D1: *Contextual and Cultural Variation in Family Decision-Making about ECE*
Thursday, April 18, 2019
10:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. | *Wilson/Roosevelt*

1. Descriptive Information

D1: *Contextual and Cultural Variation in Family Decision-Making about ECE*
 	
   To meet the needs of culturally diverse families, ECE programs must address the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of children. Using a multi-dimensional definition of access, this session highlights novel approaches to understanding the needs and concerns that influence ECE access for different racial and ethnic groups. Researchers will share data drawn from a range of ECE arrangements and states, highlighting how cultural and contextual considerations shape families' access to ECE programs.
   The first presentation will share how an ecologically valid, culturally informed model of ECE decision-making among Latino foreign-born parents with children ages 3-5 was developed through analysis of qualitative data. In the second presentation, findings from AI/AN FACES that emphasize the importance of Native language and culture in Head Start will be shared from a research and program administrator lens. The presenters will describe how the unique cultural and linguistic needs of AI/AN children play a role in accessing ECE programs. The third presentation will share patterns of enrollment for children ages 3-5 in Tulsa, OK, which has plentiful options for publicly funded ECE. Factors associated with program selection, including ethnicity and home language, will be described. The fourth presentation uses qualitative data to explore undocumented Central American immigrant mothers' desired characteristics of care for their children. In this presentation, culturally- and contextually-grounded family needs and preferred ECE arrangements will be explored. Throughout the seminar, drawing upon work across diverse populations, attendees will consider the depth and breadth of issues regarding ECE access from a cultural and community context.
	Facilitators
	   Julia Mendez Smith, University of North Carolina – Greensboro, and **Julia Henly**, University of Chicago
	
	Panelists
	   Kevin Ferreira van Leer, California State University - Sacramento | *Early Childhood Education Decision-Making among Latino Foreign-born Parents: Developing a Culturally-Informed Model*
	
	   Jessica Barnes-Najor, Michigan State University | *Inclusion of American Indian and Alaska Native Language and Culture in Head Start*
	
	   Sherri Castle, University of Oklahoma | *Tulsa Study of Early Education and Development: Patterns of ECE Enrollment and Migration*
	
	   Colleen Vesely, George Mason University | *Undocumented Central American Immigrant Mothers' Search for Care in the Context of Deportation Threat*
	
	Scribe
	   Nazran Baba, ICF

2. Documents Available on Website

1. Contextual and Cultural Variation in Family, Julia Smith
2. Undocumented Central American Immigrants, Colleen Vesely
3. AIAN Language and Culture in HS, Barnes-Najor
4. Enrollment Patterns, Sherri Castle
5. Early Childhood Education Decision-making Among Latino Foreign-born Parents in the United States, Ferreira van Leer

3. Brief Summary of Presentations

    a. Multiple dimensions exist in family decision making that determines household demand and corresponding supply.

- **Summary of Presentation #1: Kevin Ferreira van Leer**

  o Contextualizing the study: Latinx Migrant families and ECE
    - A brief overview and statistics of the LatinX community was provided; refer slides for specific details and data.
    - Center-based high-quality care is beneficial for these immigrant families. Unfortunately, these families are not using center-based care at the same rate as their other counterparts (e.g. White, Black, Asian/Pacific islander).
    - Why is this not happening?
      - Refer to the Accommodation Model.
        o Families are making multiple accommodations. For example: Do I need employment more or child care more? What is the availability of both? Preferences lead to different choices for care.
        o Model's premise: family characteristics, community characteristics, preferences, opportunities and constraints, lead to ECE choices
      - Our goal was to look at how the Accommodation Model manifests itself for Latin immigrant families.
    - Methodology:
      - Conducted focus groups in 4 communities. Included group interviews and follow up analyses of the information collected.
        o Language use: this is a form of social capital – to speak both English and Latin
        o Availability of care settings
    - Participants:
      - 22 parents from 18 families, refer slides for specific details
    - A culturally informed model emerged from talking to these families. Seven themes came up:
      1. Informed preferences
         a. This came up from their explanations that gave more insight into their context.
      2. Belief about development and parental goals
         a. Participants expressed:
            i. The ideal would be when you can care for your own children
            ii. The child is always recording everything, through observation
            iii. Education is okay once appropriate. When is it appropriate for them to be in a learning setting vs another setting? The participants had specific thoughts on this.
            iv. It is important to maintain a language to use within the family, in addition to English
      3. Trusting providers
         a. Protection from maltreatment and danger (e.g. gang activity, turbulence in the household, deportation) was a pressing factor
         b. Character and preparation of the caregiver was important. For example, what kind of person are they? What are their values? Are they a "good" person or a "bad" person?
         c. They think that maternal care is the best, as this has a nurturing way of interaction between the provider and child.
      4. Understanding of ECE
         a. This theme looks at what is available and what it looks like for them
         b. Mexico and Colombia have robust Pre-k programs but they look very different compared to the U.S.
         c. For example, Colombia has the concept of an "infant garden" but they don't see the equivalent to it in the U.S. They are looking for half day programs that are play based.
         d. Knowledge of local options is a factor. For instance, knowing the type of care terms and not knowing them makes it hard to communicate what is available.

