Education Policy Analysis
Archives/Archivos Analíticos de Políticas
Educativas
ISSN: 1068-2341
epaa@alperin.ca
Arizona State University
Estados Unidos

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Creating Positive Contexts of Reception: The Value of Immigrant Teachers in U.S. Early Childhood Education Programs
Education Policy Analysis Archives/Archivos Analíticos de Políticas Educativas, vol. 24, 2016, pp. 1-30
Arizona State University
Arizona, Estados Unidos

education policy analysis archives

A peer-reviewed, independent,
open access, multilingual journal

epaa aape

Arizona State University

Volume 24 Number 1 January 4th, 2016 ISSN 1068-2341

Creating Positive Contexts of Reception: The Value of Immigrant Teachers in U.S. Early Childhood Education Programs

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Citation: Adair, J. K. (2016). Creating positive contexts of reception: The value of immigrant teachers in U.S. early childhood education programs. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 24*(1). http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v24.2110

Abstract: Young children of immigrants are increasingly part of early childhood programs in the United States but teachers have mixed approaches and attitudes about the immigrant families that they work with. This article details an analysis of 50 preschool teachers in five US cities using data from the Children Crossing Borders video-cued ethnographic study. The analysis finds that preschool sites that valued the insight of immigrant teachers had more positive views of immigrant communities and stronger mechanisms to communicate with immigrant parents. The article ultimately argues that policies that support the presence and meaningful input of immigrant preschool teachers can help preschool sites be positive, rather than negative or indifferent, contexts of reception.
Keywords: early childhood education, immigration, teachers, video-cued ethnography

Creando contextos positivos de recepción: El valor de profesores inmigrantes en programas de Educación Infantil en EE.UU.
Resumen: Los hijos pequeños de familias inmigrantes son cada vez más parte de los programas para la primera infancia en los Estados Unidos, pero los docentes tienen enfoques y actitudes

Journal website: http://epaa.asu.edu/ojs/
Facebook: /EPAAA
Twitter: @epaa_aape

Manuscript received: 28/4/2015
Revisions received: 28/7/2015
Accepted: 30/7/2015

mixtas sobre las familias inmigrantes con las que tienen que trabajar. Este artículo detalla un análisis de 50 docentes de preescolar en cinco ciudades de Estados Unidos a partir de datos de un estudio que usa datos del Children Crossing Borders pistas etnográficas en video (Children Crossing Borders video-cued ethnographic study). El análisis concluye que los organizaciones preescolares que valoran la intuición de los profesores inmigrantes tenían opiniones más positivas de las comunidades de inmigrantes y mecanismos más fuertes para comunicarse con los padres inmigrantes. Este artículo argumenta que en última instancia políticas que apoyen la presencia y el aporte significativo de los maestros de preescolar inmigrantes pueden ayudar a organizaciones preescolares a generar contextos de recepción positivos, más que negativos o indiferente,
Palabras clave: educación de la primera infancia; inmigración; profesores; pistas etnográficas en video

Criando contextos positivos de recepção: O valor de professores imigrantes nos programas de educação infantil nos EUA

Resumo: Jovens filhos de imigrantes são parte cada vez mais dos programas para a primeira infância nos Estados Unidos, mas os professores "são misturados em abordagens e as famílias imigrantes que trabalham atitudes Este artigo detalha uma análise de 50 professores de pré-escola em cinco cidades norte-americanas de dados del *Children Crossing Borders* pistas etnográficas en video (em inglês video-cued-ethnography). A análise conclui que as organizações pré-escolares que valorizam professores imigrantes tinham opiniões mais positivas das comunidades imigrantes e mecanismos mais fortes para se comunicar com pais imigrantes. O artigo argumenta que políticas que apoiam a presença e valorizam as contribuição significativa dos professores imigrantes podem ajudar organizações pré-escolares para gerar contextos de recepção positivos, em vez de negativos ou indiferentes.
Palavras-chave: educação infantil; imigração; professores; pistas etnográficas en video

Introduction

The early schooling success of children of immigrants and the early engagement of their parents is a growing concern for educators and policymakers. Currently one in four children has at least one immigrant parent, growing to over 25% of children 0-5 years old in the United States in 2010 from 13% in 1990 (Fortuny, Hernandez & Chaudry, 2010). Over the past fifteen years, the entire increase in the number of young children living in the United States has come from immigrant families (Fortuny et al. 2010). While most parents hope for teachers who understand their young children and treat them with love and kindness, this is not always what happens, particularly for young children of immigrants, English Language Learners and/or young children of color even in early childhood classrooms (Garcia & Gonzalez, 2006; U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 2014; Yoon, Lee, & Goh, 2008). Some early childhood scholars warn that a lack of affect between teachers and young children will negatively impact children's long-term capabilities to overcome discrimination in the larger society and achieve educational success towards college and the workforce (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Yoshikawa, 2011). What kinds of experiences young children of immigrants and their families have in preschool sets the foundation for a relationship between parents and schools and the child's educational trajectory (Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Pianta, Steinberg & Rollins, 1995).

This article explores how preschool teachers at multiple preschool sites in five U.S. cities described the particular role of affection as a tool to welcome young children of immigrants from varying communities to school. The analysis presented here comes from focus group interview data with 50 preschool teachers in five U.S. cities, all collected as part of the larger Children Crossing Borders study - a video-cued ethnographic study of immigrant parents and preschool teachers. To begin, I explain the Children Crossing Borders Study and how the teacher focus group interviews were conducted in the five cities. I contextualize each city and site and then describe how teachers at each site spoke about affection and young children of immigrants. I focus on exploring the types of explanations teachers offer for the ways they treat children and families from immigrant communities and how teachers' ideas about affection with young children reveal the kinds of assumptions they make about immigrant parents and communities. In this article, the role of immigrant teachers emerges as an important factor in whether preschool sites can be described as positive or negative contexts of reception for immigrant communities. After discussing the role of policy, teacher assumptions and contexts of reception in early childhood education, I will describe the ways in which all five preschool sites described their own attempts to welcome and work with children of immigrants and their families. Following this discussion of data, I suggest policy approaches that can contribute to improving the contexts of reception for immigrant families in early childhood settings and work towards increasing the influence of immigrant teachers in early childhood education.

United States Educational Policy and Young Children of Immigrants

Educational policies involving children from immigrant communities in early childhood education and care are primarily focused on public early childhood programs. These public programs fund 41.5% of U.S. children through either the states as early childhood education and care programs or through the federal government (Barnett, Carolan, Squires, Clarke Brown & Horowitz, 2015). At the state level, if young children of immigrants live in states where there is "universal preK" such as Georgia then they would be able to begin prekindergarten at age four regardless of circumstance. More often, however, young children of immigrants qualify for public early childhood programs if they meet certain state criteria such as financial stress as demonstrated by parents' wages or by a language other than English being spoken of at home. Language and economic qualifiers continue to be the main ways that immigrant children and/or children of immigrant parents receive public early childhood services at both the state and federal levels (Espinosa, 2013). Despite strong efforts by early childhood scholars (Yoshikawa, et. al, 2013) and U.S. President Barack Obama (see Rich, 2013) around universal preK for U.S. four year olds, there is still no centralized regulation or local governance nor universal early childhood education and care system for three or four year olds. However, the federal government does fund early childhood programs for young preschool/prekindergarten age children that are considered "at risk" for academic success. This essentially makes early childhood education programs in the United States an intervention program rather than a true enrichment and/or educational system. This particular set of rationales for offering services to young children of immigrants – that of their or their family's deficit positioning in regards to schooling– give some context to how schools can sometimes begin as an unwelcoming space for young children from immigrant families.

