

Ethnic Community Strategies and Needs for Immigrant and Refugee



Presenter:
Sharon Morrison, PhD

Team:
Paige Smith, PhD
Raleigh Bailey, PhD
Cinthya Saavedra, PhD

Background

- Growing national, state and local awareness that children from immigrant and communities do not receive early care or literacy education services.
- Guilford County Partnership for Children (GCPC) has established as priority areas the need to serve families with LEP and for all children 0-5 to have early literacy experiences.

Project Purpose

- *“Ethnic Community Immigrant Child Care Strategies”*
 - Identify types and context of current care
 - Cultural values, beliefs and practices
 - Problems and needs
 - Identify strategies that can be used to plan “real-time” culturally responsive services
 - Grounded in the experiences and perceived needs of immigrant families



Project Context

North Carolina: New “gateway” Community

Central North Carolina = Guilford County

- Since 1990’s, 400% ↗ Hispanic/Latino immigrant population (mainly from Mexico)
- Resettled African refugees (Sudan, Somalia, Liberia, Congo) and immigrants (Niger, Ghana, Nigeria, Togo), Bosnian Refugees, S. E. Asian Refugees (Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, Burma)
- > 74 languages spoken in school system



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Guilford County Population

Ethnic Group	Number
<u>Africans</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Liberian•Nigeran•Sudanese	1100 2200 2500
Montagnard	5000
Latino	27000



Methods



- Convene steering committee of key representatives from immigrant and refugee communities, lay advisors, advocates, faculty
 - Action-oriented community diagnosis partnership
- Conduct focused group discussions with immigrant mothers/caregivers
 - Interview guide
 - Recruit
 - Audio-tape groups
 - Transcribe data
 - Feedback loop



Focus Group Questions

1. How is it different (similar) raising your children here?
2. There is an old African saying, that is now popular in the United States that goes “it takes a village to raise a child”.
 - Who helps you raise your child? e than at home?
 - What part of your “village” are you missing?
 - Are there new people or places in your “village” here that you wouldn’t have in your home country?
3. What challenges do you face raising your children here?
4. What do you think is important for your children to learn or to do before they go to school?
5. What programs or services would be helpful to you raising your children here?



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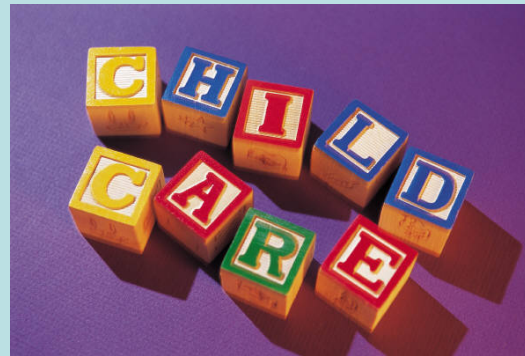
Focus Group Participants

Ethnic group (2 each)	Location	Number of women
Latina	Greensboro	16
Latina	Highpoint	23
Montagnards	Greensboro	9
N. Sudanese	Greensboro	9
S. Sudanese	High Point	17
Liberian	Greensboro	9
Nigerian	Greensboro	13



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Results



Themes



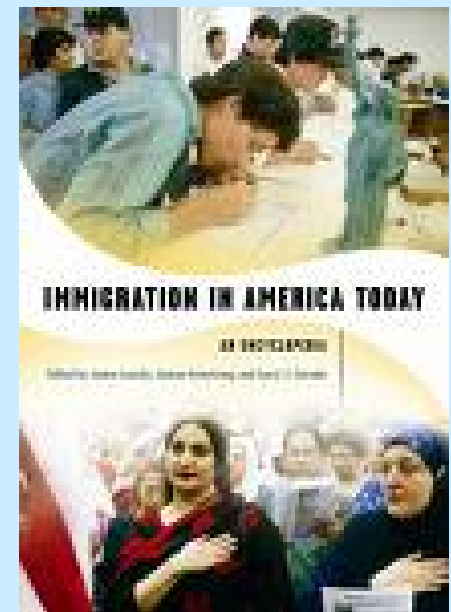
“Coming to America”...Benefits

Living in the America, we benefit from many valuable things. Some of our kids either have physical problem or mental problems and we always get the right help (social workers, nurses, etc...).