5. Perceived context of reception
    a. Prevalence of discrimination and racism
    b. Perceptions of the political climate
6. Understanding of ECE
7. Opportunities and Constraints
    a. These 7 themes give way to ECE selection

- **Summary of Presentation #2: Jessica Barnes-Najor**

    o Introduction
        - Very little research exists on American Indian and Alaskan Native (AI/AN) 3-5 age research.
        - Tribal Early Childhood Research Center is recognized by OPRE and funded through them. It is a collaborative with community partners and research leaders. They have been working together for over 10 years.
        - Project: FACES – Family and Child Experience Survey
            - Being done since 1997 (every 3 years). It is a descriptive study.
            - Approx. 565 federally recognized AI/AN communities
            - If Region 11 families are to have nationally recognized data, we could include them. Something needs to be done about that. Do we want to have an understanding about what is happening in Region 11 programs so that we can compare them with FACES? Yes; but only if we can get data that is meaningful for us. We have embarked on this process.
            - We work with partners such as Mathematica to obtain the data. Refer to slides for detailed results:
                o Just over half of the children have English only spoken at home: 51.5%
                o Just less than half speak some tribal language: 46.3%
            - There is a concern for loss of language (e.g. tribal).
                o Majority of children were in homes where English was the primary language: 94.5%
            - People value knowing tribal languages a lot, even though there is language loss.
            - Classroom and Center staff: refer slides for data.
                o There is observational data: 62% of children were in classroom in which native language use was observed.
            - Native languages should be included in the conversation and context of revitalization
                o At the time, people were afraid of including the language in this program. But focus groups showed interest in doing so.

- **Summary of Presentation #3: Sherri Castle**

    o Patterns of Enrollment, Migration, and Classroom Experiences Across 3- and 4-year-old Publicly Funded Preschool
        - Interested in enrollment patterns for programs and researchers. The work is being done in partnership with Georgetown University. We started with 3 year-olds and we have funding to follow these children through 4th grade (2023).
    o Pre-K does have an impact in entering kindergarten with a boost
        - Looked at 2 key research questions:
            - Q1: What were the patterns of enrollment migration across the 3- and 4-year old years in the Tulsa SEED sample?
            - Q2: What predicts exiting Head Start for Tulsa Public Schools after Y1?
    o Why Tulsa?
        - It has some interesting developments taking place in early education.
        - It has universal high penetration of Pre-K
        - It has a large and diverse urban population

- Research Q1
  - Migration patterns – where did they go
    - 54% remained in HS for a second year; half typically exit
    - 24% went to large urban district, refer slides for data.
- Research Q2
  - It is important to look at what looks to be the reason underlying the exit of HS after 1 year, and to know what that will tell us about our programs and public school districts.
    - We gathered demographic data. It should be noted that none of the data is significant, some of it was surprising to us.
    - Of families choosing public school Pre-K. We looked at child assessment scores, cognitive skills, and behavioral skills.
      - Children who exited HS to go to public schools had higher scores in letter word tests and applied problems. Children who are stronger academically tend to be looking for public Pre-K.
      - Behavior markers:
        - Children rated higher in disruptive behavior tended to stay in HS more.
      - Classroom experiences
        - Not too illuminating.
      - Asked parents, what was the most important factor and why did you choose to send your 4 year-old to Pre-K?
        - CAP: it offered the strongest support for development and learning.
        - TPS: it was for convenience
  - Research Question #1
    - HS retains about half of its three year-olds
    - TPS pre-K has a much more diverse group of children in terms of prior ECE experience
  - Research Question #2
    - In terms of demographics, only parent education seems to matter among variables included.
    - Kids who display higher math scores are more likely to leave for TPS.
    - Kids who display more behavior problems are more likely to stay in CAP.
    - Parents who value supports for social development and learning are more likely to stay in CAP.
    - Parents who value convenience are more likely to leave for TPS.
  - Next Steps
    - Future research directions: research on siblings and how that impacts decision making (e.g. convenience of dropping kids in the same school vs different schools)
    - Cannot predict movements among the samples
    - Look at how 2 years of HS experience compares to 1 year? We may not be comparing apples to apples. Higher risk children might need additional considerations.

