



Resource Article

Inside this edition

CULTURAL

COMPETENCE

Resource Article	1
What do the data say?	3
Consultation Corner	4
On the WWW Continuing Education	5

Culture is a strong influence in a young child's life. Cultural values are expressed through shared routines and influence what and how families teach their children. Mealtime, for example, is a culturally rich routine in which families communicate their ideas about self, others, communication, and independence. Martini explored this topic in a study of mealtimes among four different American sub-cultural groups.

The study involved 278 Japanese-American, Filipino-American, Native Hawaiian, and Caucasian-American parents. These parents responded to questionnaires inquiring about what they wanted their children to learn, what they imagined for their children as successful adults, and what that success would look like. The Japanese-American parents (n=120) wanted their children to live a well-ordered life, be in contact with family, and master the demands of their lives. The Filipino-American parents (n=50) differed somewhat from the other groups in that they wanted their children to grow up obedient, respecting authority,

conducting themselves well with good manners. The Native-Hawaiian parents (n=48) wanted their grown children up being socially connected, happy, and self-reliant. The Caucasasia-American parents (n=60) wanted their children to become self-reliant, happy, spontaneous, and creative.

Martini then recruited a subset of these families to video tape "a typical weekday evening meal" with their infants (aged 7 to 23 months). The tapes were initially viewed and coded using various mealtime features (i.e., number of people present, location of meal, where the infant was positioned) as markers. Subsequently the videos were viewed and coded using various *maternal actions and learning interactions* (i.e., response to infant, directing of infant behavior, communication with infant) as markers. Then a final viewing was coding using *child actions* (i.e., exploration, experimentation, engaging in play, cooperation, resistance) as markers.

Resource Article (continued)

The results suggested several differences amongst the four groups. This brief highlights two specific variations that highlight the influence of culture on mealtime experiences for infants. The degree to which mealtime focused on the baby and the degree to which baby was allowed to experiment and explore.

Japanese-American mothers focused heavily on the baby during meal times. The babies were generally fed before the rest of the family ate. The baby was fed by his/her mother sitting in a face-to-face position with the mother quickly responding to the baby's communicative intents. Their exploration during meal times included having toys in addition to food while sitting in high chairs.

Filipino-American mealtimes were highly focused on the baby with mealtimes typically involving the baby on the mother's lap at the table while the family ate. The babies were spoon fed until 2-3 years of age. Baby exploration during mealtimes were somewhat limited because the babies were typically held as they were spoon fed.

Hawaiian-American mealtimes focused on the entire family. These babies were fed on the laps of their mothers until approximately 9 months or until they became mobile. Once the baby was crawling or toddling, the baby was free to roam during mealtimes. They were fed when they approached the person holding the bowl of food. This opportunity to roam provided the children many opportunities for exploration.

Caucasian-American mealtimes were also family focused. They typically involved babies sitting in high-chairs near their mothers. They were given finger foods, and utensils. In doing so they tended to make noise to attract the attention of their

mothers and family members. These babies spent most mealtimes in high chairs and were provided with food and utensils to experiment with and explore.

Considering the parents' responses to the initial questionnaire (i.e., what they wanted their children to learn and what they imagined success to be like for their child as an adult), we can see that the structure of mealtime supports the expression and nurturing of these values. Japanese-American mothers watched their babies carefully, facilitating successful behavior through redirection and shaping as they attended closely to their baby's behavior. Filipino-American mothers were highly attentive to their infants, wanting their infants to eat in a certain and proper way. Martini also noted that for this sub-culture, "Food was considered sacred and not to be wasted or played with, so children were spoon-fed until they could feed themselves efficiently and with little waste." Hawaiian-American mothers allowed their babies to explore their environment by crawling and toddling and learning about things via trial and error. Caucasian-American mothers allowed their children to explore food independently and experiment with social contact.

Mealtime is a shared routine where children learn and parents express their ideas about what is important for children to learn. Families' cultural values and beliefs shape the ways they carry out various daily routines and activities. As early interventionists, we can learn a lot about a family's culture by asking about their mealtimes.

Martini, M. (2002). How mothers in four American cultural groups shape infant learning during mealtimes. *Zero to Three, February/March, 14-20.*



What do the data say?

Are minority children disproportionately represented in EI/ECSE?

In an article, on behalf of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) researchers explored if minority children are disproportionately represented in early intervention (EI) and early childhood special education (ECSE).

A growing body of research is confirming the positive results of EI and ECSE. For example, data reported from 33 states on the national early childhood outcome measures showed that 72 to 81% of children exiting EI and ECSE respectively showed greater than expected growth in their acquisition of knowledge and skills and 52 to 53% exited EI and ECSE respectively within age expectation (Early Childhood Outcomes Center, September 2013). This growing validation of positive results for children with delays or disabilities reinforces that all eligible children, regardless of racial-ethnic origin, should be afforded the opportunity to benefit from these supports and services. Yet, years of school level special education compliance monitoring has identified evidence of disproportionate representation of racial-ethnic minorities in special education.