Teacher Assumptions and Contexts of Reception

Positive and negative attitudes of teachers, schools and programs affect the academic success of children throughout their lives (Lee & Loeb, 2000). Positive interactions and relationships are often thwarted when children from marginalized backgrounds participate in programs led by teachers who internalize deficit thinking (Valencia, 2012; Van den Bergh, Denessen, Hornstra,Voeten & Holland, 2010). When teachers and schools internalize that some children and/or families are not as equipped for success as others, they lower their expectations and uninspiring teaching results (Banks, 2006; Gay, 2000). Diamond, Randolph & Spilane (2004) found that when teachers lower their expectations they take less responsibility for student learning. Deficit assumptions about families also change how teachers interact with students and families (Valencia, 2012; Villenas, 2001; Zentella, 2005). Teachers' assumptions or attitudes can encourage or dissuade immigrant families from participating in traditional events, meetings, dialogues, and celebrations (Reese & Gallimore, 2000; Souto-Manning & Swick, 2006).

Affective teacher-student relationships influence student engagement, learning and development (Green, Rhodes, Hirsch, Suárez-Orozco & Camic, 2008; Roorda, Koomen, Spilt & Oort, 2011). Interpersonal relationships are important for success particularly in communities of color struggling against marginalized position and historical racism over time (Antrop-Gonzalez & de Jesus, 2006). For children of immigrants who are fighting a host of institutional barriers (see Yosso, 2006), these relationships require care and understanding. Authentic caring (Noddings, 2013; see also Valenzuela, 1999) is based on teachers understanding and connecting to a child's cultural background in ways that sustain reciprocal relationships. Valenzuela (1999) writes,

> Without this connectedness, students are not only reduced to the level of objects, they may also be diverted from learning the skills necessary for mastering their academic and social environment" (p. 62).

Like Valenzuela, Anthrop-Gonzalez & de Jesus (2006) understand connectedness to include a critical understanding of Latino communities and the political, social, economic and cultural forces that shape their experiences. They assert that "the critical analysis of the social position of Latino communities informs authentically caring student/teacher relationships" (Antrop-Gonzalez & de Jesus, 2006, p. 430). When teachers have a hard time interrogating their own belief systems to find and then challenge the biases they may have with children or communities, this can negatively impact the schooling experiences, achievement and mobility of children from marginalized backgrounds, particularly children of immigrants (Valdés, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2014).

Teachers and schools receive immigrant communities with varying degrees of support, respect and/or hostility (Lee, 2005; Zhou, 2014). This variance mirrors the different *contexts of reception* that await young children of immigrants in the towns, cities and countries in which they live and go to school (Portes, 2003, p. 43). Contexts of reception are the socio-political and economic factors that make economic attainment possible for newcomers to the U.S. (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006) yet immigrant groups experience very different kinds of reception where they live and work and go to school. Portes and Rumbault's (2006) longitudinal work with first and second generation immigrants demonstrates that some immigrants have a smooth transition into mainstream society while others face social environments with harsh almost impossible requirements to assimilate into and/or adapt to mainstream society. While the purpose of this analysis was not to compare immigrant experiences, the different contexts of reception in which both teachers and families in the CCB study participate is part of understanding the meaning and interpretation of the teachers' ideas about affection.

Affection in Early Childhood Education

Affection as a demonstration of care and positive teacher/child interactions is seen as an important part of early childhood education and young children's wellbeing (Carlson, 2005; Goldstein, 2002; Reifel & Brown, 2001). The field of early childhood education in the U.S. has positioned affection as an important, if taken for granted, part of caring for young children as they transition from home to school (Kontos & Wilcox-Herzog, 1997). Scholars have demonstrated that young children respond positively affection over anger from their teachers, even with improved academic performance (Mill & Romano-White, 1999). The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning – CSEFEL (2005), in a research summary on warmth and affection, argued that

> Warmth and affection are aspects of positive teacher-child relationships that are critical for children's well-being in early education settings. . . Teachers who are warm and affectionate show children that they like them, enjoy being with them, are having fun with them and are pleased with their efforts and accomplishments. Expressions of warmth and affection are most effective in the context on an ongoing positive relationship between a child and caregiver; they also contribute to making that relationship positive and authentic (p.2).

CSEFEL argues that warmth and affection are aspects of positive relationships at school and contribute to making those relationships positive and authentic. And yet affection is hard to direct into policy. For example, The National Association for the Education of Young Children (a major accreditation force at federal and state levels) does not use the word affection in their policy statement. Instead the policy guidance makes a more general claim, "From the earliest years, of life, warm, nurturing relationships with responsive adults are necessary for many key areas of children's development" (2009, p.13). The guidance goes on to explain that these relationships begin as the teacher cultivates a "caring community of learners" that is founded on "consistent, positive, caring relationships between the adults and children" (p. 16).

Another indication of the importance of affection and nurture in early childhood education is the recent rise of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Teacher-Child Observation Instrument. This is significant because CLASS does not track child outcomes but rather focuses on teacher-child relationships as an indication of high quality schooling. There is a strong emphasis in CLASS on socio-emotional learning with the claim that "when ECE teachers provide effective emotional, organizational, and instructional supports, children are more successful as learners and demonstrate improved social and academic outcomes" (Office of Head Start, 2013, p.6). The growing attention to how teachers treat and interact with students and families is increasingly part of early childhood policy. As was not the case during the data collection years of the Children Crossing Borders project (2006-2010) now all federal Head Start programs in the U.S. are required to use the CLASS as the primary federal monitoring system. In fact, teachers and schools within the Head Start system cannot earn quality ratings unless the "teachers and students enjoy warm, supportive relationship with one another" (Pianta, La Paro & Hanre, 2008, p. 2.).

Before detailing how preschools in the CCB study spoke about using affection as a tool to work with young children of immigrants and outlining how these ideas contributed to preschool being a context of reception for immigrant families, I will first explain the CCB data collection process as well as the analytic design.

Video-Cued Ethnography and the Children Crossing Borders Study

The Children Crossing Borders (CCB) study began as a group of international scholars thinking and talking about how early childhood educational programs were responding to increased immigration in different countries (see Tobin, Arzubiaga & Adair, 2013, p. xii-xiii). They also wondered how cultural, national, linguistic and geographical differences might influence what parents and teachers expected from one another as well as the kinds of practices immigrant parents and preschool teachers favored for young children beginning school. To collect data in multiple countries and to compare the ideas of preschool teachers and immigrant parents in multiple cities within multiple countries, the CCB project used an extension of video-cued, multivocal ethnography, perhaps more commonly known as the Preschool in Three Cultures method, as developed by the early anthropological work of Joseph Tobin (1989, 2009).

Video-cued ethnography engages with and systematically analyzes the perspectives and experiences of people in their daily lives, in context. Video-cued ethnography specifically privileges these perspectives and experiences and utilizes core methodological tools found in traditional ethnography including interviewing (Forsey, 2010), participant observation of daily routines and activities (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2010) and recording daily experiences, interactions, conversations, situations and environments in field notes (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011) to try and represent daily life from as close to an insiders' point of view as possible. While traditional ethnography typically includes fieldwork for 1-2 years in one site, video-cued ethnography collects data in shorter amounts of time from multiple communities of a particular group living in different towns, cities or countries. The multi-vocal, multi-sited nature of video-cued ethnography makes it ideal for comparative work that showcases the cultural nature of how people live within, respond to and help create the environments and attitudes around them.

The video-cued ethnographic process within educational settings works in two phases. First researchers observe and participate in a number of classrooms, searching for a site that is more or less typical of a classroom in the country or context being investigated. This typicality is not an exact representation of what all classrooms are like or even a high quality version of a classroom. Instead it is familiar enough to connect participants across sites and groups. After a site is chosen and researchers spend an extended time (anywhere from one month to one year) trying to understand the daily routine, practices and environment of the classroom, researchers film in the classroom for 3-5 days. They edit the footage and put together scenes that show a typical day. The rough draft of the film is then shown to the teacher and students so that they can correct, interpret and critique the film's representation of their classroom. With this emic feedback, the film is edited down to 20 minutes and students' parents then watch and respond to the film. Their comments help create the final version of the film.

