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Defining Effective Parenting and Teaching Practices among Head Start Caregivers and Educators: a Qualitative Approach

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DEFINING EFFECTIVE PARENTING AND TEACHING PRACTICES AMONG HEAD

START CAREGIVERS AND EDUCATORS: A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

ELLEN C. WING

70 Pages

Past research on parenting practices among families living with low socioeconomic resources has often been conducted without attempts to understand the strengths of this population. In addition, much literature on parenting and teaching practices during early childhood has studied each entity individually. Using interview data and practices consistent with grounded theory, this study sought to understand how the parents, teachers, and family resource advocates of Head Start children conceptualize effective parenting, teaching, and home-school connections. The themes that emerged evoke discussion on the meaning of relationships, the value of education, and how personal experiences shape perspectives.

KEYWORDS: Parenting; Teaching; Home-School Relationship; Head Start

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Throughout the process of working toward my doctorate, I have come to realize that there is nothing I do that is not intrinsically interconnected to the lives and systems around me. I am grateful beyond words for all those seen and unseen who have walked with throughout this journey, opening doors I didn't know existed, believing in me when I didn't know how to believe in myself, and reminding me that this experience was first and foremost about cultivating empathy and being open to growth. To the participants, and the many clients before there were participants, who shared pieces of their lives with me. You are the most incredible teachers I could have asked for. Dr. Greg Braswell thank you for your unwavering support and faith in me throughout the completion of this research. Your positivity, expertise, and kindness was a gift that made this project nothing but a joy to complete. Dr. Karla Doepke, there are no words perfect enough to thank you for the endless time, care, and mentorship you have so selflessly shared with me. Your generosity has left a lasting impression on my life and my practice. Dr. Brea Banks and Dr. Amanda Quesenberry, thank you for the insight, excitement, and encouragement you both provided during this process—your support has been an invaluable resource.

Finally, to my family, the reason for it all. Thank you for loving me so well that all I have ever wanted was to learn to do the same for others. This work is dedicated to my grandparents, all of whom wanted nothing more than the world for their children and grandchildren. I carry your hopes with me always.

E.C.W

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CHAPTER I: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Parents and teachers play an integral role in a young child's development. Perhaps the strongest influencing forces within a child's world, parents and teachers not only possess the power to shape development through direct interaction, but their socialization decisions can help connect a child to a wide variety of additional learning environments and life experiences. As the individuals who interact most consistently with young children, parents and teachers are in an optimal position to promote positive physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development. This is a major undertaking, one which cannot be properly understood without attending to the broader social and cultural contexts surrounding socialization. Both parenting and teaching are strongly influenced by overarching social and cultural structures such as social class, race, ethnicity, and political climate. These convoluted, mutually interactive systems bleed through to the practices employed by both caregivers and educators and ultimately frame a child's developmental experience. It is clear that attempts to understand the effects of parenting and teaching practices on child development must not ignore such social and cultural factors. However, the way in these systems are addressed in research holds serious implications regarding the social justice of populations at study.

One circumstance that can significantly influence a child's developmental ecology is living with low socioeconomic status. Research indicates that when monetary capital within a family is limited, young children are more likely to experience a number of adverse outcomes including poor physical and emotional health as well as limited academic achievement (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). Low socioeconomic status also disproportionately affects individuals who hold minoritized racial and ethnic identities (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2017). Thus, it is essential that services designed to support these communities acknowledge the impact

of historical trauma and make explicit efforts to focus on the strengths of the diverse range of individuals impacted by low-income (Denham, 2008; National Center for Children in Poverty, 2017).

Head Start is one, well established, federally funded early childhood program designed to serve young children and families from low-income environments (U.S. Department of Health, 2018). Through program design and high implementation standards, the Head Start organization is committed to empowering children and their families by means of ongoing collaboration between educators and caregivers. Accordingly, the Head Start program has the opportunity to strongly influence a child's caregiving and educational systems (U.S. Department of Health, 2018). It is important that such a setting develops a strong conceptualization of what it means to parent and teach effectively as well as how these two highly influential enterprises interact on a child's development.

