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# The Role of the Parent in Fostering Cultural Awareness

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THE ROLE OF THE PARENT IN FOSTERING CULTURAL AWARENESS

by

Kimberly A. Blich

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

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For the Degree of Master of Science

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Under the Supervision of Professor Helen Raikes

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# THE ROLE OF THE PARENT IN FOSTERING CULTURAL AWARENESS

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University of Nebraska, 2013

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Past research indicates that the cultural constructs of race and ethnicity are socialized and that that socialization process begins in early childhood. This qualitative case study sought to learn more about the parental role in fostering children's cultural awareness as well as parents' collaboration experiences with childcare providers with regard to the fostering process.

Five parents of children (ages two-to-five years) from an ethnically and racially diverse preschool were participants. Participant interviews were conducted and The Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE) and The Parent-Teacher Relationship Scale (PTRS) measure were administered. A three-tiered coding system was used to analyze text data. Descriptive statistics were calculated and a mean split was used to create "High" and "Low" categories. Qualitative data was then compared using quantitative categories.

Results were that parents formed either racial or ethnic identities that were related to the meanings conveyed in race and ethnicity explorations and interactions with their children. Racially-identified parents emphasized racial similarities and differences to their children whereas ethnically-identified parents conveyed ethnic information such as family ancestry and immigration. Parental dialogue, or *cultural talk*, was the crux of race and ethnicity explorations. All participants conveyed race and ethnicity meanings in a developmentally-appropriate manner.

There was little formal collaboration between parents and their childcare providers as it related to fostering cultural awareness. However, it was learned that parents view themselves as primarily responsible for teaching their child about race and ethnicity and teachers as supplemental figures. Quantitative data provided additional insight by demonstrating that the sample was most apt at accepting others' differences but were least able to engage in perspective-taking with others of racial and/or ethnic diversity. Ethnically-diverse and racially-diverse parents reported high quality and low quality relationships, respectively, with teachers.

Results of this study suggest that racially-identified and ethnically-identified parents construct and convey culture differently to their children. Furthermore, their experiences with providers seemed to differ as well. Results are useful to those working with families and diverse children, especially teachers.

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## DEDICATION

This project-its origin, execution, and completion-is partly dedicated to all children who have broken through past barriers to become all that they wish. Thank you to all the people that help these children. And thank you to those who will continue to work with these children long into their adult years. *We* will never forget you.

This is also dedicated to my nephew, Raymond Wayne (age four), who inspires me every day and drums the beat to which my heart pulses.

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“The children almost broken by the world become the adults most likely to change it”

(Frank Warren)

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I greatly appreciate the support and expertise of Drs. Carolyn Edwards and Maria de Guzman. Their assistance as committee members, in addition to the efforts of Helen and Tonia, encouraged me to grow in methodological skill and informed my researcher's lens. These four individuals offered their wealth of information in the tradition of mentorship and scholarship. I am incredibly thankful.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Conceptualizing Culture, Race, and Ethnicity.....	1
1.2 Cultural Competence.....	6
1.3 Working Towards Cultural Competence.....	7
1.4 Focus on Diversity in Early Childhood Education.....	8
1.5 Importance of Multi-Cultural Exposure.....	9
1.6 Capturing the Parent Perspective.....	10
1.7 Current Study: Conceptualization.....	11
2. METHODS.....	12
2.1 Sample.....	12
2.2 Data Sources and Procedures.....	19
2.3 Measures.....	19
2.4 Rationale.....	22
2.5 Research Session Procedures.....	23
2.6 Data Inventory.....	25
2.7 Data Analysis.....	25
2.8 SEE and PTRS.....	26
3. RESULTS.....	28
3.1 Interview Data.....	28
3.2 Fostering Cultural Awareness in Families.....	29



3.3 Parents' Collaboration with Kids' Corner.....	41
3.4 Quantitative Data.....	50
3.5 Qualitative by Quantitative Categories.....	52
4. DISCUSSION.....	57
4.1 Limitations.....	64
4.2 Future Directions.....	66
4.3 Implications.....	67
REFERENCES.....	70
APPENDICES	
Appendix A: Participant Demographics.....	75
Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol.....	76
Appendix C: The Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy.....	77
Appendix D: The Parent-Teacher Relationship Scale.....	80
Appendix E: Recruitment Flyer.....	81

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Racial and ethnic diversity within American society is steadily increasing. In Nebraska alone, children of immigrant families (of various ethnicities) are the fastest growing age group of immigrants (Anderson, 2010). Furthermore, young people (18 years and younger) are continually accounting for the largest-growing age group in the U.S. and most of these children are of ethnic diversity (Lynch & Hanson, 2004). Considering the diversification of our nation and state, it is socially appropriate and responsive to incorporate efforts to meet these diversification needs into social infrastructures of schools, administration, health care, and legislative policy. Specific attention to meeting the diverse needs of these children (explicitly during the young years) is critical. The response to our nation's diversity has acquired considerable momentum among scholars and practitioners alike, especially within educational domains. A wealth of research has contributed to the current body of literature on meeting the needs of individual children and adolescents in educational settings vis-à-vis promoting student engagement, preparing teachers, and facilitating racial socialization (Green & Cherrington, 2010).

#### **Conceptualizing Culture, Ethnicity, and Race**

According to The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA), culture is “shared patterns of behaviors or interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization” (2011). Definitions of culture vary, insofar as field of study and context, but several commonalities exist regarding the conceptualization of culture. These commonalities include: behavioral components such as shared language and forms of communication

(Division for Early Childhood, 2004); a notion of co-occurring experience from within the culture and those outside the culture that, though occurring simultaneously, may vary tremendously (CARLA, 2011); a notion of change in cultural markers over time (National Research Council Institute of Medicine, 2000); and the concept that culture is acquired through socialization (Division for Early Childhood, 2004).

Derman-Sparks and Olsen Edwards' (2010) work suggests that one's cultural group is related to one's ethnicity. Though, an important distinction between the two is the additional variance that may exist due to generational and situational factors such as socioeconomic status (SES). Furthermore, one's cultural identity is comprised of three main features: cultural socialization; identification and understanding of the affiliated cultural group; and the adoption, modification, and/or rejection of cultural socialization aspects in adulthood. One's affiliation to a cultural group can affect other identities an individual may have such as economic class and racial identity.

These researchers acknowledge varying levels of culture for an individual and others, termed "surface culture" and "deep culture" (Derman Sparks & Olsen Edwards, 2010, p. 56). According to this model surface culture includes artifacts, foods, holidays, and costumes. Deep culture includes language, family relationships, migration, and gender roles among others. The National Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC, 2006) also endorses a notion of surface and deep culture. This philosophy has been adopted by many institutional and organization bodies such as the Indiana Department of Education. This philosophy, or framework, delineates surface culture as food, dress, music, drama, literature, language, and celebrations.

Deep culture, however, consists of unspoken and unconscious rules surrounding culture such as social interaction expectations, patterns of decision making, body language, definitions of obscenity, and problem solving roles related to age, sex, class, occupation, and kinship. This “iceberg” conceptualization of culture also indicates varying emotional responses associated with surface or deep culture, with high and intense levels of emotional consequence associated with deep(er) culture. As seen in the “iceberg” conceptualization, surface formats translate well into classroom settings especially for young children. For example, many teachers of young children expose their students to folk music, games, food, dress, and art techniques of other cultures and, in particular, the cultures of the children in the classroom itself (PITC, 2013).

Cultural identity can also have components or sub-parts such as familial ethnic socialization; acculturative stress (transitioning into other cultural groups and societies such as immigration experiences); and perceived ethnic discrimination (Schwartz, Zamboanga, Rodriguez, & Wang, 2007). Interestingly, culture (and cultural components such as race and ethnicity) are construed on both the individual and group level simultaneously. Banks (2004) acknowledges the nested nature of global, national, and cultural identifications.

Research on ethnic identity has revealed that ethnicity is socialized through the common ethnic group, by those not in the ethnic group, and the boundaries that separate the two. Furthermore, ethnicity is constructed from cultural components such as language and ancestry (Nagel, 1994). Ethnic identity is the “internalization” of ascription to a particular ethnic group or groups. This ethnic identity formation begins with identification to an ethnic group or groups, incorporates exploration of one’s own

ethnicity, and results with the adoption (commitment) to the ethnicity. This sequential, progressive process is similar to identity formation as researched and outlined by James Marcia (Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990).

This process of developing ethnic identity is of particular importance for minority children as they make identifications with individuals, or role models, from both the dominant and minority ethnic group. Thus, ethnic identity (or the ethnic group to which one ascribes or affiliates) is likely an important part of the constellation of cultural competence.

Research has indicated that formation of ethnic and group identities begins in childhood though the process becomes more salient in adolescence (Phinney, 2000). Hernandez Sheets (2005) defines ethnic identity as, “A personal process, influenced by membership in an ethnic group (that) forms within the child and develops throughout the lifespan” (p. 214). In childhood, children receive labels of ethnic identity and information regarding individual ethnicity; adolescents conceptualize these labels and determine deeper meaning behind these categorizations (Phinney & Chavira, 1995). Furthermore, children begin to understand that race is genetic, stable over time, and a factor of organizing or categorizing people (National Research Council Institute of Medicine, 2000). In essence, children become acculturated to pertinent cultures and ethnicities (Hernandez Sheets, 2005).

However, it is possible that individuals may ascribe to racial identities over ethnic identities. The National Center for Culturally-Responsive Educational Systems (NCCRESt) recognizes racial and ethnic identity to be two separate concepts. Though both are socially-constructed, race encompasses physical markers of similarity that

people may share. Ethnic identity refers to shared cultural backgrounds (2008). Thus, individuals affiliate themselves with the races of Black or White rather than ethnicities of African American or Anglo-Saxon. Similarly, individuals may identify themselves as American Indian rather than White (or Caucasian). Racial identity development, however, is also considered to follow a developmental trajectory similar to that of ethnic identity development as well as cultural competence development (Rush, 2010).

Dominant ethnic groups may be least aware of others' culture and may believe that the dominant ethnicity to which they ascribe (e.g., Anglo-American) does not have a culture. Furthermore, this process of engaging in cultural awareness is not only beneficial to self, but also to the groups of minority ethnic groups as cultural traditions and beliefs can be recognized as individual, rather than largely similar. Thus, various prejudices and biases are challenged (Lynch & Hanson, 2004). The similarity-making of non-dominant races and ethnicities (on the part of dominant groups) is a marked component of avoiding cultural difference, which rests near ethnocentrism as described by Bennett (2004).

Banks' Ethnic/Cultural Typology (2009) reflects the connectedness between ethnicity and culture and consists of six stages that comprise a developmental continuum beginning with ethnic psychological captivity and ending with globalism and global competency. Stage 1 (psychological captivity) is characterized by individual beliefs about one's ethnic group that are congruous with those of society. Stage 2 (ethnic encapsulation) features participation of an individual in his or her ethnic group and feelings of superiority. Stage 3 (ethnic identity clarification) has a positive attitude toward his or her group as well as other ethnic groups. Stage 4 (bi-ethnicity) describes individuals who participate in more than one ethnic group positively. Stage 5 (multi-

ethnicity and reflective nationalism) describes individuals who extend from bi-ethnicity to multiple ethnic and racial groups. Stage 6 (globalism and global competency) is characterized by the extension of Stage 5 to include engagement in other cultures in other parts of the world.

### **Cultural Competence**

It is posited that cultural competence is first pursued by an awareness of one's own culture which includes ethnic and racial affiliations. This is similar to identity research which, according to Banks, indicates that one must explore and accept oneself prior to accepting others (Banks, 2004). Moreover, moving toward ethnorelativism from ethnocentrism, through a developmental process, is also supported in cultural competence assessment (Bennett, 2004). Bennett describes this process as evolution from "avoiding cultural difference" to "seeking cultural difference" (Bennett, 2004, p. 63).

Cultural competence is valued within societal institutions like health care, psychological services, and legislative programming (Clauss-Ehlers, 2010). However, cultural competence is society-contextual and difficult to operationalize, and standardize, across the disciplines that work with families and children. Definitions, expectations, and measurement of cultural competence vary. For example, according to Helms and Richardson (1997) cultural competence consists of three main features: mind-set; realization; and abilities. More specifically, the concept of mind-set entails an understanding that culture affects personalized belief systems. Realization encompasses an understanding of groups other than the specific in which one identifies. Abilities refer to the implementation of culturally-targeted practice and communication.

Additionally, as outlined by The National Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC), cultural competence consists of five elements. They are: “valuing diversity; conducting ongoing self-assessment; the ability to manage the dynamics of the difference; the willingness to acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge; and the ability to adapt to diversity and the cultural contexts of the communities that [an] individual serves” (2008, as cited by Howard, 2010, p. 112).

Authors Lynch and Hanson (1993) refer to cultural competence, or “effectiveness,” as “the ability to think, feel, and act in ways that acknowledge, respect, and build on ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity” (p. 50). These authors also stress that cultural competence is a dynamic process.