The second phase of video-cued ethnography is using the film to prompt discussion with groups at other school sites in varying cities and countries. Focus group interviews begin with the film and then researchers ask participants to respond to what they like and don't like as well as how they might do it (or want it done) differently. Participants watching and responding to the same film creates a unity and dialogue across interviews. As a researcher on the CCB project, I participated in both phases of the process. For clarification, "we" is used when referring to collecting data as part of a team and "I" is used when referring to the analytic process I conducted on affection and teachers' ideas about welcoming children and families.

Comparing Preschool Teachers in the United States

The analysis on affection presented here utilizes data collected in two phases of the U.S. portion of the CCB study.

Phase One: Solano Preschool

After spending time in multiple classrooms serving immigrant families, our research team selected Solano Elementary[1] in Phoenix, Arizona, as the primary site for participant observation and filming. This preschool was supported by state block-grant funding, a program that has since been eliminated by the Arizona state legislature (Nagasawa, 2010). The school was situated in a predominantly Latino neighborhood. Most families who attended the preschool qualified by earning less than 125% of the poverty line or by having a language other than English spoken in the home. While most of the children in the classroom had a parent who spoke Spanish at home, some children came from second and third generation immigrant families as well as immigrant families from Vietnam and Bosnia. The head teacher's name was Lolie and the assistant teachers' name was Aczalia.

Daily life at Solano was child-centered and exploratory, accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Parents walked their children into the classroom, signed a sheet of paper to "check them in" and then kissed or hugged them good-bye. The head teacher and the assistant teacher both greeted the children with a hug or a "Hi, how are you this morning?" Sometimes children cried as they walked in or screamed when their parents left. At this point, one of the teachers would hold the child in their lap or arms and tell them softly that it was "going to be ok" until they were calm enough and willing to rejoin the group's activities. After arriving, children washed their hands and sat down at a long table to eat a prepackaged breakfast served for free as part of the preschool program.

After eating, children walked over to various activities or areas of the room to play or talk to children already there. Areas for blocks, computers, art projects and puzzles as well as a child-sized kitchen area with costumes and household gadgets were organized throughout the room. Teachers often sat in the areas waiting to have discussion or ask questions to the children around them. Children sometimes sat in their laps or leaned into them with their bodies. After about two hours, children and teachers met on a carpet to sing songs, learn rhymes and read stories. Then they played outside and later came back to the classroom for an art project or more time in the areas or "centers" of the room. During these times, the teachers were often sitting next to the children in similarly sized chairs, playing alongside them on the playground or pushing them on swings.

In all of this routine, there were certain kinds of affection and treatment that were usual at Solano. When children were sad, crying or frustrated, teachers came quickly to stand or sit close to them. Teachers often hugged or cuddled with children if they were struggling to calm down. Teachers did not raise their voices and usually smiled while they talked to the children. For example, one particular child in the class – Jackie – who was not a child of immigrants struggled to participate or choose an activity within the classroom. To help her, both Lolie and Aczalia put their arm around her while talking to her.

After being in the classroom for four months, we filmed for four days. Each day we used two cameras to capture the everyday scenes we had come to expect in the classroom. Many of these

[1] All of the preschool names are pseudonyms, except Solano Preschool. The director and teachers wanted to use the school's actual name in publications.

scenes are most likely predictable to preschool teachers in the U.S. including young children crying when their parents left, children fighting over dresses or other materials, teachers and children singing, children refusing to participate in group events, teachers helping children engage in a book and children playing outside. Solano was chosen also because it had some atypical elements we hoped would provoke discussion on critical early educational topics. For example, both Lolie and Aczalia were native Spanish speakers and had immigrated as adults from Mexico and Guatemala, respectively. Being bilingual, both teachers used Spanish and English with the students. Children used Spanish and English in the classroom.

Teachers across the U.S. had opinions about the use of Spanish and how children's native languages should be handled at school (see Adair, 2011). Teachers also had a lot to say about what teacher qualities were important to teaching young children of immigrants. The scenes – both typical and atypical of preschool classrooms in the U.S. – prompted teachers to offer their opinion and perspective on the practices in the film as well as talk about how they treated children of immigrants in their classrooms. As will be explained shortly, the comparative analysis revealed differences among the participants in how they thought about immigrant families and the ways in which they approached them.

Phase Two: Focus Group Interviews in Multiple Cities

Teachers in five cities watched and responded to the Solano preschool film. The cities were selected to collectively represent a diverse range of historical connection to immigration. Phoenix, AZ, and New York City were chosen because they have long histories of immigration and they continue to be gateway cities for immigrant families. Nashville, TN, and Riverdale, IA, were chosen to represent emerging gateway cities that have a rapidly increasing number of immigrant families and a growing immigrant community, mostly from Mexico and Latin America. Finally Nuevo Campo, AZ, was chosen because it is a border town and immigration is more fluid and transnational as families move back and forth for work, school, and family obligations. Nuevo Campo and Riverdale are pseudonyms. All of the sites had a significant number of children of immigrants in their school.

Collectively, these sites offer a glimpse into cultural and geographical variation in how teachers thought they should be working with children of immigrants and their families. For example, we held focus group interviews at a private Mosque preschool in Arizona serving mostly immigrant communities from the Middle East, a head start in Arizona serving mostly migrant workers from Mexico, and a federally funded preschool in Harlem serving mostly immigrant families from West Africa. Seeing such a wide range of preschools meant that when patterns arose, they were even more significant because they arose across such a diverse sample set.

Table 1:
U.S. Teacher Focus Groups Interviews: School/Participant Characteristics

City	Schools	Total Staff Participants	Immigrant Communities Represented in Teachers	Immigrant Communities Represented in Families
Phoenix	Solano^	4	Mexico, Guatemala	Mexico, Vietnam, Iran, Iraq
	King Waters	4	Mexico	Mexico, Indigenous Mexico (Mixtec)
	Islamic Preschool	7	Scotland, Morocco, Albania, Iraq	Kenya, Jordan, Somalia, Pakistan, Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon
Nuevo Campo	Nuevo Campo*^	3	Mexico	Mexico
Nashville	Antioch	5		Mexico, Bulgaria, China, Japan
	Franklin	5		China, Japan, Mexico
New York City	Harlem	6	Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone	Honduras (Garifona), Yemen, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Sudan
	Garden Grove^	9	Dominican Republic, Mexico	Dominican Republic, Mexico, Argentina
Central Iowa	Riverdale	7		Mexico, El Salvador

Entrance and permission to conduct research in particular schools was granted through working with colleagues already associated with each school. Researchers spent between 3-5 days at each site. Initially we worked with the director or administrator over early childhood education at each site. All of the focus groups in this study were conducted in the preschool where the teachers worked. They were held either after school or during teacher workdays – days when there were no children at school. Teachers were offered compensation for their time if they came outside of school hours and we worked directly with preschool directors to negotiate schedule and school visits. As much as possible, researchers spent time observing in teachers' classrooms before the interviews. Focus group interviews lasted between 90-120 minutes and were conducted in English and Spanish as requested by the teacher participants. The interviews were filmed and recorded for transcription/translation purposes. Focus group interviews began with watching the film and then answering questions such as "Does this look like your classroom?" How would you do things differently?" or "Why do you think the teacher did this? These questions pushed teachers to consider many issues highlighted in the film and give their perspectives.

Analysis with Video-cued Ethnographic Data

After conducting focus groups with teachers as part of the CCB research team in the U.S., I chose ten focus group transcripts (50 teachers total) to analyze collectively and comparatively. To do

this, I utilized a number of analytic tools in a specific sequence so that I could look closely at how teachers spoke about welcoming children of immigrants as well as how they spoke about immigrant families. These tools included coding and content analysis, close (interpretative) readings, comparing and contrasting between focus groups, and identifying patterns and findings for early childhood education.

