

Presenter Disclosures

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The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

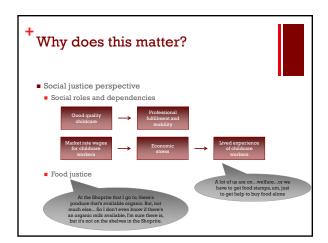
No relationships to disclose

Background

- Early childhood education settings are a major focus of childhood obesity efforts.
- Front-line childcare providers predominantly low-wage earning females are expected to implement healthy eating guidelines.
- Workers' own food access and experiences that shape their contexts and behaviors have not been well-addressed.



Objective Explore perceptions of local food environments and access to healthy foods among childcare workers in New Jersey.



Why does this matter? Pragmatic perspective Childcare workers educate children about food and eating through much more than just curriculum and standards Observational learning Verbal and nonverbal

Methods

- Semi-structured guides were developed using a socioecological framework.
- Focus groups and interviews were conducted with childcare workers about:
- Food shopping practices
- Foods available at their regular stores
- Affective and interpersonal experiences while shopping.



. Methods



- Audio recordings
- Transcriptions
- On-going reviews for
- Codebook under development

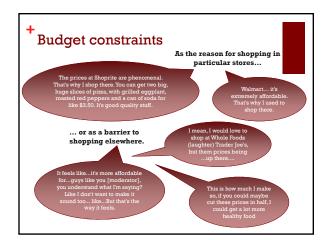
Participants

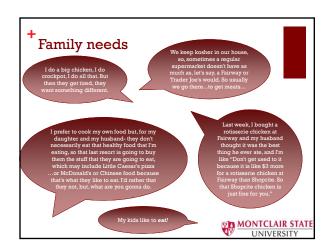
19 females at two different childcare centers in northern NJ $\,$

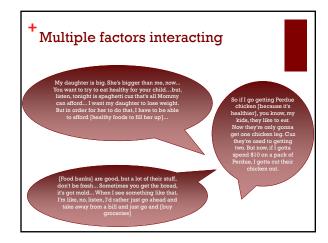
- University-based childcare center serving infants pre-K
- Approximately 50 staff
- Mainly college-educated
- Unionized, higher wages than usual
- Participants were mostly white, moderate SES

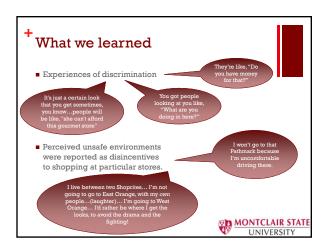
- Community-based childcare center serving infants pre-K
- Approximately 80 staff
- College degrees not the norm
- Low wages
- Participants were mostly African- or Caribbean-American, lower SES

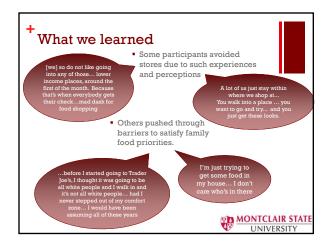












+ Discussion

 Childcare workers have complex, heterogeneous histories, practices, and perceptions regarding food.

A lot of us want to eat right like everybody else is eatingof coursel But it's hard. It's hard either money-wise... or being looked at a certain way, you don't feel comfortable... I wish at places like Walmart, Pathmark, Target – well not even Target but like Walmart and Pathmark, would offer more organic and like gluten-free

 Understanding and supporting their healthy food access could both reduce nutrition disparities and strengthen their effectiveness in implementing childcare center policies.



+Where do we go from here?...

- Continue to seek inclusion of more voices, have not yet reached saturation.
- Explore a concept from architecture "threshold fear" as a possible mechanism for racial disparities in perceived access to a full range of food retailers
- Use GIS to explore geographic access and barriers to different food retailers, in light of home and work locations.
- Plan to develop a quantitative instrument to explore findings and relationships among constructs in a larger sample.

