio tapes will be destroyed immediately following the complete transcription of the interview to ensure the confidentiality of the interview. We anticipate this to be within thirty (30) days of its recordation. If you would like a copy of the transcribed interview, please request a copy no later than seven (7) days following the interview. You may then contact the interviewer to add any comments, if desired.

Taking part is voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions, it will not affect the study and

we will remove and destroy your interview as well as remove it from inclusion in the study. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

If you have questions: The researcher conducting this study is Kisha Lee, under the direction of the principal investigator (PI), Dr. Norvella Carter in the College of Education, in the Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Kisha Lee at (979) 458-5437 or at klee@bgcc.tamu.edu. If you have any questions of concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Texas A&M University at (979) 458-4117 or at irb@tamu.edu.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and all questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to take part in this study. I have also been given a copy of this form.

Your signature _____ Date _____

Your Name (printed) _____

_____ I give my permission for photographs and audio recordings to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

_____ I do not give my permission for photographs and audio recordings to be made of me during my participation in this research study. I understand that not permitting photographs and audio recordings will still allow my participation in this research study.

Your signature _____ Date _____

This consent form and all data obtained from the research will be kept by the researcher for at least three years following the study.

IRB NUMBER: IRB2014-0285D IRB APPROVAL DATE: 06/18/2016 IRB EXPIRATION DATE: 06/15/2017

APPENDIX F

INFORMED CONSENT: KOREAN TRANSLATION

Consent to Participate in Research

The Experiences of International Families in American childcare/preschool programs

연구 참여 동의서

인터내셔널 가족의 미국내 어린이집과 유치원 프로그램 경험

You are being asked to take part in a qualitative research study examining the experiences of International families in their search for, and enrollment of, their children in preschool or childcare programs within a small college town. We are asking you to take part in this study because you indicated on a recent survey that you were interested in participating. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

당신은 작은 학교타운에 있는 자녀들의 프리스쿨과 어린이집 프로그램의 검색과 등록에 관련괸 인터내셔널 가족들의 경험을 알아보기위한 질적연구에의 참여를 요청받고 있습니다. 저희는 당신이 최근 설문조사에서 연구참여에 관심을 표명하였기에 이 연구에의 참여를 요청합니다. 작성지를 자세히 읽어보시고만약 질문이 있다면이 연구에의 참여를 동의하기 전에 질문해주세요.

What this study is about: The purpose of this study is to examine a range of unique experiences that International families are a part of when searching for childcare for their children in the U.S. You must be at least 18 years old or older, an international parent of a child who is currently attending or has attended a preschool or childcare program after arriving in the U.S. within the past five years.

이 연구는: 이 연구의 목적은 인터내셔널 가족들이 미국에 있는 그들의 자녀들을 위해 어린이집을 찾는 과정에 있어서의 경험들을 조사하고자 합니다. 당신은 인터내셔널 학부모로써 최근 5년안에 미국에 도착해서 최근에 자녀를 프리스쿨이나 어린이집에 다니게 했거나 다니고 있는 18살 또는 그 이상이어야만 합니다.

What you will be asked to do: If you agree to participate in this study, we will conduct a face-to-face interview with you. The interview will include questions about your family, your experiences in your search for childcare, your experiences and understanding of policies, procedures and practices as well as your reasons for choosing a particular childcare program. The interview will take approximately one hour to complete and will be completed at a time and place that is convenient for you and in which you are in agreement. With your permission, we would also audio record the interview and take one photograph for recordation purposes. If you would like the assistance of an interpreter, one will be provided for you. Please request one at this time and inform us of the language the interpreter should be fluent in.

질문들: 만약 이 연구에 참여하기로 동의하신다면, 일대일 인터뷰를 시행할겁니다. 이 인터뷰는 당신의 가족과 어린이집 조사에 관한 경험과 어린이집 선택에 에 있어 당신이 선택한 이유과 정책, 절차 그리고 관례에 관한 이해와 경험에 관한 질문들을 포함될것입니다. 인터뷰는 한시간 정도 소요될 것이며 동의하에 당신이 편한 인터뷰 장소와 시간으로 정하시면 됩니다.당신의 동의하에, 인터뷰는 녹음될 것이며 기록을 목적으로 사진 한장을 찍을 것입니다. 만약 통역자가 필요하시면 제공될 것입니다. 지금 한명을 요구하실 수 있으며 어떤 언어의 통역자가 필요하신지 알려주십시오.

Potential Risks: There are no anticipated risks to you by participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. However, you may choose to share sensitive and confidential information during the course of the interview. All efforts will be made to ensure confidentiality. In the event of physical and/or mental injury resulting from participation in this research study, Texas A&M University, nor anyone associated with this study, does not provide any medical, hospitalization or other insurance for participants in this research study, nor will the University provide any medical treatment or compensation for any injury sustained as a result of participation in this research study, except as required by law.