### **Working Towards Cultural Competence**

Child care centers and schools may incorporate culturally-responsive principles in an effort to meet children’s needs related to diversity vis-à-vis anti-bias education and culturally-responsive pedagogy. Culturally-responsive education is comprised of five critical efforts, as outlined by the National Center for Culturally Responsive Education Systems (NCCRESt, 2008): prejudice reduction; knowledge construction; school culture (organization, leadership, and community involvement); equity pedagogy (recognizing that all children are deserving of equal learning experiences); and content integration. This often takes the form of adults engaging in teacher talk and classroom activities that dispel existing stereotypes and promotes the building of correct knowledge (e.g., anti-bias efforts). Culturally-responsive pedagogy is a three-pronged process in which the institution, instruction, and the individual interface to engage in culturally-responsive



education. This pedagogy relies on the exchange of a center's principles in tandem with communication with parents and communities (NCCRESt, 2008).

Culturally-responsive pedagogy often manifests as rich and responsive classrooms. Ladson-Billings (1994) tells that appropriate culturally relevant teaching should go beyond many surface level formats and incorporate a transformative model. These efforts include incorporating other cultures across childhood domains, classroom centers, and occur throughout the year as opposed to one or two intercultural activities a year. The weaving of intercultural content throughout these aspects can be visible by using a multicultural lens in literacy, musical exploration, etc. More importantly, teachers can become more culturally responsive by including components of students' families and communities in the classroom vis-à-vis becoming more acquainted with the child's language, interacting with the child's family members, etc. (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Parents can also work toward cultural competence as individuals and families by talking to their children about diversity and promoting a tolerance for other cultures, ethnicities, and races within the home. Parents are also empowered as advocates of their child(ren). Recognizing and communicating cultural (race and ethnicity) needs is a key component in executing culturally-responsive pedagogy and as important as communicating other developmental or emotional needs of the child (Olivos, 2006).

### **Focus on Diversity in Early Childhood Education**

Teaching strategies and goals that promote cultural awareness and competence are of particular importance in education. For example, Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines (ages birth-to-three and three-to-five) place importance on including culturally-responsive pedagogy to not only best serve individual children but so that other children

may foster skills conducive to developing theory of mind like empathy, respect, and awareness of others' thoughts or emotions (2005). Several other states (e.g., Pennsylvania, Iowa, and Louisiana) include general guidelines for including cultural and linguistic diversity within early childhood programs (Stover Wright & Copeman, 2007).

### **Importance of Multi-Cultural Exposure**

American approaches to child development are arguably limited with regard to learning dual language and cultural awareness or potential to prepare individuals to live in a multicultural world (Stover Wright & Copeman, 2007). The way in which to tailor this content for early childhood settings is additionally complex. Past research tells us that children begin to understand and adopt stereotypes between the ages of two-and-three and individual understanding of one's first culture is acquired around age five (Burchinal & Cryer, 2003; Lynch & Hanson, 2004). Thus, early childhood (birth-to-five) is a critical age for the introduction of culturally-responsive principles.

Research shows that ethnically-diverse children identify individual ethnicity around ages three-to-four, whereas Caucasian children do so at age eight (Hernandez Sheets, 2005). Development of ethnic identity may be additionally strained within immigrant groups as they simultaneously learn about and reconcile differences of culture, values, and prejudices of dominant and minority cultures or perhaps sending and receives cultures in the instances of immigration (Phinney, 2000). It is also speculated that cultural inclusion (the inclusion of diverse people and/or the inclusion of awareness/exposure to diverse people) is significant even for infants as they are acquiring a general sense of identity, which includes components of ethnicity and culture. As such, negotiating cultural knowledge and skills begins immediately at birth (Gonzalez-Mena, 2001).

### **Capturing the Parent Perspective**

Though the trend of outsourcing for childcare is pervasive, examinations of cultural awareness (within the early childhood time frame of birth through age eight) with specific regard to parents and the parent-teacher relationship have received less attention among the body of research. However, a wealth of information exists regarding encouraging cultural awareness within educational settings (e.g., culturally-responsive pedagogy).

Often, diverse parents are excluded from participating in decisions related to their child's schooling (Olivos, 2006). These parents may even encounter discrimination or resentment from educators or administrators when discussing how a school setting can better serve the needs their child by considering the home culture (e.g., including the home language in the classroom or allowing individual play as compared to group play). In essence, parents may feel stripped of their voices and affirmative power as parents.

As a result parent involvement among diverse parents is often limited or non-existent and such non-involvement can threaten critical dialogues related to communicating parental expectations, perceptions, understanding of important roles, and input on the child's experience (Teaching Diverse Learners, 2006). Olivos (2006) stresses the importance of understanding parents' perceptions of their child's schools and its staff. Further, Olivos suggests that there exists a considerable need for research relating to parents, culture, and diversity to promote not only parent involvement but global social awareness.

Parents are key contributors to the formation of ethnic identity as they facilitate the transmission of cultural knowledge (Phinney & Nickerson, 2002; Hernandez Sheets,

2005). Specifically, parents that talk with their children about their ethnicity are more likely to have ethnically-identified children. The socialization of racial pride has been found to be of particular value within African American families (Phinney & Chavira, 1995). In a study of 200 African American families (O'Brien Caughy, O'Campo, Randolph, & Nickerson, 2002) it was found that homes rich in African American culture had (preschool) children with better problem-solving skills and fact-based knowledge.

Furthermore, specific foci of capturing parent perspectives and understanding the parental role (with regard to the fostering and communication of cultural concepts) are noticeably absent either due to lack of presence in research inquiries or lack of participation by parents. It is crucial to begin the investigation of parents' roles in transmitting cultural awareness as well as their experiences with childcare and education professionals with regard to race and ethnicity. Further, the process through which parents and teachers, collaboratively, promote cultural awareness remains unknown.

### **Current Study: Conceptualization**

Research suggests that young children first develop their self concept within their family. Then, by preschool age, begin to develop cultural identities and other social identities (Burchinal & Cryer, 2003; Sparks & Olsen Edwards, 2010). Using this as the impetus for this inquiry, the purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how parents foster their child's cultural awareness as well as to learn more about their collaboration experiences with their childcare providers.

For this inquiry, cultural awareness was operationalized as thoughts, behaviors, and actions oriented toward learning more about others' and one's own cultural background. Research questions were: (1) How is cultural awareness fostered within

families attending an ethnically and racially diverse early childhood program? (2) What are ethnically-diverse parents' experiences in collaborating with schools (teachers and staff, the environment itself, and program philosophies) to teach their children about culture?

## CHAPTER TWO

### METHODS

This qualitative inquiry utilized a case study design to explore the processes in which parents fostered cultural awareness for their children vis-à-vis familial and home contributions as well as perceived support from childcare centers.

Cases in this study were bound by place and time—five parents of children enrolled at an early childhood program during the 2011-2012 academic year were the participants.

#### **Sample**

##### *Parent Recruitment Procedures.*

This study recruited parents of young children ages two to five years of age who attended an ethnically and racially diverse childcare center. Participants were recruited using flyers (see Appendix E) that described the research, which were dispersed with child materials (e.g., child artistic creations as well as any other facility materials that were distributed). Flyers were dispersed on two occasions (approximately one month apart) and indicated that those who were interested in participating should contact the researcher (who held a staff position at the early childhood program) via e-mail.

Sampling procedures were convenient and purposeful. The researcher held a staff position at the early childhood program from which parents were recruited. Also a

laboratory school, one of the functions of the early childhood program is to be a site for scholarship and research for students and faculty of the affiliated university.

The sampling was purposeful in that parents were required to meet the following three criteria: (1) having at least one child enrolled at the recruitment site at the time of the study; (2) their child(ren) were between ages of two and five; and (3) whose children were ethnically and/or racially diverse.

*Parent* was operationally defined in this study as any individual performing primary or secondary care giving roles as demonstrated by providing physical care (e.g., feeding and bathing), economic care (e.g., providing the financial means for food, housing, clothing, etc.) and emotional nurturance.

*Ethnically and racially diverse children* was defined as any child whose ethnic and racial composition was non-majority and was not exclusively “White” or “Caucasian.” The conceptualization of “ethnically-diverse” children allowed a wider scope of parent participation to occur than using a definition based on parent ethnicity alone. For example, parents of bi-racial children were able to provide insight into this inquiry, although one parent may have been of majority ethnicity (e.g., White Non Hispanic/Caucasian). This recruitment stipulation allowed that participants may or may not be ethnically and/or racially diverse as the children of participants were to be ethnically and/or racially diverse.

#### *Early Childhood Program.*

As mentioned above, parents of ethnically and/or racially diverse children aged two-to-five years were recruited from an early childhood program in the Midwest. The pseudonym for the program is Kids’ Corner and will be used henceforth. This program is

a laboratory school accredited by The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and adheres to quality standards specifically related to cultural inclusion and exposure. For example, per NAEYC standards classrooms must include content related to diversity, in non-stereotypical ways (e.g., countering teasing and rejection, having materials and activities that dispel stereotypes of age, ability, gender, and culture).

Kids' Corner is a laboratory school, having a new cohort of student teachers each academic semester. Semester student teachers work intensively with children and families for approximately 16 weeks. Each cohort consists of approximately 10 student teachers. At semester's end, the Kids' Corner relationship ends and new teachers arrive. Moreover, Kids' Corner utilizes a system of "target teaching" within the classroom. This process organizes children into "family" groupings based on developmental age, with a group of teachers assigned to each "family" group. Within each "family" group, teachers are assigned "target children" for which they are expected to build and maintain the strongest relationships, gather developmental observation data, and contribute to the child's developmental profile (which, over time, comprehensively form each child's developmental goals). A child's "target teacher" changes each semester. Student teachers collaborate with staff in meeting these expectations similar to a student-professor format.

Kids' Corner has two classrooms, a toddler and preschool room (children 18 months-to-five years of age). Each classroom includes three staff members: a master teacher; a head teacher; and one graduate assistant. There is an average of ten student teachers. Pre-service teachers are undergraduate students in the practicum phase of coursework and are either juniors or seniors. Four of the five staff teachers hold a

Master's degree related to Early Childhood Education. The majority of staff and the student teacher population are White, native English speakers, and of Middle Class SES. Conversely, the majority of the parent and child population are racially and ethnically diverse. This information provides insight into the cultural context between home and school.

The parent population at Kids' Corner is quite diverse. More than eight countries are represented (e.g., Korea, Russia, Turkey, and Mexico). Parents (and children) speak multiple languages including English, Spanish, Russian, Turkish, Chinese, Korean, Greek, Czech, and Polish. Most parents have enrolled all of their children at Kids' Corner in accordance with the age range of care (18 months to five years), have or are pursuing graduate degrees, and have careers in health care, business, law, and education.

Families connect with each other outside of Kids' Corner socially (e.g., play dates, babysitting, etc.). Most families participate in activities held at Kids' Corner such as attending teacher-parent conferences, parent-child night events, and volunteering in clothing drives, holiday celebrations, and field site visits (parents will attend field trips with their children). Many parents also donate items to the program as well (e.g., books for the classroom library).

The children at Kids' Corner represent ethnic, racial, and linguistic diversity. While most of the children's native language is not English (e.g., Chinese) they have proficiency in English. Most of the children have siblings and friends who are also enrolled in the program, and display normative development across the seven recognized domains of child development. Those domains are: social-emotional; physical; language;



cognitive; literacy; mathematics; science and technology; social studies; the arts; and English language acquisition (Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment System, 2012).

Kids' Corner is responsive to children with special needs as they are an inclusive program. This responsiveness includes classroom strategies such as communication books, technology that facilitates receptive and expressive language, the use of visuals, the incorporation of sensory activities, and child schedules depicted visually. Professional development and collaboration with various providers in the classroom (e.g., an occupational therapist) work in concert with classroom strategies to make this an inclusive program.

*Participants.*

Five parents participated in this study, two of which were a married couple and were interviewed together. Participant descriptions are detailed below which refer to participants and their lives at the time this study was conducted. As discussed in recruitment procedures for this study, participants were recruited from an ethnically and racially diverse preschool. Recruited parents who chose to participate self-identified as diverse. Racial and ethnic categories described represent those explicitly identified by participants rather than the researcher. It should be mentioned that these participants may not best represent ethnic and racial diversity in other settings.

Libby is a 45-year-old woman who ascribes to White, English, and Polish racial and ethnic categories. She has four children, one of whom (age five) is enrolled in Kids' Corner. The other two, step children from her second and current marriage, are young adults. She holds a Master's degree and her husband holds a doctorate. Both she and her

husband hold university-affiliated jobs that they work at full-time status. Her family earns above \$80,000.00 per year, an SES that differs greatly from her lower-SES upbringing.

Libby's family emigrated from Poland around the turn of the century (1900s) and her grandparents were the first generation born in the United States. Libby grew up around her closely-ethnically-tied grandparents who spoke Polish fluently. According to Libby, her husband identifies as Norwegian, Finnish, Swiss, and Irish. Her sons have limited Polish ability and are proficient in English. Libby did not express that mastering Polish is a desired goal for her children.

Maria is a White female who is from the Midwest but identifies with Czech and Irish descent. Maria holds a Master's degree, has traveled to various parts of the world, served in a humanitarian capacity in Latin America, and currently holds a position with immigration services. Maria is married to Jose, another participant in this study. They have been married approximately 10 years and have two daughters (ages 2.5 and 4.5), both of whom are enrolled at Kids' Corner.