First, I tried to first understand all of the kinds of things teachers spoke about and also what they were silent about. I looked for general patterns about teaching and learning, about their relationships with immigrant parents and their perspective on immigrant communities in their towns and cities. I did this by applying a specific coding framework, a modified version of the CCB international coding framework (see Adair & Pastori, 2009; Adair, Arzubiaga & Tobin, 2012) for a more detailed explanations of the coding framework process) to all ten focus group transcripts in order to organize the data into thematic categories and codes. The initial list of codes was created based on what we, as a CCB research team, hoped or expected to find out in the focus group interviews. Over time, the codes became more emic, specific and grounded in the types of experiences and ideas presented by the participants. We used what participants talked about during the interviews to determine what codes were used for the framework. In the final coding framework there were 8 major codes and 75 sub codes. One of the major codes *Preschool Practice* had a number of subcodes that captured practices teachers used to welcome (or not welcome) children and parents to school. One subcode under Preschool Practices was teacher engagement and included references to affection, caring, touch, proximity, sensitivity and empathy.

For this specific analysis of how teachers spoke about affection, I used a group of subcodes from the CCB framework that included teacher engagement. (All of the codes used for the analysis are included in Appendix A.) Using the subcodes as well as close readings of all ten focus groups, I looked for patterns across sites. One pattern was that preschool teachers across cities and regardless of background saw hugging, comforting and being affectionate as critical for welcoming young children of immigrants to school. As will be described by site, teachers offered examples and explanations of giving affection to children of immigrants at preschool and described affection as a critical and assumed part of being a preschool teacher. At first glance, early childhood educators being affectionate with young children seemed assumed, ordinary and expected. The U.S. teachers referenced affection mostly as hugging, kissing, having children sit on their laps, leaning into teachers and teachers cradling children. However close interpretative readings revealed that although the teachers agreed about using affection with young children of immigrants, they did not agree about why they should use affection. This started to make affection seem more strange than familiar.

Making the Familiar Strange

Defamiliarlizing the data is an anthropological technique to help provide perspective and distance between the researcher and data that could seem ordinary or uninteresting (Geertz, 1988 p. 106). Obvious conclusions or statements necessitate the most skepticism because they are the most overlooked and/or taken for granted. Of Ruth Benedict, Geertz (1988) wrote that she was able to conduct analysis and then write manuscripts that were "organized from beginning to end in a look-unto-ourselves-as-we-would-look-unto-others manner (1988, p. 113). As a writer Benedict was able to help readers critique their own cultural norms as if from the groups Benedict was writing about. Seeing ourselves as others might see us is a way to make the familiar strange. Mead's comparative work, perhaps best articulated in the documentary Four Families, helped to make American and Canadian ways of childrearing strange. The film depicted a typical day in a household in Japan, France, India, and Canada, with particular focus on how young children were cared for. This

comparative context was meant to help a mostly Anglo, western audience consider cultural variation without ethnocentric lenses.

Making the familiar strange has also been used as a postcolonial analytical tool to "peel back familiar dominant discourses" so that researchers can better see how "seemingly benign or progressive instructional efforts can have unanticipated, counterproductive effects" (Kaomea, 2003, p.14). Kaomea used this technique of defamiliarization to look closely at a Hawaiian Studies *Kūpuna* program familiar in Hawaii Elementary Schools. Although assumed to be harmless, even culturally relevant, Kaomea discovered that the content and rationale for the program actually silenced and disempowered *Kūpuna* elder women who were teaching the program. She revealed that the program actually only used the *Kūpuna* knowledge and input that served the interest of tourism. Using defamiliarizing techniques in ethnographic research means focusing on what is taken for granted as well as what is strange and exotic in studying a group of people. Questioning what seems ordinary and taken for granted can reveal deeper or more complicated ideas that go beyond a dominant or "natural" view.

Teachers in Nuevo Campo, Arizona

Nuevo Campo, Arizona—a small town of about 32,000 people—is located on the United States-Mexico border across from Sonora, Mexico. The teachers told us early on in the focus group interviews that they were all born in Mexico. They reported that like many people in the town, they go back and forth across the border. Even with this kind of fluidity, Nuevo Campo is located in a state that has strict English Only laws that prevent teachers from using children's home language in the classroom after pre-kindergarten (Gabaldón & Ovando, 2011). In addition, Arizona is the site of harsh immigration policies and enforcement that include immigration raids with young children present, voter ID laws, and a "show me your papers" provision that allows law enforcement to ask for proof of documentation if they suspect someone is in the U.S. illegally. The teachers had major concerns about how young children would be treated when they left Nuevo Campo and looked for work or went to other cities for college.

When the Nuevo Campo teachers watched the Solano preschool film, they appreciated the teachers' affection with the children. They told us that affection was important in young children's lives especially when they are young and going to school. When asked why teachers said,

> Anna Maria: Because it makes the children feel secure and that they are in a loving environment there.
>
> Eunice: I think that, like everything, there has to be a balance. This point is very important at all of the children's ages. . . Like in a home, like in a house, they feel that way. That there's everything. That there's love. That there are rules too . . . That they know there's a little bit of everything too.

The Nuevo Campo teachers explained that affection should mirror the kinds of love and affection children have at home. Nuevo Campo teachers also explained that affection includes hugs and closeness.

> Rosa: When you see the children sad…When you see that need, at least that's what I do, right. You are always there.
>
> Janet: To be with them. To give them a hug if they need it.
>
> Rosa: You always do that because it is confidence for the child. And they feel comfortable in the classroom. There are times when it happens that we don't have a

> full class and a new child comes. The child feels a bit inhibited so we give him this closeness so that he can feel comfortable in the classroom.
> Janet: And he requires that love.

The Nuevo Campo teachers explained that affection was not just helpful for children to be welcomed but it was something that they needed to feel comfortable. The teachers went further saying that even if they did not feel comfortable holding a child so close or so long on their laps, they did it because it was familiar to the child, something they were used to getting within their own families. As one teacher, Maria, explained:

> Well, we're not used to saying goodbye with a kiss, right? Of course, if a child comes and tries to give you a kiss, we're not going to reject it, we're going to accept it but it's not our tradition to do it.

The teachers' desire to match the affection children experience at school to what they received at home motivated the teachers to be even more affectionate than they might ordinarily be at school. These teachers tried to take the lead from the children about how much and what types of affection to give. They said good-bye with kisses because it was the child's "tradition to do it." As the teachers said, "we're not going to reject it." Affection was meant to be a tool to mimic home life for the young children and help them feel comfortable at school.

Teachers in Phoenix

We conducted focus groups with three preschool centers in Phoenix. The first was Solano school where the film was made. The second was a preschool within a private Mosque school. The Phoenix Metro Islamic preschool served many different immigrant communities from Kenya, Jordan, Somalia, Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, Lebanon, and Palestine. Teachers themselves immigrated from Scotland, Morocco, Albania, and Iraq. The one teacher who was not an immigrant was the child of Mexican immigrants who had converted to Islam as a young adult. The preschool was part of the larger K-8 campus.

In Arizona, the social environment for immigrants can be unwelcoming, and even hostile, with much public discourse centered on illegal immigration and frustration with border issues. Four days after September 11th, an Arizonian seeking revenge against terrorists killed a Mesa gas station owner, Balbir Singh Sodhi, a Sikh immigrant from West Bengal, India (Lewin, 2011). Even years later, Muslim institutions like the mosque in the CCB study received threats and verbal attacks on their grounds. In one particular incident, a group of men walked into the prayer hall and after making rude gestures and racial slurs, walked out cursing at some of the children in the school (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2011). According to the teachers, the difficult reception of Muslim immigrants in the U.S. and particularly in Arizona had helped them bond as a community despite their cultural, linguistic and ethnic differences.

The Islamic preschool teachers insisted that affection was important to help children feel comfortable and loved at school. They explained that affection should mirror the type of affection mothers showed to their children at home. Praising Lolie for holding a crying boy on her lap, the teachers said that she was using affection to be more like a mother than a teacher and this was something they tried to do, especially early in the year.

> J: So what do you think of the way that teacher dealt with that?
> Aisha: We do it, you know, put him in her laps. [Help them] calm down.

> Elise: [They were] warm and close to her. We did [this] in the beginning of the year, not now that we are in the second quarter.
> Mercedes: I think we should do that more often.
> Aisha: Yeah, more often and often and often.
> J: So how did that teacher seem to you?
> Aisha: She's more warm. She is acting like mom. She's not [acting] like educated and a teacher. She's very, very comfortable with her kids. And she feels like she's in her house.

