

2011 STAM – CCPRC Meeting  
Workshop D2  
November 17, 2011, 10:15-11:45 am

## **Child Care Decision-Making among Immigrant Families (Poster Symposium)**

### **Description**

This poster symposium focused on child care decision-making among immigrant families. It included qualitative and quantitative findings across five studies on immigrants from Latin America, Africa, and Asia who are now living in communities across the United States (Colorado, Washington D.C., Maine, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Virginia and Washington). Findings discussed included: parent and program characteristics associated with care choices; immigrant parents' concerns regarding child care, strategies used by child care providers to make child care more comfortable for these families, and ways that immigrant families' child care decision-making experiences compare with native-born families' experiences. Policy and research implications of these recent findings were discussed.

### **Presenters**

Dina Castro, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill  
Erin Oldham LaChance, Oldham Innovative Research  
Juan Pedroza, Urban Institute  
Melissa Raspa, RTI International  
Colleen Vesely, George Mason University

### **Discussant**

Kyle Snow, National Association for the Education of Young Children

### **Scribe**

Jennifer Cleveland, Child Trends

### **1. Documents in Session Folder**

- “Choice of Care Among Low Income Working Families: A Study of Latino Families in the New South;” Dina Castro, Ellen Peisner-Feinberg, Debra Skinner and Adis Liy (Handout)
- “New Americans: The Child Care Choices of Parents of English Language Learners,” Erin Oldham LaChance (Handout)
- “New Americans: Factors Influencing Child Care Decision Making Of Refugee Parents in Portland, Maine,” Erin Oldham LaChance
- “Child Care Choices of Low-Income Working Families: Immigrants in Washington and Rhode Island;” Ajay Chaudry, Juan Pedroza, and Heather Sandstrom (Presentation and Handout)
- “Choice of Care Among Language Minority Families: Evidence from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort;” Melissa Raspa, Peter Einaudi, Azot Derecho, and Kyle Snow (Presentation and Handout)

- “Choice of Care Among Immigrant Families: Symposium Synergies,” Kyle Snow
- “Low-Income Latina and African Immigrant Mothers’ Experiences Selecting and Securing ECCE,” Colleen Vesely (Presentation and Handout)

## 2. Summary of Presentations

- **Introductory Comments:** Kyle Snow
  - Understanding parent choice is guided by the decisions parents make and how those decisions relate to the types of care that are best for kids.
  - The literature is good at describing choice as a product, rather than a process. Being able to explain something from a statistical angle is not the same as describing as something as a process related to choice.
- **Summary of Presentation #1:** Dina Castro
  - *Child Care Choices Among Low-Income Working Families. A Study of Latino Families in the New South.* The goal of this study was to increase knowledge about child care needs and factors related to child care utilization among Latino low-income working families living in the South.
  - Questions focused on (1) family characteristics associated with choice of care, (2) program characteristics associated with the choice, and (3) the parents’ views about quality of care and the extent to which the type and quality of care they use meets their needs. Settings included center-based and home-based care (licensed and family, friend and neighbor care (FFN). Measures included interviews and observations.
  - Data collection was a challenge. Sample was about 400 families, and involved interviews across the State. Most families using home-based care used FFN care.
- **Summary of Presentation #2:** Erin Oldham LaChance
  - *New Americans: The Child Care Choices of Parents of English Language Learners.* Erin discussed an in-depth exploratory study that looked at the child care choices of English-language learners including Mexican immigrants in Denver, and Cambodian, Somali, and Sudanese refugees in Portland, Maine (which is a refugee resettlement area).
  - The study involved focus groups in Colorado and Maine; background interviews with community leaders of study populations; in-depth interviews with anyone who interacted with the study populations in the first 5 years of these children’s lives (social service key players and teachers); and surveys of ECE providers and K–2nd grade teachers.
  - Research Questions included: What factors influence the choice of child care among low-income ELL families? What are their main beliefs about childrearing? What are the characteristics of family, available transportation? What are the broader cultural views that affect parental choice? Do ECE agencies influence their beliefs (e.g., Catholic charities)? What are the perspectives of the service providers about the immigrants’ choices?
  - Among these populations, the researchers saw lower rates of enrollment in child care as compared with U.S.-born children.
- **Summary of Presentation #3:** Juan Pedroza

- *Child Care Choices among Low-Income Working Families: Immigrants in Washington and Rhode Island*. The main focus of this study was: how and why families make child care decisions, the influence of local characteristics on these decisions, and decision making within the larger policy context.
- Protocols focused on family characteristics, community characteristics, parent beliefs, parent opinion, parent preference; sample size – 80 families.
- Research Questions: which factors ultimately influence parents' choice? How does the process of choosing child care interact with contextual factors? How do family characteristics influence their child care decision?
- Methods: high immigrant concentrations, below 250 percent of poverty, parent works at least 20 hrs./week, and child under 5 in non-parental care; two rounds of in-depth qualitative interviews about 1 year apart; interviews averaged 90 minutes in length, and were conducted in English, Spanish, and other languages (with translators).
- **Summary of Presentation #4: Melissa Raspa**
  - *Choice of Care Among Language Minority Families: Evidence from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Birth Cohort*. This study involved secondary data analysis; preschool data (Wave 3), and parent interviews.
  - Three Research Questions: Extent to which demographic characteristics relate to language minority status. Do ELL parents' views of child development and school readiness differ? How do demographics and economics relate to choice of care?
  - Families were categorized into 4 categories and grouped according to home language status.
  - The study describes the population, citizenship, economic status, views on child development, and used modeling to predict type of care at prek.
- **Summary of Presentation #5: Colleen Vesely**
  - *Low-Income Latina and African Immigrant Mothers' Experiences Selecting and Securing ECCE*. Research questions included: How do immigrant mothers navigate the ECCE system? What aspects of this process are unique to immigrant families? How do aspects of this process vary based on mothers' regions of origin (Africa and Latin America)
  - Sample: Qualitative in-depth interview study:
    - 40 mothers, in U.S. about 9 years; for many this was their first experience navigating ECE system; about 75 percent of the mothers were employed.
    - A majority of the family interviews were conducted in the family home; the average length of interview was 2–2 ½ hours.
    - Interviews with African families were conducted in English. Latin American families' interviews conducted interviews in Spanish with translator, which was a limitation of the study. African families said they wished they could have spoken in native language, would have provided a lot more detail.

### 3. Summary of Discussion with Presenters and Participants

- Summary Comments (Kyle Snow).

- Qualitative and quantitative concepts illuminate findings. Mixed-method work is especially important for studies of immigrant families, which often do not present themselves in very large samples.
- Analytically, there is a struggle with disentangling immigration status, refugee status, language minority use, and country of origin. Areas of consideration regarding diversity of families described as immigrant: immigration status, immigration generation and enculturation, refugee versus immigrant status, language use in the home, expectations for early care and education of young children, and discrimination due to race/ethnicity, immigration status, and /or country of origin.
- Must consider disentangling socio-demographics from each other and from cultural and linguistic factors. Constructed models must consider complex inter-relations.
- How are findings related to choice of care to be used? Immigrant families tend not to use center-based care, and they identify some barriers. Do we use findings to address barriers and support and encourage use of center-based care? AND/OR do we consider the choice patterns of families that exist and seek to support their choices?