[Sudanese mother]

Though we are homesick and dissatisfied to some extent, we choose to stay here because of the children. They must take advantage of the opportunities here...

[Niger mother]



“Coming to America”...Benefits

You cannot compare it, it is much better in here...even if you do not have money you can get an education.

Here it is different. Here you study and you have the opportunities. You have a career and you find a job no matter you know or do not know.

[2 Mexican mothers]



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“Raising children here”...Differences

We think that people in this country where we live are so busy working that they don't have time for their children. Back home children stay with family members, neighbors, even if you have to go away; you don't have to worry about anything. Right here...

[Niger mother]

Back home is more safe than here because back home people can keep an eye your children for you when they are outside but here people can take your children and do something bad to them.

[Liberian mother]



“Raising children here”...Differences

[Here].. economically you might be better off. However, socially and culturally it is completely different... you have to struggle with another language, other customs, and another culture. For the children it really is more difficult, because when they go to school, they have a different way of thinking than their classmates. [Mexican mother]

... it costs too much to raise children here in this country compared to our home country; you have to buy diapers, formulas, car seats, and all those things that are very expensive and that you don't need back home
[Niger mother]



“It takes a village”... What’s missing?

... In the village we have sister, brother, [grandparents] help to take care. Here I go to work with a \$7.00 an hour. .. I will need support from the government, for example, I don’t have my husband here or my family. [Montagnard mother]

Also, [we miss] the friendliness of the neighbors and the assurance that if something happens you can count on them. [Mexican mother]



“It takes a village”... what’s missing?

.. lack of other important family members such as the grandparents who contribute much to raising kids and raising them the right way especially when the parents are not at home all the time

[Sudanese mother]

The father plays a big role in teaching the kids many valuable things such as religious responsibilities, duties, and culture obligations. However, since his is at work for most of the child's time, there is not much contribution from him in raising the child. [Sudanese mother]



Safety Concerns

Once, I left my baby girl with a woman and she was very nice, but one day she had to go to the doctor and she left my daughter with a friend. One of my friends also left her daughter with her. When my friend came back, the baby was crying a lot. [They] had hit the baby ... My friend called me at work and I left immediately. It is not safe out there.
[Mexican mother]



“Biculturalism”: Important for children to learn

- An adaptive strategy of immigrant populations....
 - Culture and customs
 - Language
 - Other Stuff



Dual Language and Culture...

It is important for the children to know English, our culture... we want them to know the language and step by step they can develop the language for both languages.

[Montagnard mother]

It is very important that we teach our kids about their native culture. And in doing so, we should always stress how we, as parents, are expecting them to adhere to our culture and be proud of it. [Sudanese mother]

since we do not speak English at home, it is difficult if not impossible for us to tutor or coach our children at home before they start going to school. Sending the kids to daycare where they interact with other children and learn a few English words is certainly helpful [Mexican mother]



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Program and Service needs

- Access
 - Focus mostly on child care access
 - Transportation
 - Language
 - Time
 - Cost
 - Hours
 - Cultural stuff



Women's roles/family structure



Language and cultural disconnection



Barriers

AVAILABILITY
UTILIZATION
ACCESS



Low income/poverty



Circle of Challenges

“It is like we are caught up in a circle; we want to stay home and raise our children the best way possible, but then we become completely dependent on the husbands. If we get a job, then we are no longer home to raise our children and half of the income goes to pay for daycare.”



Lessons Learned

- Agency in Immigrant parental voices
 - Complexity of US work and family life especially for immigrant women
- Cultural brokering
- Community Expectations



We think if immigrant parents can get information about the services and where they can learn English and learn the use of many things, such as computers, if we can have daycares where our children will feel like home, the environment, the food, maybe hire a woman that can understand the immigrants' parents language that would help to understand the children's needs and habits. It is most important; we need daycare that we can afford to pay for. It is not easy to pay hundreds of dollars for daycare when we only make half of that money for living



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Thank you!!!

Collaboration:
Center for New North Carolinians
Center for
Women's Health and Wellness
African Services coalition
Catholic Social Services
Montagnard Christian Church
Guilford County Partnership for Children