The teachers insisted that the preschool was meant to function as a bridge between school and home. They connected warmth, closeness and holding children on laps as something mothers did. They did disagree to some extent about how much affection to give to children because one teacher said that after the beginning of the year, they used less affection yet two of the teachers – Aisha and Mercedes – argued that the teachers should continue to use affection "more often." Later in the interview, one of the teachers explained the connection between mothering and the types of affection that should be shown at school.

> In Islam, the mother is the center of the home. So, when children come to the preschool, they should feel like they are with their mother.

When the teachers were asked about what made their school different from others, the teachers spoke about affection, love and the need to nurture.

> JT: So if I asked you what would make your school, or an Islamic preschool or elementary school different from others, what would be the key things?
> Mercedes: I think there's more nurturing. I feel that there's a lot of nurturing, which is really important, because like I was telling the other instructor, we are dealing with 3 year olds . . . A lot of times it's like they're coming out of their nests, you know? So they're still getting all of that love and attention from their mother at that age. They're very fragile so when they come to us, I think one of the things that we do is we give a lot of love. We give a lot of love. We give a lot of attention. We give a lot of hugs and encouragement.

Teachers at the Phoenix Metro Islamic preschool justified their nurturing practice of giving love, attention, hugs and encouragement as something young children needed in order to have a smooth transition from home to school. Young children should feel warm and loved because "they're coming out of their nests." The children were leaving homes where they received love and affection from their mothers.

The third preschool in Phoenix was King Waters preschool located in an agricultural suburb south of the city with many commercial and family-owned farms. There were a growing number of migrant families in King Waters at the time of our study. King Waters preschool was nationally funded as a migrant Head Start preschool to serve low-income families, the majority of who were immigrants. The teachers at King Waters Preschool were immigrants or children of immigrants themselves from Mexico. A significant number of indigenous Mexican families from the Mixteca region (Oaxaca) also attended the school and spoke Mixteco, not Spanish. Although most of the teachers at King Waters preschool were immigrants from Mexico, they could not communicate with the Mixtec parents. Eventually a community liaison and teacher who spoke Mixteco was hired by the preschool.

> King Waters teachers also saw affection as an important tool to use with young children. After watching the Solano film, the King Waters teachers commented,
> Teresa: Something I really liked was when one of the teachers hugged the boy and the boy felt comfortable to go with the teacher and be hugged.
> Xochi: The Affection
> Teresa: The affection [and] communication between them. That is what we were saying is really important that a child is comfortable to go with the teacher.

King Waters teachers spoke about affection early in the interview. They brought up the teachers' use of affection and specifically referenced the scene when Lolie comforted Michael in the film. The teachers spoke about affection not just in a positive way as tool to comfort young children in distress. They also saw the boy's acceptance of the affection as a positive indication that the child and teacher had a positive relationship. If the child was comfortable receiving affection from the teacher, the relationship was positive.

Teachers in New York City

New York City is a traditional gateway city where Dominican, Mexican and West African immigrant families are growing in numbers. The nature of immigration continues to change dramatically there with immigrant groups shifting, overlapping and competing for resources with multiple dominant and historically marginalized groups in different parts of the city (Foner, 2005; Kasnitz, Mollenkopf & Waters, 2004). CCB Focus group interviews with NYC teachers were conducted at two preschools. The first preschool was located in Harlem. Harlem is known for its rich African-American history and yet is also home to increasing numbers of immigrants from West Africa and the West Indies. Some of the teachers at the Harlem preschool were immigrants themselves from the Caribbean and West Africa and the majority who were not immigrants self-identified as African American. Like teachers at the Phoenix Metro Islamic preschool, the Harlem preschool teachers described teachers as needing to be like mothers in terms of offering authority and affection.

> Alejandra: In kindergarten or day care, the teachers are like their mothers, almost like their mothers.
> Janet: They have to have the authority but patience and gentleness at the same time. But they also have to be strict. Sometimes they have to comfort him, the same as at home.

Harlem teachers described teachers as being "almost like"mothers to the children in their classrooms. According to the teachers in the group, being almost like a mother meant exercising authority as well as affection. Teachers needed to comfort children just as they would be comforted at home – with "patience and gentleness." Harlem teachers seemed to see affection as a way to connect children to their lives at home.

The second New York City preschool was also located in a historically African-American area. At the time of the study, the community surrounding Garden Grove preschool was experiencing significant gentrification as well as an influx of families from the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Central America. Garden Grove preschool teachers were from the Dominican Republic and Ecuador. The director and assistant director were both African-American. Garden Grove teachers, like those in King Water, had some children from the Mixteca region. The teachers told us that the families "do not speak Spanish or English" even though they are from Mexico. Teachers did

not have as much contact as they would like with the Mixtec parents and told us that they worried about helping the families feel more welcome at school.

Where other focus groups brought up how teachers should be affectionate with their bodies such as when Lolie comforted the crying boy, the Garden Grove teachers started the interview by talking about how the teacher was using the language of the children to help them feel welcomed and comfortable. The teachers referred often to a scene later on in the film when Michael, again, was with the teacher. This time he was playing with boy and girl Barbie-like dolls. Michael asks Lolie if she has any *chanclas* (sandals). Lolie answers him using the word Michael used, *chanclas*. The teachers believed using a word that was familiar to him from his own home helped him feel comfortable at school. Just as other groups had spoken about how they should use the same kind of affection as children received at home, the Garden Grove teachers spoke about how they tried to use the same kinds of words that children used at home.

> Nancy: The word we heard earlier *chanclas*, in my country they don't say it like that. I had a female student who always told me "*el trillo, trillo.*" *Trillo* means fork.
> Cristina: *Tenedor.* Fork.
> Nancy: Yes, but as you know in Ecuador we call it *tenedor.* And she always told me. I told her "are you sure that's a *trillo*?" Sometimes you cannot know. We know Spanish but not all. In a country you can have the same thing have different
> Sandra: *Sentido.* Meaning.
> Nancy: Meaning. So we have to try to find more or less what she meant with that word.
> Victoria: Sometimes there are situations where no matter how much we want to understand, we can't. But I think that it makes a difference if we try to know the family because regardless of the culture, sometimes we don't understand what is happening because other things may be affecting. Maybe it's a cultural thing or maybe it's a family thing. . . We try to build a relationship with the parents because, knowing the parents, talking with them may be the lost link, the piece of the puzzle which was missing. . .

Here, the Garden Grove teachers considered the word that the child was using, *trillo*, and even went back to ask her about it. They connected the child's use of this word outside of the child, to her family. They considered that different countries have different meanings for words. Teachers were not sure if *trillo* was the word the family used or was a word from the family's community or home country (maybe it's a cultural thing, maybe it's a family thing). For this reason, teachers explained, it was important to seek out parents' ideas and build a relationship with the parents ("makes a difference if we try to know the family"). Teachers seemed to consider a relationship with parents as the antidote to not understanding the children in their classrooms.

Teachers in Nashville

Nashville has historically been a White and African-American city with only recent immigration from outside the United States. Nashville also has one of the fastest changing populations in the U.S. and is considered a new "destination state" for refugees as well as documented and undocumented immigrants (Migration Policy Institute, 2011). Most immigrants have been arriving from Mexico and Central America. The growing Hispanic population has extended just past 10% in Nashville up from 4.7% in 2000 (U.S. Census, 2010).

Two Nashville teacher focus group sites were included in this analysis. The first was Franklin Preschool, a private tuition-free preschool conducted by a Christian church that served White, nonimmigrant families and Asian immigrant families. In the focus group interviews, we focused specifically on the immigrant community they served. The teachers explained how they tried to help young children of immigrants feel as comfortable as possible by welcoming them with a hug and a greeting when they walked in the classroom door.