While previous research has attempted to define both parenting and teaching within this population, there currently exist two limitations with this research. First, many investigations, which seek to define parenting practices among families with low-income, have focused heavily on the deficiencies of these parents, their homes, and their values (Ullucci & Howard, 2015; Abell et al., 1996). Such investigations encourage connection between the family and school as a means of helping families compensate for what they lack rather than identifying the strengths of families with low-income and using these skills to promote well-being (Calabrese, 1990 Laraeu, 1999; Valencia & Solórzano, 1997 p.189-192). Second, research that has sought to define effective practices employed by the parents and teachers has done so by studying each enterprise separately (Castel et al., 2016; McWayne et al., 2017; McWayne et al., 2016). That is, while there are many accounts of effective parenting and teaching practices across diverse social and

cultural contexts, there is little known about how these key entities conceptualize the role of their counterpart and how this may influence collaboration. By setting out to explore the unique viewpoints of Head Start caregivers and educators through qualitative analysis, the present researcher sought to take a strength-based approach to elucidating beliefs about effective parenting and teaching practices.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Impact of Poverty

Following the Great Recession of 2008, the United States saw a marked increase in the number of families impacted by poverty (Pew Research Center, 2016). Currently, 10.5 million children under the age of six years live in low income households (Jiang et al., 2015). Provided that early childhood is a time of rapid development, this age group is often considered most vulnerable to the adverse impacts associated with poverty (Jiang et al., 2015). Poverty rates intersect with race and ethnicity such that children who are Black, Native American, and Latinx are disproportionately more likely to live below the poverty line (Jiang et al., 2015). Further, research has indicated that poverty significantly alters the way an individual experiences life in terms of physical health, emotional health, and academic achievement (Ullucci & Howard, 2015).

Many children living in poverty suffer higher incidences of adverse physical health due to increased exposure to environmental hazards as well as limited access to adequate medical care (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Ullucci & Howard, 2015; Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). For example, living below the poverty line can force families into dilapidated homes which can subject children to a number of hazards including lead-based paint, poor insulation, combustion appliances, and pest and rodent infestation (Ullucci & Howard, 2015; Bashir, 2011). Each of these dangers is a reliable cause of adverse health conditions such as respiratory illness, cognitive delay, or accidental injury (Ullucci & Howard, 2015; Bashir, 2011). In addition, children living in low-income homes are less likely to receive medical care to treat health ailments in areas such vision, hearing, and dental (Ullucci & Howard, 2015). Limited access to

care in these areas severely hinders opportunities for success in school and social functioning (Ullucii & Howard, 2015).

For young children of color living in poverty, physical health can also be adversely impacted by health care professionals who display harmful biases against racially minoritized people (Flores et al., 2005; Fitz-Gerald & Hurst, 2017). According to data from the National Survey of Early Childhood Health, young racially minoritized children experience multiple disparities in health status, insurance coverage, number of referrals made to specialists, and topics discussed during visits to the pediatrician's office (Flores et al., 2005). Additional research has also demonstrated that biases against racially marginalized patients significantly impacted a health professional's treatment decisions and made these professionals more likely to provide individuals with racially minoritized identities with lower quality care (Fitz-Gerald & Hurst, 2017).

As demonstrated by the research cited above, children who are impacted by poverty are more likely to be exposed to oppressive, threatening, and uncontrollable life events including discrimination and stigmatization (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Ullucci & Howard, 2015; Reutter et al., 2009). Experiencing environmental factors such as these may lead to chronic levels of toxic stress, a physiological stress response caused by exposure to prolonged or repetitive adversity (Franke, 2014). Previous research has linked exposure to toxic stress in childhood to adverse changes in brain development (Shonkoff & Garner, 2012). These changes in the structure of the brain have been shown to negatively impact an individual's capacity to regulate emotions (Shonkoff & Garner, 2012). Experiencing a disruption in emotion regulation is likely to impede efforts to build relationships, learn, and maintain mental health (Shonkoff & Garner, 2012; Zeman et al., 2006).

Further, research has reported that poverty significantly impacts a child's education such that children from low socioeconomic backgrounds are likely to have decreased educational outcomes (Barajas et al., 2008). Children who live in poverty demonstrated lower rates of attendance and complete fewer years of school (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). While some researchers have tied these outcome variables to familial factors such as a paucity of cognitively stimulating materials and experiences at home, parental education level, and familial expectations (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002), others suggest that educators' perceptions play a key role (McLoyd, 1998). For example, teachers have demonstrated a tendency to perceive students from low-income homes less positively and to expect these students to perform lower on academic measures (McLoyd, 1998). These expectations may impact not only how teachers interact with students, but also how children perceive themselves (Jussim & Harber, 2005). Research has also shown that teachers provide children living in poverty with fewer learning opportunities and less reinforcement for strong performance (McLoyd, 1998). Taken together, many children impacted by poverty may experience substantial obstacles in trying to receive an equitable education.