Jose and Maria are in their early 40s and have plans to raise their daughters in the Midwest unless work opportunities necessitate re-location. Jose is Mexican-American. He holds a doctorate in chemical engineering. He earned both of his advanced degrees in the U.S. He and his wife, Maria, met shortly after his arrival to the Midwest for graduate study. He has attained citizenship status. They reported their household annual yearly income to be above \$80,000. Similar to Libby's sons, Jose and Maria's daughters have limited proficiency in Spanish though it is not their dominant language. They did, however, express a desire to expose more of their Spanish language to their daughters.

Their daughters have a grandfather who speaks some Czech to them, Jose and Maria did not indicate that learning more Czech vocabulary was of particular interest.

Kim is a 40-year-old, Greek woman. She and her White, American husband both hold doctorates. They have two children, sons, who are 18 months and 3.5 years, respectively. Both are enrolled at the recruitment site. Kim spent most of her years in Greece aside from graduate training and thereafter. This aspect of international residency is similar to Jose as he spent his years prior to graduate school in Mexico. She lived in Canada for graduate study and moved to the Midwest post graduation with her husband. Kim speaks Greek fluently and primarily speaks to her sons in Greek. Her husband does not know Greek. Thus, her sons use both Greek and English frequently. Kim and her husband earn above \$80,000.00 a year. Prior to enrolling her children in Kids' Corner, Kim's son was enrolled in another facility. Kim was the only participant whose children had such an experience other than Kids' Corner.

Kelly is a 31-year-old White educator of children with special needs. She described her ethnic identity as a blend, though Greek was the most prominent ethnicity in her ethnic background (and self-identification). She has a Master's degree and her husband has a Bachelor's. Together they earn upwards of \$80,000.00 per year. Kelly and her husband have two children, both of whom had been consecutively enrolled at the care center. Her youngest child, a son (two years old) was enrolled at the time of the study. Both she and her husband are from the central Midwest. Per demographics responses, they identified most strongly with "White." According to Kelly, her husband's family is German and immigrated to the U.S. approximately two generations before her husband's birth.

## Data Sources and Procedures

Qualitative and quantitative data sources were collected to explore the research questions. The data sources included:

- Three individual, semi-structured interviews
- One group, semi-structured interview (of the married couple)
- The Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE; Wang et al., 2003)
- The Parent-Teacher Relationship Scale: Teacher Version (PTRS; Vickers & Minke, 1995)

### Measures.

#### *Qualitative Measures: Interviews.*

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the four parent participants (three individual parents and one parent couple). The interviews were oriented to the research questions of: (1) How is cultural awareness fostered within families attending a diverse early childhood program?; and (2) What are ethnically-diverse parents' experiences in collaborating with schools to teach their children about culture? An interview protocol was designed to address these questions (Appendix B) which was used for each participant. The protocol was semi-structured, using pre-determined and probing questions during the interview. For example, a probing question was "How did having children change your ethnic identity or commitment to your ethnic identity?"

Interviews were conducted at participants' convenience (e.g., in their homes or at Kids' Corner). Participants chose pseudonyms and were reminded of the nature of anonymity and their ability to retract, reformat, and withdraw statements at any time (stipulated in IRB-approved protocol). Interviews lasted an average of 45 minutes each.

The purpose of using a semi-structured interview protocol was to: capture participants' beliefs and experiences regarding race, ethnicity, and culture; and acquire an in-depth knowledge of these beliefs and experiences that could otherwise not be gathered by observation or quantitative assessment alone. There were four interviews total (three individual, one interview with Jose and Maria).

*Reflective Memos.*

The memoing process was used in this study to document the researcher's bias about pre-existing relationships and experiences with participants and to formalize and systematize the researcher's thinking into a coherent set of explanations and questions that would be used to inform data analysis.

Memoing occurred before, during and after each participant interview. Memos created before each interview served to synthesize previous interview responses and make notes for the upcoming interview (e.g., concepts that were frequent or misunderstood). For example, the memo documented prior to interviewing Libby (who was interviewed third) included parental goals (e.g., socialization concerns) identified from the earlier two interviews. The memo for Kelly noted the less familiar relationship the researcher had with this participant. It also noted that goals seemed to be socialization-oriented and there seemed to be a distinct differentiation in how parents viewed individual responsibility vs. teacher support in fostering their children's cultural awareness. In addition to acknowledging biases, these memos were a tool to direct the structure of the interview (e.g., probing questions).

The researcher also took reflective notes during the interviews which were later used to note patterns for the researcher to re-visit while transcribing and reflecting. Memoing informed researcher-participant interactions and engagement.

Furthermore, memos served to aid the researcher in maintaining researcher positioning as both researcher and teacher within the early childhood program. There were 14 memos written. They were not, however, analyzed as a data source.

### *Quantitative Measures*

A quantitative measure was selected to assess a form of cultural awareness among parent participants--The Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE). The SEE is a self-report measure designed to assess an individual's empathy towards others of alternate ethnicities (see Appendix C). Its four factors are: Empathic Feeling and Expression; Empathic Perspective-Taking; Acceptance of Cultural Differences; and Empathic Awareness (in descending order of items). The scale operates under the premise that ethnocultural empathy includes emotional, intellectual, and communicative components and a Likert scale is utilized. The SEE has been tested and been found to be both valid and reliable. Confirmatory factor analysis revealed that the factors of the SEE account for 81% of variance and Cronbach's alphas for reliability estimates were: 0.91 (total); 0.89 (EFE); 0.75 (EP); 0.73 (AC); and 0.76 (EA). Furthermore, it has withstood test-retest reliability scrutiny with  $r = 0.76$  (total) (Wang et al., 2003).

The SEE was used to assess participants' capacity for empathy towards individuals who are dissimilar in racial and ethnic composition. This measure was used to give insight into qualitative interviews (supporting or incongruous beliefs) and provide descriptive information regarding the salience of intercultural tolerance.

Relationship quality could also have potentially affected the degree to which parents communicated goals, concerns, and ultimately collaborated with teachers to foster cultural awareness in their children. Therefore, the PTRS: Parent Version was used to gain information about these relationships as perceived by parents (see Appendix D). The quality of these relationships, as perceived by teachers, was not examined as only parents were recruited and sampled due to the scope of the parental role in cultural socialization and fostering cultural awareness. The PTRS was used to provide description of the quality of relationships that parents have experienced while their children had been enrolled at Kids' Corner and provide additional, objective information.

The PTRS consists of 24 questions that utilize a Likert scale. The scale measures the quality of a parent-teacher relationship. Higher scores of sub-scales, Joining and Communication to Other, indicate better communication, quality, and more positive perceptions. The PTRS has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86 for the parent version.

### **Rationale**

These scales were researched among many related scales (e.g., cultural competence scales) and were chosen after determining their specific use to this study. The scales informed participant interviews as participants began to think about race, ethnicity, culture, and how their efforts to teach their children about these concepts were supported by teachers.

The scales did, however, provide descriptive, quantitative information about participants' beliefs and experiences while their content (or nature) provided additional means for the researcher to begin a dialogue with participants. All participants completed each scale.

This study sought to gain insight into the parental role in fostering their child's cultural awareness (in the home) while also taking into account the other settings in which their children develop—an early childcare program. Children could also be as influenced by his or her community and peers. However, the two primary settings in which preschool age children live and thrive are home and school.

To gain insight into how parents engage in fostering cultural awareness in the home, qualitative interviews as well as an empirical measure that assesses ethnocultural empathy were used. This measure was used in an effort to provide insight into parents' own cultural awareness. Rather than measuring cultural competence proper (due to time, certification, and financial constraints), the ethnocultural empathy measure gave insight into parents' ability to engage in perspective-taking of those who are racially and ethnically different from themselves. This was critical to consider as such ability might be related to cultural awareness beliefs and strategies.

To gain insight into how quality of relationship with his or her child's teacher might impact parents' willingness to share racial and ethnic information (thus impacting collaboration experiences), a parent-teacher measure was used (parent report only).

### **Research Session Procedures**

There were three data sources for this study: interview transcripts; the SEE; and the PTRS. After participants provided consent to participate in the study a convenient time and location were selected to complete measures and conduct the interview. Upon arriving at participants' homes or the arranged meeting place, participants were given informed consent pages, a demographics form (see Appendix A), the SEE, and the PTRS. The order of presentation in the packet of materials to participants was: informed



consent; demographics (e.g., age, self-identified race and ethnicity, racial/ethnic composition of the nuclear family, educational attainment, and yearly income); the SEE; and the PTRS. The presentation order of the SEE and PTRS were reversed for each interview. Participants were directed to rate the quality of relationships based on “average” experiences with multiple target teachers over the course of their child’s enrollment at Kids’ Corner. They were also directed to note any comments or caveats to their self-scored report in the blank space following the measure(s).

Each packet of material was given to participants while the researcher prepared audio equipment. The materials were then collected, pseudonyms were chosen, and the interview(s) began. For example, Kim’s packet of materials included the PTRS, then the SEE. However, Libby’s presentation order was the SEE then the PTRS. However, it should be noted that these materials were given to participants at one time. It is possible that participants did not complete specific documents in the presented order. This was not noted by the researcher as, while the participant responded to materials, she set up interview equipment (e.g., memoing pad, interview protocol, and digital recorder). Furthermore, it is likely that these measures, as well as the non-uniform order of presentation, confounded interview responses. This limitation will be discussed in the Discussion section. It should also be noted that participants Jose and Maria, who were interviewed together, retained this packet of information and returned it to the researcher shortly after the research session (within two business days). This was granted in order to be responsive to Jose and Maria’s schedules (e.g., the interview was time sensitive due to their daughters’ schedule for dinner and bedtime).

Participants were instructed to consider all of the teachers their child has engaged with thus far when completing the PTRS. They were also instructed to write in any comments and feedback regarding their scoring of these relationships. This direction was given with regard to the SEE as well; this procedural step was added by the researcher and not instructed by either measure proper. These informal comments were not analyzed in this study.

### **Data Inventory**

- Three MP3 files of interviews
- One webcam recording of an interview (that captured only the audio)
- Four interviews
- 5 PTRS and 5 SEE responses
- One SPSS database of descriptive statistics of demographic information
- 14 reflective memos

### **Internal Validity.**

#### *Data analysis.*

Audio data were first transcribed by the researcher. Then, audio files and transcripts were given to a peer graduate student for accuracy checks with whom the researcher was acquainted. Items that were not correct in initial transcripts were reviewed by the researcher and edited appropriately.

A two-level coding system was used to analyze the four individual interviews. Data were divided into meaningful units consisting of phrases in interview transcripts anywhere from one sentence to one paragraph. These data units were indicative of participants' beliefs about a particular topic. The first level of analysis was a-priori and

identified statements (spoken) in which participants either explicitly or implicitly referred to their ethnicity (E) and race (R).

The final level of coding involved open coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994) in which the researcher developed patterns to describe each participant's conceptualizations and beliefs regarding how cultural awareness was being fostered in these ethnically diverse families. As I explored the research questions, this categorical development revealed participants' racial and ethnic identity experiences (past, present, and future). Example codes are: *E self-concept*; *E (self) attachment*; and *Identity*. Codes revealed an emergence of cultural talk (Code: *E (P-C)*, *CC tools Cultural talk*) that occurred in conjunction with exploration of familial and others' cultures, races, and ethnicities. During this coding analysis participants revealed their perceptions of cultural differences within society (e.g., between the U.S. and non-U.S. cultures). Nearly all parent participants discussed a race, ethnicity, and/or country of origin that was a part of their identity (e.g., Polish ancestry and Greek ethnicity). Most participants did not relate or identify themselves as part of American and Western culture.

This process of analysis was deductive first in that data were analyzed with a specific orientation to race and ethnicity. Analysis then became inductive in nature in which patterns and themes emerged. This "reversal" is in contrast to the usual process of analysis seen in other qualitative research. This limitation will be discussed later in this Methods section.

### **SEE and PTRS**

First, the SEE and PTRS were scored per author instructions (e.g., reverse scoring and sub-scale scoring). Demographic information (e.g., ethnic and racial background,

education level, and household yearly income), sub-scale mean scores, and overall mean scores for each participant and each measure were entered into SPSS. Descriptive statistics were calculated--a group mean was established for each sub-scale and factor of the SEE and PTRS, as well as overall score. Sub-scales/factors were as follows: SEE Empathic Feeling and Expression; SEE Empathic Perspective Taking; SEE Acceptance of Cultural Differences; SEE Empathic Awareness; SEE Total; PTRS Joining; PTRS Communication to Other; PTRS Communication to Other; and PTRS Total.

Second, using these group means, a mean split was used to create “High” (above the mean) and “Low” (below the mean) categories. For example, Kim’s individual score for PTRS Joining was 4.73. Thus, her score corresponded to High in regards to this sub-scale.

Conducting these mean splits allowed sub-scales and factors to be analyzed in a manner that highlighted each participant’s individual differences. These findings will be further discussed in-depth in the Results section (see Table 1). Further, although Jose and Maria have been discussed as one unit with regard to qualitative data, their quantitative data will be reported individually as each completed the surveys separately. Finally, all Highs and Lows were grouped for each subscale/factor to enable analysis of qualitative themes according to the High/Low groupings on the subscales/factors (Table 2).