> Charlotte: It was hard, especially the ones that didn't speak English, when they were first dropped off because you can't comfort them, you know? You're this stranger and you're trying to hug them and [the kids think] 'mommy has left me.' They don't know what I'm saying.
> Hannah: 'I don't understand [you]'.
> Charlotte: [It's] hard to comfort them.
> Hannah: Hard because most of the mothers are Japanese.

Franklin teachers explained that they hugged the children to comfort them but despite their affection, the children of immigrants still felt uncomfortable. The teacher tried to be affectionate but it was difficult because the child was not thinking about school or the teacher comforting them. The teachers worried that all the kids could think about was, "mommy has left me." The teachers explained that it was hard to comfort the children in their classrooms because "most of the mothers are Japanese." What the teachers meant by connecting affection, comfort and the Japanese origin of the immigrant parents isn't clear. Yet later in the interview, the teachers brought up communication issues with the parents again. It seemed perhaps that their actions as a teacher were prevented from success by the parents not speaking English.

> Charlotte: It's most of the Asian's moms are a little . . .
> Hannah: You have to write notes to them.
> Charlotte: Communication with the children, also with the parents is also a challenge.

The teachers described parents as not being able to communicate or as obstacles to children being comforted at school. Franklin teachers' references to immigrant parents consisted of what the immigrant parents did not know or were not able to offer their children. For example, another teacher explained again how her attempts to help a children were impeded by the child's mother. Again, this comment was prompted by the scene in the film of Lolie comforting a crying Michael.

> Charlotte: We have a little girl, a little Asian girl in my class. She cries the whole day. Finally I say if you're going to cry, you have to go sit in the bed. And so she'd sit there and [cry] a little bit and then you'd see her come and get up and play. So once she figured out that she wasn't going to get anything anymore now she's fine. But the minute her mom comes into class for a party or something she started crying and it's so frustrating because you're telling the mom, "She's not like this. She doesn't cry."

In this case, the teacher expressed that when the mother arrived the child cried and the teacher's usual tactics did not work. Although we cannot be sure what the teachers were implying about immigrant parents, it is fair to say that none of the Franklin teachers' comments about immigrant parents were positive. Also absent were any descriptions of what they as teachers or the children learned (or could learn) from parents.

Teachers at the second Nashville school site (Antioch preschool) was a private, tuition-free preschool that served mostly families from Mexico and Central America as well as a small number of

families from China, also saw affection as an important part of welcoming children to school. Antioch teachers pointed out Lolie's affectionate presence early on in the interview. Like most of the teachers in the CCB study, they referenced Lolie's affection with Michael.

> Angela: What did you think of terms of affection? Do you have [a] standard?
> Janet: I thought it was great. I think it depends on . . .
> Heather: The child.
> Janet: The child, whether they like it. Or seek it out, but they certainly were there was a child who turned around and gave the teacher a hug and she hugged her back. The one that came in so upset and it didn't take her very long to calm down just because he got to sit on the teacher's lap.

Affection was a helpful tool to help children calm down. The amount of affection should depend on what the child prefers. They appreciated that the child could calm down quickly with the teacher ("it didn't take her very long to calm down"). Antioch preschool teachers said many children in their classrooms struggled to adjust in the way that Michael did. The teachers attributed this to being an immigrant.

> Janet: A lot of my kids come straight from their original country so they haven't even adjusted here in America. Let alone your mom drops you off and leaves you.
> Heather: Nobody can communicate all day long. [laughing].
> Sue: It's hard to communicate with some of the parents.
> Heather: Yes.
> Sue: So that's where my big issue is with the parents.

Just as with the other Nashville site, teachers positioned immigrant mothers as the reason that children have a hard time being comforted at school. Teachers' not being able to comfort children of immigrants in their classrooms was attributed to parents leaving their children at preschool in a new country ("you mom drops you off and leaves you" and "mommy has left me") and their inability to speak English or help their children speak English. Teachers were not able to comfort and show affection to children in a way that calmed them down as Lolie did. Teachers seemed to connect this to parents' lack or the immigrant experience itself.

Teachers in Riverdale

Riverdale, Iowa, is a small town with less than 3,000 people (Census 2007). Over the past 15 years a large meatpacking factory has shifted the town's population from almost 100% White to more than 40% Hispanic. The only elementary school in Riverdale now has more Hispanic students than White students (NCES, 2007). Riverdale's downtown area consists of a typical main street in a small town, with grocery stores, repair shops, small stores, restaurants, and bars, except that the majority of shops are now operated by and for the immigrant families in Riverdale. While many of the surrounding towns have had to shut their schools and bus their students out of town, Riverdale has continued offering services and even had a new school built because of growing numbers of children moving into the town. Riverdale preschool teachers were almost all White, non-immigrant residents of the town. The exception was a woman whose father's father had come to the U.S. from Mexico. She was also married to a man who was born in Mexico. In looking for patterns across sites, teachers in Riverdale did not agree about some preschool practices or ways to work with parents, yet they were consistent in how they spoke about affection and about how immigration had changed their town.

Collectively, Riverdale teachers struggled to accept the changes in their town and school. They seemed frustrated by what they saw as a sudden shift in demographics. One teacher explained,

> I think as a school and as a community. I don't want it to sound mean, but we were just kind of thrown into it, like Tyson moved here or IDP and a whole bunch of Hispanics came to our school. And I don't think anybody really knew what to do.

This process of not knowing exactly how to welcome immigrant families to school or to the town was complicated by a negative perception of the immigrant families and a desire for the immigrant families to assimilate and take on the ways of the town. Teachers in both groups considered the town less safe than before the newcomer immigrant families had arrived. Teachers lamented,

> Nancy: When I was little I could ride my bike at night. I could go around the town at night. And there's no way I'd let my daughter [now].
> JA: Really?
> Nancy: I hate to sound mad but I think the town is a lot dirtier now. People don't take care of their houses.

In addition to the town being dirtier and less safe, the Riverdale teachers felt the new immigrant families were unwilling to assimilate into the town's way of being.

> Nancy: I wish they would take care of their lawns, they would not play the loud music all the times. It's one of those hidden rules that need to get across to [their] culture.
> JA: So there's things they need to change.
> Jenna: It's not just the laws.
> Marta: And they're not willing to change.

The teachers continued,

> Marta: Yeah, it's kind of like we're here. This is our house.
> Jenna: Like you need to give them the paper when they move in. Here are the rules.
> Marta: First day of school, you would think they would just catch on or know better.

Riverdale teachers seemed to want the immigrant families to adapt to the culture of town. They expressed ownership ("this is our house") over their town and expressed frustration that the Mexican immigrant families in their town seemed unwilling to change their ways.

When teachers were asked about their own interactions with children in their classrooms and how they treated them, they brought up affection. When asked specifically about Lolie's affectionate treatment of the children in her class, the Riverdale teachers agreed with most teachers in our study that affection was important for children in their classroom, the majority of whom were from immigrant families.

> JA: What about teachers' interactions with kids? Like how affectionate should the interaction be between the teachers and the kids? . . . Lolie is pretty affectionate. She's hugging all the time or they'll sit on her lap.
> Sarah: Kids need that.
> JA: I'm just wondering how you feel about that.
> Erica: I think it's very important. There are so many kids that don't get that at home. And this is the only time they can feel that connection to anyone. So they need that closeness.

The Riverdale teachers spoke about their use of affection as something to welcome children of immigrants to their classroom. And they said their affection was to make up for what the children were denied at home. They assumed that "so many kids" did not get affection at home. School might be "the only time they can feel that connection to anyone." In another example, teachers were asked about an incident that had happened earlier in the day. Some of the researchers had seen kids spilling water and glue and the teachers working with them to get the spills cleaned up. The teachers told us, "The children were not used to that [playing with glue]. They looked at us like we were going to yell at them". Later during the focus group interview, this idea was brought up again. Teachers told us how they tried to provide a positive structure and routine for the children despite their not having that at home.