잠재적 리스크: 이 스터디에 참여함으로서 발생할 수 있는 일상생활에서 겪는 것보다 위험한 요소는 없습니다. 다만, 당신이 인터뷰 도중 민감하고 기밀적 정보를 나누고자 할 수도 있습니다. 비밀보장을 위한 노력을 하겠습니다. 이 연구의 참여로 발생할 수 있는 육체적이거나 정신적 손상에 대해서는 텍사스 A&M 대학이나 연구관련자 누구도 연구 참여자들을 위한 의료, 입원, 또는 보험을 제공하지 않을것이며, 이 연구 참여의 결과로써의 지속적인 손상에 대해서도 대학은 법적요구를 제외하고는 어떤 의학적 치료나 보상을 제공하지 않을 것입니다.

Potential benefits: This study will not provide you specific benefits outside of an opportunity to share your experiences, opinions and views on the subject. Your participation, however, will be of considerable benefit for educational purposes, for it will provide information to preschool and childcare programs on a population of families that they serve. By participating in this study, your youngest child will receive three (3) children's books based on their age at the time of the study.

잠재적 이득: 이 연구는 당신에게 주제에 관한 당신의 경험, 의견, 그리고 견해를 공유할 수 있는 기회 제공이외에는 특정한 이득을 제공하지 않을것입니다. 하지만, 당신의 참여는 교육적 목적으로 충분히 유용할 것이며, 관련된 가족들이 있는 유치원과 어린이집 프로그램에 정보가 제공될 것입니다.

The Experiences of International Families in American childcare/preschool programs

Your answers will be confidential. The records of this study will remain private and confidential. If the research study is published or made public in any way, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. A pseudonym will be used instead of your name when transcribing the interview. All research records, notes, pseudonym keys and audio tapes will be kept in a locked file and only the researchers involved with this study will have access to them. All audio tapes will be destroyed immediately following the complete transcription of the interview to ensure the confidentiality of the interview. We anticipate this to be within thirty (30) days of its recordation. If you would like a copy of the transcribed interview, please request a copy

no later than seven (7) days following the interview. You may then contact the interviewer to add any comments, if desired.

당신의 대답은 비밀이 보장될것입니다. 이 연구의 기록은 대중에 알려지지 않으며 비밀보장이 유지될 것 입니다. 만약 연구가 대중에 알려진다면, 우리는 신원확인이 가능한 어떤 정보도 포함하지 않을 것입니다. 인터뷰가 기록되는 과정에서 당신의 실명대신 가명이 사용될 것입니다. 모든 연구 기록, 노트, 필명, 오디오 테입은 잠금 화일에 보관될 것 이며 오직 이 연구에 관련된 연구자들만이 접근할 수 있을 것입니다. 모든 오디오 테입은 인터뷰의 비밀보장을 위해 인터뷰를 글로 옮긴 후 바로 폐기될 것입니다. 우리는 이 과정이 30일 안에 이뤄지기를 기대합니다. 만약 글로 옮겨진 인터뷰의 복사본을 원하실 경우, 인터뷰 후 7일안에 요청해 주십시오. 원하신다면, 내용 추가를 위해 인터뷰 진행자와 연락하실 수 있습니다.

Taking part is voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions, it will not affect the study and we will remove and destroy your interview as well as remove it from inclusion in the study. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

참여는 자발적입니다. 당신이 대답하시고 싶지 않은 질문은 생략할 수 있습니다. 만약 참여하지 않거나 생략하고 싶은 질문들이 있다면, 이 연구에 어떤 영향도 미치지 않으며 우리는 당신의 인터뷰를 없애거나 파기할 것이며 또한 연구 참여부터 파기할 수 있습니다. 만약, 참여하기로 결정하셨다면, 언제든지 철회할 수 있습니다.

If you have questions: The researcher conducting this study is Kisha Lee, under the direction of the principal investigator (PI), Dr. Norvella Carter in the College of Education, in the Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Kisha Lee at (979) 458-5437 or at klee@bgcc.tamu.edu. If you have any questions of concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Texas A&M University at (979) 458-4117 or at irb@tamu.edu.

질문이 있을 경우: 이 연구를 실행하는 연구자는 교육대학 내 Teaching, Learning and Culture 프로그램의 책임 연구자Dr. Norvella Carter의 지도를 받고 있는 Kisha Lee입니다. 지금 질문이 있다면 하십시오. 나중에 질문이 있으시면, Kisha Lee의 전화번호 ((979) 458-5437) 또는 이메일(klee@bgcc.tamu.edu)로 연락주십시오. 만약 연구 주체로서의 권리와 관련된 질문이 있으시면, 텍사스A&M 대학의Institutional Review Board (IRB)부서의 전화번호(979) 458-411)또는 이멜(irb@tamu.edu)로 연락주십시오.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and all questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to take part in this study. I have also been given a copy of this form.

Your signature _____ Date _____

Your Name (printed)

_____

In addition to agreeing to participate, I also consent to having the interview audio tape recorded.

Your signature _____ Date _____

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study.

기록을 위해서 이 양식의 복사본을 갖게 되실 겁니다.

동의서: 본인은 위의 정보를 읽었으며 모는 질문사항에 대한 충분한 답변을 들었습니다. 본인은 이 연구에 참여할 것을 동의합니다. 또한 이 양식의 복사본을 받았습니다.

본인 서명 _____
날짜_____

이름 _____

참여 동의와 더불어, 본인은 또한 인터뷰 오디오 테입 녹음을 동의합니다.

본인 서명 _____
날짜_____