#### *Trustworthiness and limitations.*

Trustworthiness was maintained in this inquiry. Data sources were used to corroborate one another (e.g., SEE and PTRS data supporting interview data). Reflective memoing occurred throughout the research process (to account for potential bias and

maintain researcher positioning), and the qualitative findings (e.g., patterns and themes) were debriefed with a committee member.

Limitations to this study included the absence of data triangulation among multiple sources. This limits the trustworthiness of this work. Additionally, completion of the SEE and PTRS may have confounded interview results. Generalizability is limited as the information gathered describes only the participants, which is customary with the case study design. Furthermore, though steps were taken to prevent and account for researcher bias (who simultaneously held a staff position at Kids' Corner), the inherent nature of such a relationship limits the empiricism and usability of these results. To this end, however, the memoing process helped to offset these biases. For example, the nature of relationships was noted in memoing vis-à-vis a limited relationship with Kelly versus a rich relationship with Libby. Additional limitations, including those from the incorporation of quantitative data, will be further explained in the Discussion section of this manuscript.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESULTS**

#### **Interview Data**

The purpose of this study was to explore the processes by which parents fostered cultural awareness for their children vis-à-vis familial and home contributions as well as support from childcare centers. Research questions were: (1) How is cultural awareness fostered within families attending a diverse early childhood program?; and (2) What are ethnically-diverse parents' experiences in collaborating with schools (teachers and staff, the environment itself, and program philosophies) to teach their children about culture? It

was revealed that the process of fostering cultural awareness follows the trajectory of: parent identity; defining culture within the home; goals and actions. While learning about parents' collaboration experiences with schools, with regard to fostering their child's cultural awareness, it was revealed that parent-school collaboration followed the pathways of: collaboration expectations vis-à-vis conceptualizing parent and teacher roles; direction of communication; and perceptions of Kids' Corner's responsiveness. While these are not causal pathways, they seem to demonstrate associations and to some extent sequences.

First, qualitative analysis, then quantitative data and, finally, examination of qualitative codes by the high/low categories of quantitative are presented. The final presentation is not a formal mixed methods approach but augments use of the quantitative data to help interpret the qualitative.

### **Fostering Cultural Awareness in Families**

Three findings were identified in parents' approaches to fostering cultural awareness with respect to research question one. They were: racial and ethnic orientation connections to fostering cultural awareness in the home; meaning-making actions; and developmental appropriateness of meaning-making actions. How parents fostered children's culture in the home was characterized by actions and interactions that were: deep and surface culture type engagements; developmentally appropriate; linked to parents' primary racial and/or ethnic identities; and inclusive of intentional dialogue, or *cultural talk*.

*Parents' orientation to race, ethnic and cultural identities.*

The first finding identified is that the process of parents' fostering cultural awareness in the home is connected to their orientations to race and/or ethnicity as an individual. Parents were specifically asked to describe their racial, ethnic, and cultural identities and what those identities meant to them (Appendix B: Interview Protocol questions 1-3). Through this directed conversation with participants, the researcher was able to begin to understand how participants define and communicate the cultural aspects of race and ethnicity.

Categorizing participants' identities was established during coding and was explicitly evidenced by participants' comments and discussion about their own race and/or ethnicity. This evidence was comprised of both affirming and negative comments about their race, ethnicity, or culture. For example, Jose said, "Mestizo...that's how I identify myself." When prompted to discuss what this identity meant to Jose, he talked about the power of context and "geographical location," providing the example of, "in...it was like 'Oh, you're from Mexico!'" whereas, in the United States, being Mexican is "negative." Jose also went on to talk further about prejudice, discrimination, and racism saying, "You're the Mexican of the...in Spain it's the Moroccans. In, uh, Ireland it's the Polish. In essence, the Latinos." With this statement Jose discusses his experiences with discrimination in the United States for being Mexican-American. However, discrimination is contextual on the larger group in which the minority group is situated. Though Jose experiences discrimination within an American context, he describes positive experiences with being Mexican while in other cultures such as Spain.

This served as evidence to suggest that Jose's primary orientation (identity) was that of his ethnicity—Mestizo and Mexican. However, it was also evidenced throughout the interview that he felt there were many negative societal attitudes about Mexicans. For example, Jose spoke about his experiences as a Mexican with looking like a “Mexican bandito” and having different experiences with his ethnicity in different situations such as his workplace, a retail department store, or while individuals view his home for potential purchase as real estate. He said, “[You] put your cap on backwards and] it's like, ‘Yy-ep, you're a Mexican!’” Jose's reflections of implicit racism, as he discussed, provided evidence to support that Jose was both ethnically and racially identified.

Maria reflected on her racial and ethnic composition and those identities. She said, “I consider myself a White girl. Irish and Bohemian or Czechoslovakian...I said I was like a Whitey, Caucasian, um, of Irish and Czech decent.” In this statement, Maria was cognizant of her ethnic make-up, but it was not as salient to her identity as her race. During the course of the interview, she referred to stereotypes about other ethnicities and cultures as well as her own saying, “Oh yeah. We have stereotypes.” Maria (and Jose) went on to discuss their stereotypes about their own ethnicities as well as Turkish, Korean, and French individuals in particular.

Maria was also cognizant of the prejudices and discriminations that occur against non-majority individuals based on race. This was best summed when Maria was asked to think about her daughters' minority status, “It gets more complicated when I speak of the kids and how they're gonna experience it.” Here, Maria shares her concern with how her daughters will be treated with regard to discrimination, prejudice, racism, and bias as affiliated with her husband's ethnicity, primarily due to her daughter's darker skin



complexion, hair color, and last name. Thusly, it was determined that Maria identified most with her White majority race.

Maria, Jose's wife, had an identity construction that was racially and ethnically based. For example, during the interview Maria stated that she was a blend of various ethnicities—Czech, Irish, Bohemian. Maria did not express explicit positive meanings of these racial and ethnic identities. Instead, she discussed many negative stereotypes about these identities throughout the course of the interview. For example, she said, "My mom's side is Irish and they're drinkers and they're boisterous and they're (inaudible) stereotype...have a love of words you know." She went on to refer to herself as "Whitey" and mentioned she and her husband's joke of referring to her children as "Czech Mex." Maria acknowledged the incorporation of stereotypes in her belief system. Maria reflected, "We'll somewhat be consciously or maybe sometimes inadvertently passing along certain stereotypes."

When asked to talk about her racial and ethnic identities Kim provided, "To be White, it doesn't mean anything really. I don't know what it means...nothing. To be Greek, it means a lot." This evidenced her orientation to ethnicity. Kim spoke in-depth about the rich, fulfilling nature of being Greek, which included Greek history and her family legacy. She said, "We have this long history...you go through the history of your country [kindergarten to high school], so there is a lot of pride I think because you see that link through the centuries...we didn't lose our culture."

Interestingly, Kim reflected how her awareness of the importance of her Greek ethnic identity became more salient after she had children. She reflected, "And I noticed after I had kids, I'm very...not concerned, but I really want them to experience my

culture”. She further stated, “But since I had my kids, I want to do for them what my parents were doing for me.”

Libby identified primarily with her Polish ethnicity. She viewed her ethnicity as important and a part of an ancestral legacy that impacted her, and her children, at an individual level. Libby said, “My ethnicity is Polish and English. I’m  $\frac{3}{4}$  Polish heritage and that’s from the turn of the century, 1900.” Libby’s family history rested closely to the meaning and significance of her ethnic identity. She explicitly reflected on the “negative connotations” that comes along with being Polish. For example, when asked, “What does this identity mean to you?” Libby stated, “I have a mixed relationship with my heritage. There’s a lot of racism and anti-Semitism that I grew up with that I don’t like to feel connected to in any way.” Libby’s discussion about her ethnic identity suggested that this identity was something she worked to come to terms with over the years with maturity, life experiences, and reflection. Libby reflected:

“I’m not living where I grew up. So, there is a disconnect because of that. That was deliberate as well. [Ethnic identity is important], but there are things I don’t like about where I came from and that gives me something to reject...I love the food...polka [but] I mean it’s more of a negative relationship.”

She reflected how she intentionally tried to separate from prejudicial influences from her childhood environment that encouraged separatism and discrimination of others and her experiences with witnesses both privilege and prejudice. She offered, “I definitely attribute some of my success to my majority status. I could see someone doing the same kinds of things who is not in the majority and not getting the same preference that I might

get.” This directly influenced Libby’s construction of race and ethnicity and was later seen in the interview to be influential on how she fostered these concepts to her children.

Kelly displayed identity ambiguity that was evidenced in discussion such as “I guess my Mom really describes us like a Heinz 57 bottle—so many different cultures. I guess the main, dominant one would be Greek. But, that’s just like 1/16<sup>th</sup> of us.”

Throughout the course of the interview Kelly talked about this ambiguity in a variety of ways including, “I guess we always had the idea that we were American and that was it,” “vague,” “we don’t really understand it [ethnic background],” “it’s just always kinda been like you’re who you are but it was always kinda secondary, off in the corner like [ethnicity],” and most succinctly, “I don’t have culture.” Kelly seemed to equate culture to race or ethnicity that was non-majority and was unsure of her own ethnic background and its meaning. Thus, Kelly identified primarily with her White, Caucasian race.

Kelly also reflected on some of her life experiences that informed her belief system regarding race and ethnicity. She remarked that the life events of marriage and having children made ethnicity more salient, if only for the sake of her children. She said, “I think now, as a Mom, um I see how much my husband values his heritage. And, which sor--makes me look more into of my heritage. Um, just because I want my kids to not just see his side. I want them to see my side.” Though Kelly displayed uncertainty of her racial and ethnic identity, the topic became more importance once she had children.

Second-level coding during analysis provided understanding of participants’ inclination to either racial or ethnic identities. However, it should be noted that categorizations of participants’ identities may be more deeply held, or held within the other distinction (e.g., race as opposed to ethnicity). These interviews cannot best

encapsulate individuals' identities outside of this particular inquiry. It is also possible that identity categorizations that were evident to the researcher may not ordinarily manifest as such. For example, majority participants may feel some levels of discomfort with their majority and privileged status and may seek out ethnic identities as opposed to racial ones. Moreover, participants' identities may incorporate other cultural components than race and ethnicity, which was the exclusive lens of this study. Perhaps other cultural aspects, to participants, are deeply held and an active part of their identities.

*Meaning-making actions.* Participants' descriptions of their identities, coupled with their reflections on their belief systems and experiences, informed the first objective of this study. Additional support for identity descriptions was found in the manner in which parents engaged in meaning-making behaviors and actions with their children surrounding race, ethnicity, and culture concepts. Such meaning-making activities included learning from other family members (e.g., aunts, cousins, and grandparents), visiting museums, referring to encyclopedias, storytelling, etc. However, the meaning-making process differed depending on the participant's primary identity association.

Therefore, the second finding that emerged was that parents find specific actions that make meaning of their ethnic, racial, and cultural beliefs, some of which seemed to convey "deep culture" and some of which were more surface level. Participants showed, and experienced, culture at surface levels (e.g., food, dress, music, arts/drama, dance, literature, language, celebrations, and games). All participants reflected on the nature of these racial, ethnic, and/or cultural interactions. All of the ways in which parents exposed their children to such diversity were surface-level (Derman Sparks & Edwards, 2010). For example, Maria cited "dancing and listening to [music]" in addition to "food, cultural

events, and clothes.” Kim discussed travel to Greece as well as “*paramethia* [Greek myths], books, and food [surrounding cultural celebrations].” Libby and Kelly discussed food, storytelling, familial interactions (e.g., children with grandparents), and cultural events.

However, some participants conveyed “deep culture” meaning (Derman Sparks & Olsen Edwards, 2010) to these surface-level formats and activities vis-à-vis explicit parent-child dialogue. Explicit “deep culture” discussion by parents was sensitive to the developmental range of their preschool-aged children. This was particularly evident in a reflection from Libby. While pointing out racial inequality among workers and customers in an airport she spoke to her children about a person’s character being more meaningful than their skin color, etc. Libby described this experience:

“They’ve [sons] been lucky enough to be on airplanes at a young age. And I will subtly point out that everybody on the other side of the counter is brown. And all of us over here are White. And I’ll say, ‘Those people are working. It’s not that we look down on them. But, don’t you think it’d be fairer if we kinda mixed that up a little bit?’ Stuff like that I might mention.”

Libby spoke about the meaning of pointing out inequality by describing the meaningful lesson that accompanied the recognition of different races and social classes, saying, “I mean if someone’s not being nice you don’t have to go down...be the better person I’d say. But, it’s how someone’s behaving that matters. And not their ethnicity, not their religion. Not their background in any way.”

*Deep and surface culture.* Surface-level engagements were used to expose children to how their ancestors live/d as well as others (of differing races, ethnicities, and

cultures) live. Each intentional activity oriented to expose their children to race and ethnicity was accompanied by the parental role and, specifically, the use of intentional dialogue that gave global meaning to these activities.

Parents who associated more with their race emphasized racial similarities and differences by intentionally teaching their child about societal prejudices and biases in a developmentally-appropriate manner. For example, Jose said, “We should just talk, you know, like put it on the table. You know, your Daddy’s from Mexico, looks like a Mexican, and when he doesn’t shave he looks really like a Mexican bandito. He does.”