> Jenna: I think [at] school, there's more structure, there's more routine. And [for] a lot of our families, there's not at home. So that's a huge change or an adjustment for the kids when they first come.
> JA: How can you tell?
> Sarah: I'd say a lot of times maybe the discipline is more passive at home. Or maybe there isn't any. It's kind of like, what I see from being here is there's no in between. . . . I have some kids that, if they would have spilled that milk, they would have just looked at me with huge eyes like . . .
> JA: Scared?
> Jenna: Like what are you going to do to me or I've had kids start crying because they're scared of . . .
> Erica: What's going to happen.

Teachers worried that when accidents happened in the classroom, students feared negative consequences. They seemed to suspect that the children had become used to being yelled at for such incidents at home. Affection was offered to children as a way to counter the negative experiences of home and/or to provide hugging and comfort that children were assumed to not receive outside of school.

Making Affection Strange

Preschool teachers' strong desire for affectionate, loving practices and learning environments match pleas from early childhood scholars (Hyson & Taylor, 2011; Goldstein, 2002) and professional organizations (NAEYC, 2009) for teachers to be gentle, kind, positive and affectionate so that young children feel comfortable and safe beginning school. On the surface, the teachers' ideas about welcoming young children of immigrants seemed united and professionally aligned. Everyone agreed that hugging, comforting and calming down children was an important part of being a preschool teacher. Yet there were some key differences in why they believed affection was so important. For example, teachers in Nuevo Campo, Phoenix, and New York City said that a teacher's role is to be like a mother, offering affection and rules to children. One of the best tools to help children to feel welcome and successful at school is to be "almost like a mother" to comfort children as Lolie did in the Solano film. These teachers assumed that children were loved, kissed, hugged, comforted, and cared for at home and so as teachers they should offer the same kind of treatment.

Other teachers, primarily at the sites in Nashville and Riverdale, spoke about affection (comforting, hugging, calming down) as being something that compensates for what children do not receive at home and/or from their parents. For example, teachers in Riverdale said that kids needed

affection such as hugging and closeness. Affection was important to offer children because "so many kids that don't get that at home. And this is the only time they can feel that connection to anyone." Teachers in Nashville saw affection as an attempt to counter what parents had done to their children. They made references to parents leaving their children at school and not having the right skills to help them feel comforted. In these cases, the teachers seemed to assume that children did not get enough of what they needed from their parents.

The analysis of teachers' comments on using affection with young children of immigrants in preschool revealed two oppositional assumptions about young children's lives outside of home. Some teachers saw welcoming children with affection at school as a way to connect to children's home lives. This perspective assumed that children came from positive, loving homes. Other teachers saw welcoming children with affection at school as a way to compensate for what children did not receive at home. This perspective assumed that children came from negative, lacking, unaffectionate homes. While binaries can be suspiciously simple (see Levi-Strauss, 1969; Derrida, 1992), the binary in this data set suggests at the very least that teachers working with children of immigrants do so with different ideas and assumptions about the children's families. These two assumptions are made more complicated by looking closely at the backgrounds of the teachers at the different sites as well as their levels of experiences with families outside of school.

Teachers' Backgrounds and their Assumptions about Children's Home Lives

Teachers' backgrounds were factors in both assumptions. The sites that assumed children received affection at home (Nuevo Campo, Phoenix and New York City) had some similarities. First the teachers were all in cities with long histories of immigration. Second, the teachers were mostly immigrants themselves. Many of the teachers were bilingual, speaking a combination of Mixtec, Spanish, English, and French. Teachers of color were in the majority at each site in Phoenix, Nuevo Campo, and New York City. The sites that assumed children received little or not enough affection at home (Nashville and Riverdale) also had similarities. The teachers were all in cities where immigration was rather new. None of the teachers in Nashville or Riverdale were immigrants. And the majority of teachers at each site identified as White, nonimmigrant. Riverdale preschool had a teacher who self-identified as Hispanic with a grandfather who had come from Mexico. The Nashville preschools had one teacher who was African-American nonimmigrant.

On the surface, such a stark difference between immigrant teachers assuming that immigrant parents offer their children appropriate amounts of affection and nonimmigrant teachers assuming that immigrant parents do not, seems to explain itself. Teachers who have immigrant backgrounds would know firsthand that most immigrant families love and care for their children. The differences, however, between nonimmigrant and immigrant teachers extend past their assumptions about children's home lives. There are actual differences in what they know about immigrant families and how much they interact with immigrant parents.

Interactions with Immigrant Parents and Families

During focus group interviews, teachers in the CCB study were asked about how they work with parents. Teachers collectively emphasized the importance of communicating with parents and mentioned using strategies of parent-teacher communication such as sending home notes in multiple languages, making home visits, conducting parenting workshops and parent teacher conferences. Table 2 summarizes the different ideas to work with parents that teachers brought up into focus groups. When I compared ideas by sites with majority teachers of color and immigrant teachers with

teachers who were majority White and nonimmigrant, there was an obvious difference in the tools, strategies and ideas they had to work with immigrant parents. The first four ideas in Table 2 are shared by all of the sites. The additional ideas came specifically from Nuevo Campo, Phoenix and New York City.

Table 2:
Teachers' Ideas to Work with Immigrant Parents

Riverdale and Nashville Sites (nonimmigrant teachers)	**Nuevo Campo, Phoenix and New York City Sites (majority immigrant teachers)**
home notes in multiple languages	home notes in multiple languages
home visits	home visits
Parent workshops	Parent workshops
Parent teacher conferences	Parent teacher conferences
	Cultivate parents to become staff "because they live in the community"
	Try to "get to know family"
	"See the parents' reality as immigrants" – that it is difficult for them
	Be sensible about how you judge immigrant parents
	"Try to walk in the shoes" of immigrants
	Empathize with "parents' understanding of school"
	"Organize play dates with parents of different backgrounds"
	Get to know particular situation of immigrants in your community – "how are they doing in the community"?
	"Talk with them afterschool or on weekends"
	Create a "program for preschool parents with parent mentors" in the community
	"Ask parents questions about their children"

The Nashville and Riverdale (nonimmigrant) teachers had little and/or negative interactions with the parents and few tools to work with them. They admitted to being disconnected from parents, even in programs where home visits were mandated. Riverdale teachers explained that while home visits were a great opportunity to talk to the parents, they still did not know the parents very well. Some teachers confessed that they rarely saw parents in the school. They had little contact with them. Others offered that when they saw parents outside of school more often than usual, parents

were grateful and appreciative. Sarah, one of the Riverdale teachers who taught herself some Spanish and tried more than the others to communicate with parents, told us, "I think the parents want to know more than they ask us." She explained that she tried to communicate with parents but that often the parents did not reciprocate. Sarah was less negative about parents that her colleagues. However her ideas about working with parents and the limited number of tools to interact with parents matched those of her colleagues.

Nuevo Campo, New York, and Phoenix (immigrant) teachers had a much more extensive list of ways they worked with immigrant parents. The teachers gave many more examples of asking parents questions or going to parents for ideas about their children. Some of the ideas that Nuevo Campo, Phoenix and New York City offered involved some additional effort and time on their part. These ideas included helping interested parents work at the school because they lived in the community, being cautious not to judge parents and to see school from the parents' point of view. The immigrant teachers did not assume they understood the parents, even when they were from the same immigrant community. This doesn't mean that immigrant teachers were able to navigate an institutionally flawed context like schooling and be perfectly culturally responsive (see Adair, Tobin, & Arzubiaga, 2013) for an example of how immigrant teachers struggled to respond to parents). Still immigrant parents welcomed children of immigrants and their families to school with positive assumptions about their home lives. And they had many more tools and ideas to welcome them to school. Even when immigrant teachers did not know the parents or community very well, they did not assume that the parents were unaffectionate or that the home lives of the children were terrible. When, for example, immigrant teachers in King Waters and New York City did not know a lot about Mixtec communities or speak Mixteco, this did not translate to a deficit perspective of Mixtec families.