The researchers noted that, underrepresentation of children who are racial-ethnic minorities may be attributed to differences in values and expectations for children, beliefs about delays and disabilities, attitudes related to stigma, reliance on extended family for assistance and support, or possibly socioeconomic status and lower access to health care. It is also possible that racial-ethnic minorities are overrepresented as they may experience more risk factors, such as poverty and low birth weight. Racial bias may also be a contributing factor, resulting in more children of minorities being referred. Over and under

representation are both possibilities, yet the directionality of disproportionality is not empirically known.

This study, examining disproportionality in EI and ECSE, included an impressive sample of 7,950 children, with and without disabilities participating in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Birth Cohort (ECLS-B). Parent interviews were conducted to learn about the child's status, including if the child was disabled or delayed and participating in EI/ECSE with an IFSP or IEP. From the full sample 450 children had an IFSP or IEP. Parents also reported on their child's gender, family's socioeconomic status, mother's age and marital status, primary language, residence characteristics, child's gestational and birth characteristics and early academic skills proficiency, child's frequency of behavior problems, and access to well-child care.

The results showed the following findings, which raise the question about disproportionate representation in EI/ECSE. Children in EI/ECSE were more likely to be, male, White, born to mothers who engaged in behavioral risks during pregnancy, born very preterm and/or with moderate or very low birth weight and/or congenital anomalies, to display lower numeracy and/or receptive language knowledge, and to engage in externalizing problem behaviors (p. 344). Children in EI/ECSE were less likely to be Black, Hispanic, or Asian or primarily speak a language other than English (p. 344).

Morgan, P. L., Farkas, G., Hillenmeier, M. M., & Maczuga, S. (2012). Are minority children disproportionately represented in early intervention and early childhood special education? Sage Publications. Accessed November 2013 from <http://edr.sagepub.com/content/41/9/339>



Consultation Corner

Beginning this month through March 2014 we are excited to have Christina Kasprzak and Betsy Ayankoya as our consultation corner experts addressing the topic "Cultural Competence."

In collaboration with lead scholar, Dina Castro, Christina Kasprzak and Betsy Ayankoya authored *The New Voices/ Nuevas Voces Guide to Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Early Childhood* and the accompanying *Facilitator's Guide*. These key resources provide a comprehensive professional development course for programs to prepare for and welcome *voices* from different backgrounds and cultural experiences.

Christina M. Kasprzak, M.A. is an Educational Consultant at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is currently the Co-Director for the Early Childhood TA (ECTA) Center and has more than 16 years of experience in supporting early intervention and early childhood special education programs across the United States in implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Her technical assistance and training experience has focused on three areas: providing quality services for young children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds; designing and conducting program evaluation; and measuring child and family outcomes for early intervention and early childhood special education programs.

Betsy Ayankoya, serves as an Associate Director at the Early Childhood TA Center and an Early Childhood Consultant for the South East Regional Resource Center. She has worked in special education for close to 30 years, as a therapist, college instructor, technical assistant provider, project manager and administrator. Her current involves leading strategic planning and program improvement activities with state agency staff, addressing general supervision in Part C, supporting implementation of the IDEA. She supports multiple early childhood special education collaborative efforts including supporting the revisions to the current DEC (Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children) Recommended Practices. She currently serves on the national advisory board for First School, a collaborative Pre-K to 3rd grad initiative and previously served on the DEC Executive Board.

KIT Newsletters
are available
online at
www.edis.army.mil



On the WWW

www.militaryparenting.org

The website above links to an online parenting course for service members and veterans facing the challenges of family re-integration. The six module course is designed to provide information, promote active problem-solving and dialog between family members. Module 1 'Back into the Family,' begins with the topic of 'Managing Expectations,' followed by 'Anticipating Your Child's Reactions' and concludes with 'Reestablishing Your Parental Role.' Some interesting features include: brief video

clips from service members talk through some of their challenges. Throughout the modules, parents are encouraged to consider their child's level of development as well as their point of view. There is also an opportunity to create (and print) a parenting plan based on common concerns, such as 'How to fit in with the family now that I'm home.' Given the number of soldiers returning from deployments and extended trainings, this website could be a valuable resource to share with military families and agencies and organizations supporting military families.



Continuing Education for KIT Readers

The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) is offering a continuing education opportunity for KIT readers.

In line with the focus on *Cultural Competence*, readers are invited to receive continuing education contact hours for reading the monthly KIT publications (November 2013 through March 2014) and completing a multiple-choice exam about

the content covered in these KITs.

KIT readers will receive the exam in April 2014. There is no need to register for the CEUs. Rather, if you are interested complete the online at www.edis.army.mil Upon successful completion of the exam, you will receive a certificate of non-discipline specific continuing education contact hours.

*Thank you for your continued interest in the KIT.
Please share your KIT questions/ideas via email to
EDISCSPD@amedd.army.mil*