Parents who were ethnically-identified constructed meaning surrounding ethnic information such as language and family immigration history. Their child’s ethnicity was viewed as central to their identity and, thus, important to teach to their children. As seen in racially-identified parents, parents who were ethnically-identified engaged in meaning-making while keeping developmental appropriateness in mind. Libby provided, “We’ll talk about [Swiss] athletics. What the people there are generally good at, athletic wise. ‘You got the Swiss jumping gene,’ or whatever.”

This was not a mutually-exclusive process, however. Parents did not exclusively incorporate either racial or ethnic content. Instead, parents used organic opportunities to engage in intentional teaching, though their identity was related to the type, and frequency, of racial and ethnicity engagements. Context seemed to be salient to the type of engagement that occurred. For example, Libby was categorized as ethnically-identified in the analysis procedures of this study. Yet, she also discussed and incorporated racial information when engaging in these concepts with her children (e.g., race and social class differences observed at an airport). Thus, parents transmitted both racial and ethnic

information to their children, despite their primary identity orientations. Furthermore, surface level formats may be as meaningfully and deeply held as deep level formats and meanings though manifesting less often.

*Developmental appropriateness.* The third finding that emerged was that while exploring race and ethnicity, parents were cognizant of their child's developmental range when ascribing meaning to these concepts and experiences. This theme was evident in every participant interview. Most participants recognized the need to convey meaning in language that was easily understood by their children as well as meanings that were developmentally appropriate as well. In other words, all parents credited children as knowledgeable recipients of racial and ethnic concepts when they are presented in an understandable way. For example, Kim remarked that she provides words in both Greek and English to her sons (18 months and 3.5 years old) while Maria provided an example of how her four-year-old daughter shows her awareness of her Irish heritage. Maria stated "She [daughter] knows she's quarter Irish. But, she says, 'Mom is this quarter Irish music?'"

Some parents, however, expressed challenges with taking complex concepts such as racism and discrimination and intentionally talking to their young child about these issues. Libby commented on the difficulty in fostering racial and ethnic meaning in her five-year-old, under the auspices of development appropriateness best with, "It's hard to tell a little kid, it's [rejection/acceptance of others] too complex. Just trying to figure out the simple thing and what to cut it down to, on their level, has been a challenge." Kim said, "I don't know how much he can absorb at this age," when reflecting on telling Aesopian myths to her son. Maria also talked about remaining sensitive to her child's

developmental range saying, “They’re [children] not necessarily hearing it [race and ethnicity meanings] the way that you’re saying it [meanings].”

Parents were also intentional in the degree to which they engaged in racial and ethnic concepts with their children given the developmental range of their children. Libby provided that she withholds the negatives regarding her ethnic heritage (Polish) given the young ages of her sons. She said, “We don’t bring up the negatives yet—they’re four and seven years old.” Jose and Maria discussed engaging about race with the children by comparing skin tones and hair texture. Jose said, “We talked about everybody’s hair, you know. She’ll talk about Mischa’s [family cat]...Mischa and Daddy have different hair than Mommy and the girls.” Kelly reflected on her children’s dislike of food given their age and habituation to American tastes. She said, “I do German food sometimes, but they [children] would rather have chicken nuggets.”

These participants’ reflections demonstrate that parents observed caution and care when exploring concepts such as race and ethnicity considering the incongruity of the abstract nature of these concepts and their children’s limited ability, due to age, to understand such abstractions. Or, as in Kelly’s example, parents were aware of the developmental context in which their children thrive. Kelly’s children disliked German food much like other young children might dislike grapefruit juice. Kelly was thusly aware that food may not be a format in which to explore other ethnicities with her children. Parents were purposeful in engaging in race and ethnic subject matter while ensuring their children could comprehend the underscored messages concerning race and ethnicity.



The explicit, purposeful dialogue that accompanied meaning-making actions was revealed as a pattern and termed *cultural talk*. When asked about the ways in which she teaches her children about her identity and home culture Libby provided, “We’ll say, ‘Hey, that’s where your father’s family comes from.’ And we show them on a map. And we might look something up in an encyclopedia.” Another example of intentional dialogue, or *cultural talk*, is from Kim who said, “When we are back home [in Greece] I show him [eldest son] pictures all the time of when I was little, show him videos where he’s playing with the sand, and I say, ‘This is Greece.’” Jose shared, “We talked about everybody’s hair...she’ll [daughter] talk about Mischa’s. Mischa and Daddy have different hair than Mommy and girls. That sort of thing.”

Comments such as these provided evidence that parents were mediators of the manner in which their children discovered, explored, and experienced race and ethnicity. Parents used *cultural talk* as the primary means of fostering cultural awareness in their children, though the *cultural talk* used other tools such as surface-level experiences as the mode in which the meaning of the *cultural talk* was presented. Parents also employed visual and technological references in teaching their children about their race and ethnicity, and the meanings associated with them.

Parents were also intentional in how they explored race and ethnicity with their children by the types of media and other tools with which they used to assist them in exposing their children to race, ethnicity, and culture. For example, parents incorporated technology such as Skype and Google Earth when discussing the places and peoples that comprise their family culture. Parents sought to provide realistic examples and visuals that supported their *cultural talk* messages in an effort to make abstract, global concepts

more absorbable for their children. This was seen in parents' use of developmentally appropriate music, clothing, books, storytelling content, reference materials (e.g., encyclopedias) and pictures/photos.

These themes demonstrated that parents are extremely critical in fostering cultural awareness as they intentionally introduce, withhold, filter, and elaborate on racial, ethnic, and cultural topics. This was further supported by learning about how parents collaborate with teachers in an effort to foster their child's cultural awareness.

*Parents' collaboration with Kids' Corner.*

The second research objective of this study was to learn about parents' experiences in collaborating with schools to teach their children about culture. While exploring this research question, it was revealed that:

- Parents conceptualize different roles for themselves and teachers
- Parents communicate about race and ethnicity in a similar way of sharing private information
- Parents believed Kids' Corner staff would be responsive if diversity needs were brought to their attention

The pertinent findings of RQ2 are discussed below.

*Conceptualizing parent and teacher roles*

The first theme to emerge in relation to RQ2 was that parents viewed their role very differently from that of the teacher's role with specific regard to fostering their child's cultural awareness. Parents thought themselves to be the primary persons responsible for fostering their child's cultural awareness. Conversely, the school, or

teachers, were perceived by parents as facilitators of introducing race and ethnicity information to their children.

Jose said, “Home should be the primary place where those things [teaching racial and ethnic topics] happen.” Kim said, “Obviously, it’s my role as his mom and his dad also to teach him about our backgrounds. I don’t expect them to teach him about Greece, or talk about Greece all the time. But, talk about different countries and talk about different areas.”

Parents did acknowledge, however, that school settings should be a part of teaching their child about race and ethnicity and that teachers should be responsive to racial and ethnic needs as they arose. These needs were explicit racial and ethnic needs (e.g., scaffolding the use of Spanish words in the classroom), instances in which these concepts arose surrounding family traditions or travel experiences (e.g., participating in Greek Holy Week or travel to Mexico), and situations in which children’s curiosity about race and ethnicity occurred in the classroom setting (e.g., curiosity about hair texture). While reflecting on this Kelly said, “I think that, especially, you can bring in different speakers and different people to talk about their culture.” Libby offered, “Where I learned about, um, equal rights, civil rights, was at school..it wasn’t from home. So, it’s important to bring it into the schools.”

Furthermore, during Jose and Maria’s interview they also reflected on their experiences with race and ethnicity under the auspices of interacting with Kids’ Corner. Jose said, “No matter what, even if they [teachers] don’t talk about any other cultures, I don’t care. I would try to give them [daughters] that at home because that’s what

happened to me. Everything I ever received, a lot of cultures, about the world, and everything else, was at home. In school, it was completely all technical.”

Maria offered, “My kids are a lot more aware of languages, different food, different...I just figure, like, we have, we have diversity up the *wazoo*. Like, we have all sorts of friends from other countries, they’re [daughters] exposed to all sorts of things. The neighbors, the family’s just like ours. Mom is White, speaks Spanish, Dad is Mexican. And the kids are growing up much like ours except they speak Spanish in their house...And, um, so to us it’s like that area is covered.” Here, Jose and Maria are speaking to their primary responsibility of teaching their daughters about race and ethnicity, as opposed to their children acquiring that information first at Kids’ Corner. Maria discusses how her children are primarily exposed to diversity in the home and community (e.g., multiple ethnicities, languages, family friends). Thus, it is a secondary goal for this family to have diversity exposure in the classroom/early childhood program.

Libby reflected on her understanding of these roles as well. She offered:

“I see Asian children here, Black children, Hispanic. It’s a good group of mix of children here. The kids have come home with different information, with Chinese words, or whatever else. It’s being incorporated. Maybe not enough. But, just day-to-day it gives us opportunities to talk about different kinds of people. Because one of the kids might say ‘so-and-so,’ who might be of a different race than we are, did this. And, we can. It opens up opportunities to talk about how different families to things differently or whatever.”

In Libby’s above reflection, she is indicating that her child is immersed in diversity by attending Kids’ Corner. However, her son’s experiences at Kids’ Corner are

supplemental experiences with race and ethnicity that she can intentionally guide and discuss. This supports the theme that parents viewed themselves as primarily responsible for why, and how, they fostered their child's cultural awareness.

Participants saw themselves as having primary roles in teaching their children about race and ethnicity (and teachers as facilitators). Interestingly, one participant, Kim, discussed having a facilitator role regarding non-cultural topics such as language skills, social skills, and physical ability. She reflected on deferring to her son's teachers on such matters of normative development:

"It's like when [youngest son] was born [oldest son] starting acting like a baby... You know parents sometimes don't want to see certain things so I rely on them...you're the experts. You guys notice things that I don't bring up, please tell me because you are...I trust you. You see so many children. I think my child is perfect. And they [teachers] have been wonderful, telling me they notice something or assuring me that things are going well, that he develops well."

Reflections such as these informed RQ2 in the sense that parents viewed Kids' Corner role as collaborative, as opposed to primary, in fostering their child's cultural awareness. Teachers and staff were expected to supplement deep and surface level engagements into race and ethnicity by first being responsive to parents' communication attempts.

### ***How parents communicate about race and ethnicity***

While exploring parents' experiences with teachers in an effort to foster their child's cultural awareness, insight was gained on how parents communicated with their child's teachers about race and ethnicity. Participants reflected upon multiple means of

communicating with their child's teachers. These strategies included: home visits; two way notebooks; pick-up and drop-off communication; e-mailing; and an open door policy.

When reflecting on how Kid's Corner was responsive to the cultural needs of their child, all parents reflected on the home visits of their child's new target teacher that occurred at the beginning of each year. Parents reflected how the home visit set the tone in which parents and teachers could discuss a child's needs related to race, ethnicity, culture, and diversity. In essence, parents would inform teachers of racial and ethnic information they felt teachers needed to know.

Maria provided, "I think that target teachers, you know, they're very open and they ask, 'Is there anything that we should know?' 'Is there anything we should do?'" Maria went on to say that such an invitation to future conversations, about all child matters (not simply race and ethnicity exclusively) was not only established but confirmed their responsiveness. She also specified that teachers do not initiate race and ethnicity conversation, but are responsive when prompted. She said, "They don't specifically seek us out, or this that, or the other. But, I think what we've told them in the past is, um, like you know, just, if you happen to know any words in Spanish, maybe you can reinforce it."

Kim also spoke about how the home visit was critical in establishing parent-teacher communication:

"The first thing they [teachers] ask is 'What are your goals? You know, what do you want [at the home visit]?' I love that because I can communicate that at the

first visit, but with the two-way notebook. We-I use it, now, religiously! I can tell the teacher on a weekly basis this is what he is up to, this is what he'd like to do."

Parent-teacher communication extended throughout the semester (past the initial home visit) vis-à-vis two-way notebooks, drop-off and pick-up conversation, and intentional communication such as e-mails. Kim further reflected about the use of the two-way notebook, "I feel comfortable telling them [teachers] about Easter...[son] will be talking about what he did during Holy Week. I don't feel uncomfortable telling them that or preparing them for that." Libby said, "There's lots of communication, formal...informal you can drop in and talk to anyone at any point and for it's for real. It's not just lip service."

Participant reflections revealed that Kids' Corner implemented strategies (e.g., the home visit) that supported their initial discussions with parents on racial and ethnic topics. Within this study, participants reflected on these experiences that they, as parents, initiated. Save for discussions about the home visit, parents did not share any experiences that were initiated by Kids' Corner staff or teachers. Race and ethnicity needs were shared in a similar fashion as other private information (e.g., child health needs) in that parents initiated the communication (and potential collaboration) process.

Parents initiated communication with teachers in a number of child development contexts inclusive of race and ethnicity. This was evidenced by: their conceptualization of primary parent and secondary teacher roles; and their ascension into conversation starter roles with their child's teacher(s). However, communication strategies were not confirmed in conjunction with classroom observations or teacher report and should be interpreted under that consideration.

### *Kids' Corner responsiveness and parental satisfaction*

Little explicit collaboration with teachers and staff was evidenced in interview data as parents viewed themselves as carrying the primary responsibility to foster their child's cultural awareness. Rather, parents believed Kids' Corner staff would be responsive if diversity needs were brought to their attention.