What Teachers' Ideas about Affection Reveal

Ideas about affection reveal different assumptions teachers made about immigrant families. Immigrant teachers in our study, who had the most ideas and deepest personal experience with immigrant communities, thought the most positively about them. They saw their own efforts to use affection with children of immigrants as mirroring what children received at home. They had the largest repertoire of strategies to ask immigrant parents questions and involve them in their children's education. Nonimmigrant teachers who had fewer ideas and experience with immigrant communities were critical and distant from immigrant parents.

Ideas about affection also revealed varying abilities and strategies to work with immigrant families. Teachers saying that they are doing something in their classrooms because none of the parents will or can do it can be a sign that the teacher has negative assumptions about families. The emphasis on immigrant mothers specifically failing is part of what Villenas (2001) refers to as "benevolent racism" that has both racial and gendered discriminatory underpinnings (see 2001, p. 22). Relationships between parents and teachers are difficult if not impossible to create when teachers attempt to engage with parents while holding negative assumptions about them.

On a more institutional level, the findings reveal that when sites have negative assumptions about families it is likely that teachers have little meaningful contact and connection with them. Improving the educational trajectories for children of immigrants includes engaging with and having positive relationships with immigrant parents (Takanishi, 2004; García & Gonzalez, 2006). Positive relationships with parents are more likely when institutions have "positive beliefs about the cultural heritages and academic potentialities" (Gay, 2000, p. 23) of children and families, particularly when

institutions are unfamiliar with cultural communities or new communities enter the school. As Trueba & Bartolomé (2000) write,

> Educators [can] consciously reject deficit explanations and look to utilize, build on, and infuse into the school culture the numerous cultural strengths they see their working-class, immigrant and U.S. born minority students bring to school (2000, p. 284).

Our study suggests that even in places with strong anti-immigrant sentiment as was the case in Phoenix, schools can be positive contexts of reception where parents are seen as loving, caring parts of children's lives and where teachers have a strong set of strategies and abilities to engage with immigrant families. It seems that the influence and input (not just the presence) of immigrant teachers is a factor in schools being positive, rather than negative, contexts of reception for immigrant families.

Implications for Early Childhood Program-level Policies

Early childhood programs that encourage and support the professional inclusion of teachers and leaders with immigrant experience contribute towards building a positive context of reception for young children of immigrants and their families. Preschool and pre-kindergarten programs for four-year olds are often the first institutional experience immigrant families have in the U.S. and certainly the first institutional experience for children. These initial early childhood educational experiences are foundational to how young children and their families see the role of schooling. As in some of the Phoenix schools, early childhood programs can be positive concepts of reception even when the surrounding political climate (as it is in Arizona) is a rather negative context of reception. Immigrant teachers having a strong influence at the school or within the program helped programs help privilege positive ideas about immigrant families or at least begin relationships between schools and immigrant communities on a positive, rather than negative, assumption. Positive ideas and assumptions enabled programs to better connect with and take advantage of families' expertise. Again, it is not to say that programs and policies should reflect an oversimplified positivity about immigrant life. But rather an initial assumption about parents and families that are positive and that encourage, even expect, teachers and directors to get to know families as a way to get to know children.

The act of valuing immigrant experiences in teachers seems to be connected to valuing immigrant experience generally. Policies that empower the perspective and ideas of immigrant teachers on a range of early childhood practices, not just those that simply recruit teachers with immigrant experience, are important for creating positive contexts of reception for teachers and eventually for the families with whom they will work. These findings imply that program systems may need to make specific efforts that include culturally connected policy, recruitment efforts and listening carefully to the staff already present at preschool programs.

Culturally Connected Policy

Programs at local, state and federal levels would benefit from having more direct input and decision-making from immigrant communities. This necessitates communities being represented at the table of policy-construction. New Zealand's Te Whariki (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1996) early childhood curriculum model is an example of cultural partnerships that helped to create a bicultural early childhood framework. In this case Maori communities were sought by

policymakers for their ideas and philosophies about what young children should experience in early schooling. These ideas were then incorporated equally into the curriculum with a focus on early childhood values such as belonging, contribution and well being, central values to Maori communities (see Carr & May, 1993). In the same way, policy decisions can and should include the expertise of immigrant communities at local, state and national levels. This does not mean one or two people being asked to represent whole communities. Rather, in-depth and ongoing collaboration with parents, community members and education experts should participate in the writing and implementation of curriculum, parent involvement and other types of policy.

Recruitment Efforts

Recruiting teachers with immigrant experience means confronting many kinds of obstacles facing immigrant students along the pipeline, particularly during the undergraduate years (see Urrieta, 2010; Yosso, 2006; Yosso, Smith, Ceja & Solorzano, 2009) In addition, policies that support "grow-your-own" teacher development programs can develop a locally connected teaching force that values immigrant experience, bilingual and multilingual capabilities and positive ideas about immigrant families. For example Skinner (2010) describes Nueva Generación, a community partnership between a neighborhood association and Chicago State University in which community members could return to or begin college in the bilingual education track and take courses at the local school as well as the college campus. Requiring policy development between Chicago Public Schools, Chicago State University, the Logan Square Neighborhood Association as well as the State of Illinois, the partnership attracted students who could begin the program as a cohort, already connected through their experiences in their community with connections to local schools in need of immigrant and/or bilingual teachers.

Listening Carefully to Immigrant Teachers

When schools and centers already have teachers who are immigrants, particularly recent immigrants, who are from the same community as the children being served, they can be seen as valuable faculty at the school with expertise and understanding that is to be respected, not demanded or ignored (see Adair, Tobin, & Arzubiaga, 2012, for extended discussion). Power shifts and opportunities for authentic policy-making can be approached as a meaningful sharing of ideas and possibilities for including and communicating with communities as well as practices in the classroom and other early childhood elements more broadly. We need more research that documents the ways and high-quality early childhood programs that privilege voices of immigrant parents and teachers and the ways in which this kind of political structure affects the academic and social development of young children of immigrants.

Early childhood programs in the CCB study that cultivated relationships and positive contexts of reception for immigrant teachers were also those that cultivated positive contexts of reception for immigrant families. The findings presented here do not imply that only sites with teachers with first-hand immigrant experience can be loving, caring and positive contexts of reception for children of immigrants and their families. And all sites without nonimmigrant teachers are not necessarily contexts of reception influenced by negative assumptions about immigrant families. Programs that support and benefit from the influence and expertise of immigrant teachers tend to be the programs that also cultivate relationships with immigrant parents and that begin parent/school relationships with positive assumptions about immigrant family life. Positive

assumptions are a good place to start for any early childhood program wanting to serve and connect with immigrant communities.

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Appendix A
Codes and Subcodes Used to Analyze Teachers' Ideas about Affection and Immigrant Families

Preschool Practice	
Parent/School Interactions	How do immigrant parents and teachers interact – in the school, outside the school, etc.
Teacher engagement	Affection, caring, touch, proximity, sensitivity and empathy
Teachers and diversity	Multicultural strategies, special needs, cultural and religious diversity, anti-bias programs, reinforcing identity, making visible different cultures, ways to name immigrant children.
School discrimination	How the school discriminates against individuals; Stories of discrimination, racism…at school among children, among parents
Parenting	
General Life of Parents	Descriptions and explanations about the lives of parents – can be comments or stories. Includes the work/family balance.
Childrearing attitudes	Thoughts/ ideas about fatherhood, motherhood, values and goals, nature of childhood.
Childrearing practice	Discipline, educational activities in the home
Immigration	
Public Discourse	How society talks about immigrants. National or local ideas about how immigrants are expected to assimilate, and/or integrate.
Neighborhood Characteristics	Where immigrants choose to live their everyday lives. How neighborhoods are organized in relation to one another.
Conflict	Disagreements and tension between different minority/immigrant groups and within singular immigrant groups themselves.
Relationship to dominant	Comments about the dominant, mainstream group – how the rules of the society work and how the mainstream operates.
Language	
Languages at home	Parents understanding or practice of using language, which languages are used at home, code switching.
Multilingual children	Comments about children speaking more than one language. Their problems and their potentialities.

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Volume 24 Number 1 January 4th, 2016 ISSN 1068-2341