- **Summary of Presentation #4: Colleen Vesely**

  - Title: Undocumented Central American Immigrant Mothers' Search for Child Care in the Context of Deportation Threats
  - Our work focused mainly on Central American families. We used a community based participatory-research approach. Community partners informed and guided all our work.
  - We also don't just do research. We like to put our ideas into action. Therefore, we follow up research with concrete action steps.
  - Research questions:
    - What is it that mothers desire?
    - How are mothers navigating the ECE system?

- o Data
  - Interviewer-assisted survey
    - Embedded qualitative child care history interviews
    - Families' deportation plans
  - In-depth interviews
    - Obtained mothers' immigration stories
  - Participant characteristics: majority from El Salvador; time in the US is 10 years; majority do not speak or know a little amount of English; 84% are worried about being deported. For more results, refer to the meeting slides.
- o Findings
  - Desired characteristics of care:
    - Not a lot of community trust in this space. It's not that the researchers are outsiders, but within the community itself there is a lack of trust. Parents trust their families first and foremost. They don't really trust neighbors or the neighborhood. In order of preference for care it would be:
      - o Family first
      - o Then center`
      - o Then the neighbor
    - Mothers talked about how children should be treated – that they should be treated like their own. If the caregiver is not treating the child like their own child, then not a preferred choice.
    - Education is important for this community, when the children are old enough.
    - We must keep in mind the specific context in which these families are seeking care. This is a community with a lot of overcrowded housing. They really want care to be outside of that three-bedroom apartment with four or five families living together. They also want the children to be away from television because when in the house that is what they watch most. They also want the care to be away from the neighborhood since they've shared that local gangs sometimes run the park and other safety concerns exist.
    - Learning English is important to them, especially to prepare for kindergarten. They connected this with their observations.
    - Parents saw maternal care was best up to a certain age. They shared that this is till around 2.
    - Need more insight into families with children with special needs and how they are being accommodated or not accommodated for.
    - Cost is another major factor. It slices out a range of options that they could not consider.
    - Location is a big factor for them too.
  - Planning for ECE
    - These families are very planful even though they are trapped within this constrained context.
    - For example, if they found that working non-standard hours didn't work, they will make key decisions like leave a job at night to work some hours during the day and vice versa.
    - Infant care: they reported that there is not enough good access to infant care.
    - Navigating center-based care: finding difficulty with the rules of engagement for this type of care. Sometimes they say reported getting the run around. Paperwork can be complicated and sometimes they report experiencing institutional betrayal (e.g. how they think they are supposed to be helped is not aligning with the help they receive in reality).
    - They report having difficulty understanding how the waitlists work and when to apply.
    - Informal care: this is difficult as it requires ensuring family stability and provider stability. Reports of children being maltreated have deterred some folks from this type of care.

- Implications for action
    - Continue to be informed by communities as you do the work. Have them at the table.
    - We've done:
        - Community ECE registrations
        - Know your rights trainings
        - Created protection networks
        - Worked with local centers regarding access to ECE systems
        - Worked with informal child care providers to address low quality interactions

4. Brief Summary of Discussion

a. **Question:** it seemed like there was a not an emphasis on teaching learning, social, and emotional development for these families. Can you comment?
   i. Response: Think about Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. If the basic needs are not met, then these parents are not going to want to focus on the higher levels. So sometimes they look to these care types to provide those basic needs first. These parents aren't concerned as much about cognitive development when they are trying to meet some of those basic needs first.
b. **Question:** are you'll working with migration or state agencies and the Office of Learning?
   i. Vesley's response: we are working with city governments.
   ii. Najor's response: we work with the tribal community of the state and the tribal government is often faced with a strained relationship.

5. Summary of Key Issues Raised

- Julie's comments to authors: we've moved so far in such a good way, from a static singular choice of child care that they make to having a landscape of choices for these special populations. There is an incredible richness in the rigor of all these programs and it is great to see in this research that was presented today. I also noticed a push back in the way we are trained to do this work from traditional research methodologies of academia to engage in more community-based research with key community partners. Would love to hear more about the community partnerships. From an academic perspective, we must do more to push our institutions to recognize this type of scholarship and the value it brings to getting to the heart of some of these issues through community partnerships.