When asked to reflect upon their collaboration efforts some parents mentioned topics *not* related to culture and diversity. Participants reflected on why they felt that Kids' Corner staff and teachers would be responsive to their needs related to diversity by sharing other evidence of responsiveness. For example, Kim reflected, “[Oldest son] was stuttering at some point. I sent an e-mail to some of the head teachers there. And they were so responsive. Giving me articles to read. Sending me information. Uh, he has asthma so they write down in a book when they observe him coughing. Like, you know, those sorts of things. I believe they are extremely responsive to my needs or my concerns.”

Similarly, Kelly said, “When we had [behavior] problems with [son], we sent emails and then we actually went in and sat down with [head and master teachers as well as director]. Um, just to talk it out and figure out what's causing the issue (inaudible) a team. I like that it wasn't just ‘This is your problem ‘cause you're the parents’ or ‘This is your problem ‘cause it's at school.’ It was how can all of us fix this problem.”

Only three participants indicated having had explicitly communicated a collaboration need, related to race and ethnicity, to teachers. They were: Jose and Maria; and Kim.

Jose and Maria discussed a desire for their daughter's teacher to scaffold her use of Spanish words in the classroom. However, they did not discuss whether this need had



been met. Instead, they reflected on how other aspects of diversity represented positive collaboration. They cited: participating in race, ethnicity, and socio-cultural inquiries as Kids' Corner is a laboratory school; classroom events that included Jose in making piñatas and sharing Mexican culture; and racial and ethnic diversity among teachers. For example, Maria said, "They do things to support cultural things...I took part in, um, somebody else's study [on cultural awareness]." Jose shared, "When it was that time of, uh, doing the demonstration where I made the piñatas."

With regard to how other aspects of diversity represented positive collaboration, Maria reflected, "She [target teacher] said her dad didn't speak Spanish, but her grandpa did. And, I think, I think that meant a lot to [daughter]. I mean, no, not to overblow it, but she noticed. She said, 'Her skin matches mine.' And she noticed that. That that girl was like her...The teachers are, you know, really open to whatever we say and they do their best to implement it." Jose and Maria did explicitly state that they valued educational quality over and above cultural components. However, Jose and Maria did differ on how they placed cultural education as a part of overall educational quality. Maria went on to reflect:

"Our, the top thing is like academic, cultural second...So, if it was a Whitey, non-diverse school that was like better academically somehow we would choose that over some place that was sort of that was really multi, like on the bandwagon with...our first goal would be, you know, are they getting the best education? But, that said, I consider all that cultural stuff to be part of the education."

Conversely, Jose said:

“Before meeting her, to me the most important thing was the technical aspect. You know? They teach very well the science and technology, I’ll go. No matter what, even they don’t talk about any other cultures, I don’t care. I would try to give them that at home because that’s what happened to me. Everything I ever received, a lot of cultures, about the world, and everything else, was at home. In school, it was completely all technical.”

The other participant to explicitly indicate she had communicated race and ethnicity needs to teachers was Kim. Kim discussed the importance of preserving the Greek language for her son. She had explicitly expressed this importance to her son’s teachers with, “The teachers, obviously, don’t speak Greek. I don’t expect them to speak Greek, but I told them, if he says something you don’t understand...it’s hard because I know it’s tricky, and you want him to speak well, but maybe he’s trying to say something in Greek. Ask is this what you’re saying, other than saying this is wrong. Ask him to repeat it. Maybe he’s trying to say glass. Maybe he’ll say *pateerie* or ask him in English.” Kim did not explicitly state if she knew that teachers were implementing this strategy.

Similar to Jose and Maria, Kim discussed other aspects that indicated Kids’ Corner was responsive to diversity. Kim reflected, “That’s why I thought this [Kids’ Corner] is a great place...I saw all kinds of different, one of the instructors was Chinese. She tells the children “hi” in Chinese, because they were asking. I thought, ‘This is fantastic.’ She also had an accent when she was talking.”

Though little explicit collaboration was seen in this study, parents did express a sense of trust in their providers that such cultural awareness collaboration would be

helpful and positive. It was suggested, from the resulting themes of RQ2, that parents were confident that Kids' Corner would meet their child's diverse needs of race and ethnicity based on their responsiveness in other matters.

### Quantitative Data

Group means for each subscale, factor, and overall score on the SEE and PTRS were computed. Individual participant scores were then categorized as High or Low for each subscale and factor by use of a mean split. Finally, individuals were grouped together as High Group or Low Group for each subscale, factor, and total. Group means, standard deviations, and High Group/Low Group designations were as follows:

**Table 1. Participant SEE and PTRS scores**

	SEE EFE <i>M = 4.90</i> <i>SD = 1.39</i>	SEE EPT <i>M = 4.51</i> <i>SD = .93</i>	SEE ACD <i>M = 5.52</i> <i>SD = .97</i>	SEE EA <i>M = 5.05</i> <i>SD = .67</i>	<i>SEE</i> <i>Overall</i> <i>M = 4.93</i> <i>SD = 0.98</i>	PTRS Joining <i>M = 4.64</i> <i>SD = .23</i>	PTRS Comm. <i>M = 4.76</i> <i>SD = .54</i>	PTRS <i>Overall</i> <i>M = 4.66</i> <i>SD = .26</i>
<b>Jose</b>	2.53 LG	4.28 LG	3.80 LG	4.25 LG	3.35 LG	4.52 LG	5.00 HG	4.62 LG
<b>Maria</b>	5.93 HG	<b>5.86</b> HG	<b>6.00</b> HG	<b>5.75</b> HG	<b>5.90</b> HG	4.52 LG	5.00 HG	4.62 LG
<b>Kim</b>	5.33 HG	3.28 LG	<b>6.00</b> HG	4.75 LG	4.90 LG	4.73 HG	5.00 HG	4.79 HG
<b>Libby</b>	<b>5.80</b> HG	4.71 HG	<b>6.00</b> HG	<b>5.75</b> HG	5.58 HG	5.00 HG	5.00 HG	5.00 HG
<b>Kelly</b>	4.93 HG	4.43 LG	5.80 HG	4.75 LG	4.93 mean level	4.42 LG	3.80 LG	4.29 LG

*Note: Highest and Lowest scoring participants within each SEE factor and overall score are represented using bold and italic denotation, respectively.*

- SEE Empathic Feeling and Expression (EFE)  $M = 4.90$ ,  $SD = 1.39$
- SEE Empathic Perspective Taking (EPT)  $M = 4.51$ ,  $SD = 0.93$
- SEE Acceptance of Cultural Differences (ACD)  $M = 5.52$ ,  $SD = 0.97$
- SEE Empathic Awareness (EA)  $M = 5.05$ ,  $SD = 0.67$
- SEE Overall  $M = 4.93$ ,  $SD = 0.98$

- PTRS Joining  $M = 4.64$ ,  $SD = 0.23$
- PTRS Communication to Other  $M = 4.76$ ,  $SD = 0.54$
- PTRS Overall  $M = 4.66$ ,  $SD = 0.26$

*SEE.* Among the four factors of the SEE, participants performed the highest with regard to ACD ( $M = 5.52$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ). This indicates that of all ethnocultural empathy aspects, participants were most able to accept others' differences as they related to race, ethnicity, and culture.

Participants performed the lowest with regard to EPT ( $M = 4.51$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ) indicating that, though participants accepted and valued the cultural differences of others, they were least able to engage in perspective-taking of these individuals (or understanding the experiences of these persons). Kim scored the lowest with regard to EPT of all participants.

In order of ascending ability, or skill, SEE factors were: EPT; EFE; EA; and ACD. Participants had a high ability to be empathically aware, which encompasses an awareness of others' feelings and an individual response to these emotions, with particular emphasis on discrimination and prejudice (Wang et al., 2003).

*SEE High and Low Groupings.* Jose comprised the only participant in the SEE EFE LG. This was also the case in the SEE ACD factor. SEE EPT and SEE EA had the same composition with Maria and Libby in HG and Jose, Kim, and Kelly in LG. With regard to the SEE overall, Maria and Libby were the HG and Jose and Kim were the LG. Kelly's overall mean for the SEE rested at the group mean and was not assigned to neither HG nor LG.

*PTRS*. Communication to Other was the highest-rated aspect of quality of relationship ( $M = 4.76$ ,  $SD = 0.54$ ). The Joining subscale ( $M = 4.54$ ,  $SD = 0.23$ ) had the lower of the two subscale means as well as the overall score mean ( $M = 4.66$ ,  $SD = 0.26$ ). Libby reported the highest quality relationship with her child's teacher (5.00) and Kelly reported the lowest quality relationship (4.29).

*PTRS High and Low Groupings*. PTRS Joining HG was comprised of Kim and Libby and the Joining LG consisted of Jose, Maria, and Kelly. PTRS Comm. HG was Jose, Maria, Kim, and Libby. Kelly was the only participant in the PTRS Comm. LG. For overall mean scores on the PTRS, HG participants were Kim and Libby. PTRS LG participants were Jose, Maria, and Kelly.

### **Qualitative By Quantitative Categories**

In this next section, the predominating findings for each combined quantitative group (SEE Combined and PTRS Combined) are identified. That is, the findings for the HG SEE groups are presented, the quantitative findings for LG SEE group are presented and the same for the PTRS. A summative table of quantitative by qualitative findings is provided below. Notable patterns are denoted in italics. Other findings for SEE and PTRS subscales are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Quantitative by Qualitative Comparisons.**

	<b>SEE EFE</b>	<b>SEE EPT</b>	<b>SEE ACD</b>	<b>SEE EA</b>	<b>SEE Overall</b>	<b>PTRS Joining</b>	<b>PTRS Comm.</b>	<b>PTRS Overall</b>
<b>H</b>	Maria Libby Kim Kelly	Maria Libby	Kim Libby Maria Kelly	Maria Libby	Maria Libby  <i>Kelly (mean level)</i>	Kim Libby <i>EI</i>	Jose Maria Kim Libby	Kim Libby <i>EI</i>
<b>L</b>	<i>Jose</i>	<i>Jose</i> Kim Kelly	<i>Jose</i>	<i>Jose</i> Kim Kelly	<i>Jose</i> <i>Kim</i>	Jose Maria Kelly	Kelly	Jose Maria Kelly <i>RI</i>

*Note: Ethnically-identified (EI); Racially-identified (RI)*

Participant High/Low groupings for both measures were reviewed in conjunction with interview data to identify patterns among groups.

*SEE.* Only two participants of the total five were immigrant individuals—Jose, from Mexico, and Kim, from Greece. Both of these participants scored in the LG for the SEE overall which indicates that these individuals have a lower sense of ethnocultural empathy as compared to other participants. This lower empathy was evident in interview data for Jose as he spoke consistently about stereotypes of his own race and ethnicity as well as others. Jose acknowledged his existing stereotypes for other races and ethnicities saying, “I’m not saying that I’m a saint and I don’t have my opinions about Turkish people or Koreans.” In the instance of Jose, at the intersection of time at which this study was conducted, the quantitative data additionally informed his lower ability to engage in perspective-taking with another, different individual that was first identified in qualitative data.

Jose scored low in every SEE factor and was placed in the LG for the SEE overall. This quantitative finding reiterates Jose’s reflections on the discriminations,

prejudices, and biases faced as a Mexican-American. Jose was the only participant to discuss these negative experiences in terms of his present experience with race and ethnicity. Though other participants shared similar experiences, they were discussed within the context of participants' pasts (e.g., Libby's childhood and adolescent environment, from which she made a conscientious separation as an adult). Further, Jose was the only participant to be placed in the Low Group on the SEE EFE and ACD factors. Though Jose reported low quality relationships on the PTRS Joining subscale, and overall, he did report high levels of communication with his children's teachers.

Libby performed in the HG for each SEE factor. It is possible that Libby is an anomaly in this sample, but when considering qualitative data, it is suggested that Libby did have high ability to engage in empathetic thoughts and behaviors with others of different ethnicities and races. This was evidenced in interview data by her pointing out racial and ethnic differences among individuals, prevailing social stereotypes, and her reaction to the status quo such as, "It's not just me believing what I believe in a vacuum. I know that if they make choices, like if one of them wants to date a Black girl, or whatever, that may affect them. But, I would tell them that there might become an issue if you do that. It's your choice and I encourage it but don't think everybody's gonna accept it."

However, it seems that Libby did not engage in activism type behaviors (to counter the status quo) which are oriented to SEE factor EFE as it encompasses, "Communication of discriminatory or prejudiced attitudes or beliefs" (Wang et al., 2003, p. 224).

For example, Libby said:

“I definitely attribute some of my success to my majority status. I could see someone doing the same kinds of things who is not in the majority and not getting the same preference that I might get. It’s very alarming. And I kept going with what I was doing. You can’t change society. But, I recognize that that was a part of what-how I could move where I did.”

Thus, it appears that Libby’s quantitative performance and qualitative categorizations are incongruous.

Furthermore, Kelly’s ethnocultural empathy skills overall rested at the mean, suggesting that she was neither high nor low with regard to these skills. However, Kelly was a part of the LG for SEE EA and, yet, the HG in the SEE ACD. This oddity in performance follows the overall sample’s trend in engaging in SEE EA at a lower level, but engaging in SEE ACD at a high level. Perhaps it should be considered that these measures are self-report and such a trend can suggest that participants may perceive themselves to be apt at accepting others. Yet, performance on other factors suggests otherwise. Perhaps participants responded to demand characteristics in this way.

Moreover, Jose and Maria demonstrated contradictory ethnocultural empathy abilities. For each SEE factor Jose performed in the LG. Conversely, Maria performed in the HG for each factor. This is supported in qualitative data as Jose shared that Maria helped him to engage in appreciating others’ diversity, especially within childcare settings. For example, Maria first said, “Our first goal would be, you know, are they getting the best education? But, that said, I consider all that cultural stuff to be a part of the education. Jose elaborated, “She-she’s, you know, she [Maria] has educated me on a



lot of things and one of them is that an education is more than the technical aspect [including culture and diversity]. Because I grew up like that, you know? (...) Maria has educated me.”

*PTRS*. Parents who had been found to be ethnically-identified (Kim and Libby) from interview data had high quality relationships with their children’s teachers. Conversely, parents who were racially-identified (Jose, Maria, and Kelly) had low quality relationships with teachers. Quality of relationship was based on parent perceptions. This finding was supported in qualitative data as Kim and Libby spoke profusely about Kids’ Corner’s responsiveness and levels of communication. They were overwhelmingly satisfied with Kids’ Corner based on their own experiences. Conversely, Jose and Maria shared during their interview that Kids’ Corner staff do not seek them out and when reflecting their satisfaction overall, they cited their daughters’ excitement to attend Kids Corner. They said, “You know that there is something good happening in there, they’re [children] like ‘I don’t want to go home! I don’t want to go home!’” Though Kelly expressed satisfaction with Kids’ Corner, she prefaced her reflection on staff and teachers with, “We [she and her husband] don’t get the full picture. We’re in-and-out.” Kelly’s statement indicates that she has less visibility and communication with her child’s teachers. Libby also rated her relationship with her child’s teachers high in each *PTRS* sub-scale and overall as well.

There were no other discernible patterns in how parents conducted meaning-making actions with regard to their level of ethnocultural empathy. It’s also unknown how deeply these parents’ ethnocultural empathy abilities were related to their parent-teacher relationship.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DISCUSSION

The objectives of this study were to address two research questions: (1) How is cultural awareness fostered within families attending a diverse early childhood program?; and (2) What are ethnically-diverse parents' experiences in collaborating with schools (teachers and staff, the environment itself, and program philosophies) to teach their children about culture? Qualitative findings were supplemented by a parent-teacher relationship assessment and an ethnocultural empathy measure.

#### **Research Question 1**

Qualitative results indicated that fostering cultural awareness in children, from the role of the parent, is a process that seems to first originate from the parents' racial or ethnic identity. Explicit interview questions and coding procedures of interview data suggested a participant differentiation between self concept and identity and, furthermore, either ethnic or racial identities. However, identification factors could extend more deeply for participants or otherwise manifest differently than what was evidenced in this inquiry.

Results suggested that parents form racial or ethnic identities that are influenced by their belief systems (of race and ethnicity) as well as social and life experiences. Social experiences for some participants were: encountering discrimination and racism due to their racial or ethnic diversity (in their past and present); and witnessing prejudicial behavior to others based on their ethnic and or racial diversity. Impactful life experiences were, for some participants, having children as passing on racial, ethnic, and cultural meaning became more salient to parents. A causal relationship between belief

systems and experiences was not evidenced and, therefore, it is unknown if experiences first inform belief systems, or if belief systems first inform experiences. Rather, it is possible that belief systems and experiences are symbiotic in nature, simultaneously affecting participant attitudes and expectations while also changing and evolving.

Furthermore, parents displayed tendencies toward either race or ethnicity in terms of their identities and interactions with their children. However, the nested nature of race and ethnicity, with other societal factors such as SES, cannot be denied. The categories of either racial or ethnic identity cannot encapsulate participants. It is possible that the *true* identities of participants are subjective, deeply-held and complex, constantly evolving, and can encompass both race and ethnicity simultaneously in addition to other identities such as gender, religious affiliation and sexual orientation as Banks (2004) suggests. It is possible that participants felt discomfort regarding their majority status, and accompanying privilege, and described identities with skewed positivism.

Moreover, true participant identities are not static. Results of this study revealed that belief systems and experiences were impactful on participants' lenses of race and ethnicity. It is possible that additional experiences, or experiences that were not discussed, have a working affect on identities or, at minimum, racial and/or ethnic group affiliation. Thus, these categorizations of identities describe these participants only at the intersection of their beliefs and experiences at the time of this study, under the descriptions of race and ethnicity in this particular inquiry.

Qualitative data further informed RQ1, revealing that parent identities shaped how race and ethnicity were defined in the home as well as how parents engaged in exploring these concepts with their children. All participants engaged in "surface culture"

experiences with their children to teach them about race and ethnicity. These experiences included exploring food, dress, music, arts and drama, dance, literature, and language (Derman Sparks & Olsen Edwards, 2010, p. 56). It is possible that surface level interactions were employed due to the sensitive developmental range of parents' young children.

However, the degree to which how "deep" deep culture is and how "surface" surface culture is remains unknown. Surface culture interactions were evidenced most in this study. It's possible that the surface nature of these interactions does not implicitly indicate that they are superficially valued by participants. For example, surface level formats such as dress and holiday celebrations may be held to a very deep, meaningful regard by individuals. It is important to note that culture (race and ethnicity) and its accompanying meanings are subjective and individually synthesized and adopted (Schwartz, Zamboanga, Rodriguez & Wang, 2007).

Despite the similarity of surface level interactions employed by parents to foster their child's cultural awareness, the meaning conveyed by the parent during these interactions differed. "Deep culture" meaning (Derman Sparks & Olsen Edwards, 2010) was oriented to family relationships, migration, and gender and social roles. For example, some participants used surface level interactions to teach their children about racial inequality in American society, albeit in a developmentally appropriate way.

Furthermore, the deep level meanings conveyed through surface level engagements differed depending on either the racial or ethnic identity of the parent. Racially-identified parents emphasized racial commonalities and differences to their children. Parents who were ethnically-identified emphasized ethnic information such as

language and family history (e.g., teaching children about how their ancestors lived). However, parents did share both ethnic and racial information with their children despite their primary alignment to either race or ethnicity. Context was influential on emphasizing either racial or ethnic information to children. Overall, parents differed in the meanings they chose to convey to their children about race and ethnicity (e.g., family pride or racial quality). To this end, all parents used *cultural talk* as the explicit, intentional dialogue that accompanied these race and ethnicity interactions.

Parents were sensitive to their child's developmental range, however, and the use of *cultural talk* reflected this sensitivity so that children could comprehend abstract principles. Overwhelmingly, parents had a philosophy that their children were capable of understanding race and ethnicity meanings contingent on the developmentally-appropriate way in which meanings were presented. In addition to this explicit, purposeful dialogue parents also incorporated a variety of visual aids and other media to assist in making race and ethnicity meanings developmentally appropriate. Parents used encyclopedias, maps, family photos, home videos, clothing, as well as internet programs like Skype and YouTube.

Quantitative data revealed that in terms of ethnocultural empathy, parents were most apt at engaging in acceptance of cultural differences as this factor of the SEE was the highest mean of all other factors and combined, overall score. Participants scored the lowest with regard to engaging in empathic feeling and expression. This result is interesting in the sense that, according to literature cited in the introduction of this study, learning about and understanding other's race and ethnicity precedes the acceptance of existing differences (Rush, 2010; Bennett, 2004; Banks, 2009). However, these

participants were less apt to engage in empathetic perspective-taking and expression of that process but performed well with regard to accepting differences. Perhaps there exists a dissonance between what participants perceive their empathic skills to be and what they actually are, insofar as data gathered from this study alone. Moreover, though these parents shared elements of ethnocultural empathy in their goals and actions, the way in which such empathy influenced how cultural awareness was fostered within the home is not known.

Using the quantitative data in combination with the qualitative data, ethnically-identified parents-Jose and Kim-were the only two participants in the LG for the SEE overall. They were also the only immigrant individuals in this study. Perhaps lower empathy scores are related to the challenges of culture duality many immigrants encounter, despite their length of residence in a country (Segal & Mayadas, 2005).

Jose and Kim had particularly unique race and ethnicity narratives given their emigration to the United States. Those immigration experiences were salient to Kim and Jose, as evidenced by the frequency with which they were discussed during interviews, and explicitly described as a part of their ethnic identities. Perhaps these experiences inform how empathetic these individuals could be toward others of differing races and ethnicities. Moreover, Jose scored in the LG for each SEE factor and overall. Of all participants, Jose's interview had the most salience of racism and discrimination than any other participant. Perhaps Jose's individual narrative was particularly skewed toward negative experiences with others as opposed to other participants' more positive experiences and HG scores.

## **Research Question 2**

The second research objective of this study was to learn about parents' experiences in collaborating with schools in an effort to teach their child(ren) about culture. Qualitative analysis revealed that parent-school collaboration was hinged on parents' conceptualization of parent and teacher roles. However, teachers' conceptualization of these roles was not investigated in this inquiry and, therefore, role responsibility was not confirmed. Parents viewed themselves as bearing the primary responsibility of teaching their child about race and ethnicity and schools, specifically teachers, as secondary, supplemental figures. Parents felt that race and ethnicity teachings should begin in the home.

It was also revealed that parents initiated communication with practitioners. This direction of communication seemed to reflect parents' role responsibility regarding the fostering of their child's cultural awareness. Kids' Corner staff and teachers initially established the precedent for the direction of parent-teacher communication. This "openness" was described in generalities, with no specificity awarded to race or ethnicity. Parents were commonly asked, at target teachers' home visits, "What should we know [about your child]?" This seemed to set the tone and climate with which race and ethnicity collaboration would occur.

Parents first introduced race and ethnicity information, concerns, and implementation strategies. Communication between parents and teachers was frequent and ongoing. Most often, parents utilized their child's two-way notebooks to communicate with teachers regarding race and ethnicity, similar to other information. For example, Kim communicated her son's interest in planets whilst also informing his

teacher about his participation in the Greek Holy Week. However, some participants did discuss daily, informal communication at pick-up and drop-off.

Kids' Corner teachers and staff, as perceived by parents, *would* be responsive to their diversity needs if they were communicated. There was little evidence of explicit collaboration seen in this study. Rather, there was an overwhelming atmosphere for trusted responsiveness among parents. Parents felt that Kids' Corner staff and teachers had demonstrated reliability and responsiveness in other child development domains (e.g., health concerns like asthma) and felt that they would perform similarly to any race and/or ethnicity concerns *should* they arise.

Quantitative data provided additional insight into parents' experiences with their childcare providers. Ethnically-identified parents exclusively comprised the High Group in the PTRS: Joining subscale and in the PTRS Overall High Group as well. In essence, ethnically-identified parents reported better quality relationships with their child's teacher(s). Reviewing quantitative by qualitative categories seemed to support the idea that racially-identified and ethnically-identified parents not only construct race and ethnicity differently in their homes (as determined in qualitative analysis) but could possibly have different experiences with their childcare providers.

Parents were not evenly distributed regarding their perceived quality of relationship with their children's teachers. However, communication was the highest rated subscale of the PTRS. This quantitative finding supported the qualitative result that communication was an important component in parents' experiences with teachers.

In an overarching sense, quantitative results further reflected the qualitative results of this study. Participants seemed to differ between racial and ethnic identities.



However, the specifics of those differences remain unknown, as they relate to fostering cultural awareness within the home. Finally, PTRS results indicate that communication was more impactful on the parent-teacher relationship than general congruity, or joining, with teachers. It should be mentioned, however, that perhaps the laboratory school nature of Kids' Corner (featuring new student and target teachers each semester) may have confounded participants' perception of quality of relationship. Nevertheless, the combined use of qualitative and quantitative data suggested that, though parents view themselves as primarily responsible for fostering their child's cultural awareness, their relationship with teachers was important to this process vis-à-vis specific communication channels and attitudes that reflected responsiveness.

In sum, findings from this study align with existing research on children's ability to recognize race and ethnicity in preschool years (Burchinal & Cryer, 2003; Phinney, 2005; Phinney & Chavira, 1995; Hernandez-Sheets, 2005; Gonzalez-Mena, 2001). Results seemed to misalign with existing research regarding (diverse) parents' relationships with teachers (Olivos, 2006). This study determined that, in this inquiry, ethnically-diverse parents had not only high-quality relationships with teachers, but better relationships than parents who were racially-identified. This finding is contradictory to Olivos (2006) stance that diverse parents are often excluded. However, it should be considered that the recruitment site and participant sample may not best represent a typical parents' experience with diversity in relation to their parent-teacher relationship.

### **Limitations**

The use of quantitative measures is a limitation of this study given the inability to perform applied statistical analyses considering the small sample size. Thus, quantitative

data can inform qualitative data but not by use of more statistically sound means (e.g., effect size).

Another limitation of this study is the mixed methods analysis employed without the use of a mixed methods study design. Though quantitative data gave additional insight into qualitative findings, the way in which these two data types were used is contradictory to methodology of other qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods studies. This study also has limited trustworthiness and it would be wise, in future endeavors, to establish additional data sources in conjunction with validity strategies such as member checking.

It should be noted as well that participants may not best represent ethnic and racial diversity. Though they were recruited in relation to their child's diversity, it could be said that participants were primarily majority status, with the exception of Jose and Kim. The sample of this study was also comprised of affluent individuals with high levels of education and SES. It is possible that their experiences with race and ethnicity may differ due to their ability to seek out high quality child care and experiences for their children and an ability to engage in higher-order thinking (e.g., metacognition).

It is certainly possible that parents of ethnically and racially diverse children, from less affluent backgrounds, may experience race and ethnicity differently, and thus, transmit different cultural information to their children. It is also possible that gender (and other socialization factors) is a variable of interest in learning more about how parents foster their child's cultural awareness but was not addressed in this inquiry.

Moreover, other aspects of parental engagement may measure how these parents collaborate with their children's teachers in an effort to foster cultural awareness. For

example, an examination of type of communication may be a better indicator of relationship quality.

Additionally, this study originally intended to incorporate Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory in analysis procedures but relied on a prior coding of race and ethnicity concepts in participant interviews. Analysis was then continued using open coding. Though informative, the resulting patterns were not analyzed with the consideration of this framework. It is possible that there exist a number of nuanced beliefs and interactions within specific ecological levels that could be better identified by using this framework during all levels of coding and analysis. Furthermore, using this lens to analyze data could result in a different interpretation of results.

Finally, researcher bias was not completely controlled due to absence of collaboration with a secondary researcher or peer debriefer. Though steps were taken to account for some bias, it is possible that the longstanding relationship of the researcher with parents confounded results (e.g., skewed parent reporting of relationship with their child's teacher).

### **Future Directions**

Future studies of a similar nature should address these limitations as well as consider how cultural awareness is fostered within families from specific ethnic or racial groups. Perhaps immigrant individuals actualize race and ethnicity differently from non-immigrant individuals. A pursuit of interest would be to incorporate: a quantitative ethnic identity assessment such as The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992); or a measure that specifically measures cultural competence, such as the Intercultural Development Inventory (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003). Furthermore, research

could explore how key family members (e.g., grandparents and aunts) influence how cultural awareness is fostered within children.

Future endeavors could consider conducting a multi-case study across communities with various SES levels. Most importantly, future studies of a similar nature should engage in home observations, related to race and ethnicity in an effort to corroborate qualitative findings, disconfirm findings, and identify additional aspects of the fostering process that are idiosyncratic. Future research studies may address how meaning-making actions change due to the increased age and developmental range of children (e.g., the use of deep level culture formats) as well as how having children changes an individual's racial and ethnic identity formation.

Moreover, future research could expound on the quantitative by qualitative comparisons completed in this inquiry by conducting line item analysis or categorical analysis methods in conjunction with these qualitative themes. Perhaps a similar method, conducted with a larger sample, would reveal more insights into the interrelationships of empathetic characteristics with how cultural awareness is fostered within families.

### **Implications**

This study found that fostering cultural awareness in children is greatly impacted by parents and, specifically, their racial and ethnic identities. Parents discussed the uncertainty and pressure of appropriately teaching their children about abstract racial and ethnic concepts as well as instilling meaning and pride to their own, individual racial and ethnic composition. Thus, these results are helpful to individuals collaborating with parents of young children such as teachers in an effort to support parents' goals and expectations. Results may be additionally helpful to individuals collaborating with

ethnically-diverse families as they foster multiple identities simultaneously (e.g., children of immigrant individuals).

Through reviewing these results, practitioners can gain insight on how to begin conversations with parents about race and ethnicity—the race and ethnicity within the family as well as others. Such conversations may be a more active component of collaboration, as opposed to leaving parents to introduce the topics. Parents valued the ability to discuss racial and ethnic concepts with teachers as they arose. Though parents may have had few conversations up to the point at which interviews were conducted, they were confident that such matters would be handled appropriately and professionally, to the betterment of their child. This suggests that parents view openness to diversity as critical to potentially collaborating with teachers and staff.

Furthermore, teachers stand to benefit in understanding how parents view the teacher's role in fostering their child's cultural awareness (as parents view this as their primary responsibility). Such understanding can spur professional development opportunities (informal and formal) especially in homogenous settings that can better enable teachers to feel efficacious in collaborating with parents to best meet children's diverse needs.

Additionally, early childhood programs could consider implementing specific culturally-responsive policies and strategies as well as to purposefully communicate those programming goals to parents (e.g., parent handbooks and orientations). The parents of this study found limited evidence to such effect at Kids' Corner with the exception of diversity in the family community. Evaluation of culturally-responsive programming can also create conversations to facilitate home-school transitions and as well as *intentionally*

supplement parental teachings of race and ethnicity. Results pose an ability to help teachers modify practice as it relates to culturally-responsive efforts and meeting the child's individual diversity needs.

Finally, these results inform the current body of literature on race and ethnicity development within families of young children. Overall, these results counter more substantiated trends of: the connection of learning about others prior to accepting them (Banks, 2009; Bennett, 2004; Ruth, 1997); and the exclusion that many diverse parents face with their childcare professionals (Olivos, 2006). It is important to interpret results of this study with caution due to the limitations identified as well as the non-representative nature of this sample. However, it would be worthy to consider that perhaps empathetic components of cultural awareness and competence may require further attention by researchers since, in this sample, participants were least apt to engage in empathic feeling and expression but could accept the ethnic and racial differences of others. It is possible that empathy and acceptance incorporate different cognitive and emotional processes and may not as interrelated in some individuals.

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## APPENDIX A

### Participant Demographics

	<b>REB</b>	<b>SREB</b>	<b>REC</b>	<b>EL</b>	<b>SEL</b>	<b>HYI</b>
<i>Maria</i>	White	Hispanic/ Latino	White Hispanic/Latino	Master's Degree	Doctorate	Above \$80,000
<i>Jose</i>	Hispanic/ Latino	White	White Hispanic/Latino	Doctorate	Master's	Above \$80,000
<i>Kim</i>	Greek	White	Greek White	Doctorate	Doctorate	Above \$80,000
<i>Libby</i>	White English Polish		White English Polish Norwegian Finnish Swiss Irish	Master's Degree	Doctorate	Above \$80,000
<i>Kelly</i>	White	White German	White German	Master's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Above \$80,000

Labels:

REB: Racial and Ethnic Background

SREB: Spouse's Racial and Ethnic Background

REC: Racial and Ethnic Composition of Immediate, Nuclear Family

EL: Education Level

SEL: Spouse's Education Level

HYI: Household Yearly Income

## APPENDIX B

## Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Parents' Beliefs About Cultural Competence and its Components	Parents' Experiences with Childcare Providers and Educational Settings
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How would you describe your ethnic and racial identity (or identities)?</li> <li>2. What does it mean to be <u>specific ethnicity/race</u> to you?</li> <li>3. What are your thoughts about your ethnic and racial identity? Is this identity important to you?</li> <li>4. How do you convey these feelings (e.g., importance) to your children?</li> <li>5. What kinds of things do you do to teach your child/ren about your ethnic identity (identities) and home culture (e.g., speaking your native language and celebrating specific holidays)?</li> <li>6. What is your main goal in teaching your child about your family's ethnic identity?</li> <li>7. How important is it (to you) that your child develops a strong sense of ethnic identity (or is a minor sense of ethnic identity alright)?</li> <li>8. How important is it (to you) that your child develop an appreciation of cultures and ethnicities that are not their own? Why or why not?</li> <li>9. Why is it important to teach your child about your family's ethnic identity as well as other cultures/ethnicities?</li> <li>10. Is this appreciation as significant as other child development goals/milestones such as your child writing his or her name?</li> <li>11. Do you want your child/ren to make friends with children of other cultures, races, and ethnicities?</li> <li>12. What kinds of activities, behaviors etc. do you do with your children to: teach them about other cultures?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Do you think that school/childcare is a part of teaching your child about other cultures and ethnicities? Provide some examples to this effect.</li> <li>14. Is your childcare facility prepared to care for your child in terms of culture and ethnicity?</li> <li>15. Have you shared this interest in ethnic identity and culture with your childcare professionals?</li> <li>16. How receptive are your childcare professionals to your beliefs?</li> <li>17. What kind of support have you witnessed or received with regard to teaching your child about other cultures (e.g., CRP activities, a reflective classroom environment, etc.)?</li> <li>18. Are you aware of any aspects of cultural inclusion within your center (e.g., mission statement, professional development events, etc.)?</li> <li>19. How do providers seek your input in an effort to meet your child's needs or learn about your child?</li> <li>20. What are your overall thoughts about your childcare professionals' capacity to meet your child's cultural needs?</li> </ol>

## APPENDIX C: The Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE)

**Wang, Y.-W., Davidson, M. M., Yakushko, O. F., Savoy, H. B., Tan, J. A., & Bleier, J. K. (2003) The Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy: Development, validation, and reliability. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 50(2), 221-234.**

## **Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE)**

**Yu-Wei Wang  
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### Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE)<sup>1</sup>

Please respond to each item using the following scale:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Moderately Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Agree</b>	<b>Moderately Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

1. I feel annoyed when people do not speak standard English.
2. I don't know a lot of information about important social and political events of racial and ethnic groups other than my own.
4. I know what it feels like to be the only person of a certain race or ethnicity in a group of people.
9. I seek opportunities to speak with individuals of other racial or ethnic backgrounds about their experiences.
10. I feel irritated when people of different racial or ethnic background speak their language around me.
13. When I interact with people from other racial or ethnic backgrounds, I show my appreciation of their cultural norms.
14. I feel supportive of people of other racial and ethnic groups, if I think they are being taken advantage of.
18. I express my concern about discrimination to people from other racial or ethnic groups.
21. I don't care if people make racists statements against other racial or ethnic groups.
22. When I see people who come from a different racial or ethnic background succeed in the public arena, I share their pride.
24. I recognize that the media often portrays people based on racial or ethnic stereotypes.
25. I am aware of how society differentially treats racial or ethnic groups other than my own.

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<sup>1</sup> Some items have been omitted to protect the copyright and distribution guidelines of this measure. For the full measure contact Dr. Yu-Wei Wang. Permission to use must be authorized by Dr. Wang.

27. I do not understand why people want to keep their indigenous racial or ethnic cultural traditions instead of trying to fit into the mainstream.

31. It is difficult for me to relate to stories in which people talk about racial or ethnic discrimination they experience in their day to day lives.

Factor 1: Empathic Feeling and Expression (15 items)

3, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 26, 30

Factor 2: Empathic Perspective-Taking (7 items)

2, 4, 6, 19, 28, 29, 31

Factor 3: Acceptance of Cultural Differences (5 items)

1, 5, 8, 10, 27

Factor 4: Empathic Awareness (4 items)

7, 20, 24, 25



APPENDIX D: The Parent-Teacher Relationship Scale (PTRS)<sup>2</sup>**Parent-Teacher Relationship Scale: Teacher**

The following statements are about your relationship with your child's teacher. For each one, please circle the number that best indicates how much you agree with the statements.

	Strongly disagree	Mildly disagree	Not sure	Mildly agree	Strongly agree
1. We trust each other.	1	2	3	4	5
2. It is difficult for us to work together.	1	2	3	4	5
3. We cooperate with each other.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Communication is difficult between us.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I respect this teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
6. This teacher respects me.	1	2	3	4	5
15. We agree about who should do what regarding my child.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I expect more from this teacher than I get.	1	2	3	4	5
17. We have similar expectations of my child.	1	2	3	4	5
18. This teacher tells me when s/he is pleased.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I don't like the way this teacher talks to me.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I tell this teacher when I am pleased.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I ask this teacher's opinion about my child's progress.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I ask this teacher for suggestions.	1	2	3	4	5

<sup>2</sup> Some items have been omitted to protect the copyright and distribution guidelines of this measure. For the full measure contact Dr. Kathleen Minnke. Permission to use this measure must be obtained by Dr. Minke.

## APPENDIX E: Recruitment Flyer

**Title:** The Role of the Parent in Fostering Cultural Awareness**IRB # 12560**

Primary Investigator: Kimberly Blich

Secondary Investigator: Helen Raikes, Ph.D.

**Purpose:**

This research project will explore the parental role in fostering cultural awareness within ethnically-diverse (and racial non-majority) families as well as parental perceptions on cultural competence within early childhood settings. You must be 19 years of age or older to participate. You are invited to participate in this study because you are a parent of a child aged birth-to-five years and among an ethnically-diverse or racial non-majority family.

**Procedures:**

You will be asked to provide demographic information as well as complete two measurements and be interviewed. The interview is oriented to exploring your familial beliefs and practices that foster cultural awareness and your perceptions regarding cultural competence of professionals within early childhood settings. Research sessions (completing the instruments and interview) will be audio taped and last approximately 90 minutes and will be held at your convenience within your home or at Kids' Corner.

If you have any questions regarding this research or participation, please contact the Primary Investigator at the information listed below. You may also contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board at (402) 472-6965 with questions or concerns regarding this research.

**If you would like to participate please contact the Primary Investigator at the information listed below.**

**Name and E-mail of Investigators<sup>3</sup>:**

Kimberly Blich, Primary Investigator  
*kimberly.blich@huskers.unl.edu*

Helen Raikes, Ph. D., Secondary Investigator  
*hraikes2@unl.edu*

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<sup>3</sup> Cellular phone numbers were made available on this flyer but are omitted for thesis dissemination.