Head Start

Provided this evidence, it is exceptionally important that high quality services exist to support low-income families with young children. One such program designed to help families and children living in poverty is Head Start. Head Start is a federally funded early childhood program designed to serve young children and families from low-income homes (U.S. Department of Health, 2018). The Head Start program aims to cultivate school readiness in children from birth to age five by providing comprehensive and culturally responsive center and home-based services (U.S. Department of Health, 2018). The overarching goals of Head Start

include the promotion of early learning, health, and family well-being. Importantly, Head Start program standards repeatedly indicate that program goals should be achieved through the involvement and empowerment of caregivers. Depending on the nature of Head Start services provided and the developmental needs of the family, educators collaborate with families in a variety of ways such as regular communication, home visits, parent conferences, and assistance coordinating and attending health care appointments (U.S. Department of Health, 2018).

For the purpose of the present study, I recruited participants from a Midwestern Head Start program. This program serves families in metropolitan and rural areas who identify with a variety of races, ethnicities, and languages. While Head Start programs have a variety of educational employment positions, those of particular interest to the current study included classroom teachers, family resource advocates, and educational managers.

Guiding Theoretical Frameworks

Just as it is exceptionally important that efforts are made to support low-income families with young children through high quality research and service provision, it is also essential that such efforts are based on theory that acknowledges the importance of environmental context and culture in child development. One theory that attempts to capture the importance of context in development is ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994).

The ecological systems theory purports that human development is a process that occurs over time as an individual engages in repeated, reciprocal interactions with the people, structures, and symbols in their ecological environment (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). According to this theory, an individual's ecological environment is comprised of multiple, nested structures including microsystems (such as family, school, peer group), mesosystems (the linkages between microsystems), exosystems (the connections between direct and indirect systems like parents and

their parent's workplace), macrosystems (patterns of interaction informed by the overarching

culture) and chronosystems (a system encompassing change or consistency over time in areas

relevant to a person's past, present and future (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). See Figure 1 for a

visual depiction of the ecological systems theory.
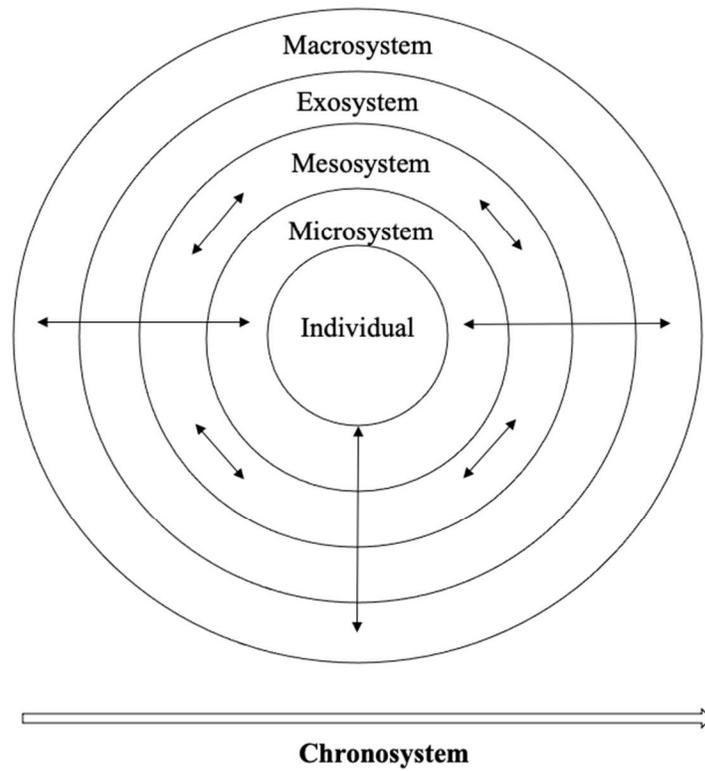
Figure 1. Ecological Systems Model

Another theory that can be used to describe a child's developmental experience in terms

of their context is the developmental niche. Constructed to facilitate understanding of the cultural

regulation of child development, the developmental niche is a theoretical framework anchored by

three, interlocking components (Super & Harkness, 1986). These components, or subsystems are

(1) the physical and social setting in which the child lives; (2) the customs and practices of child

rearing in which caregivers engage; and (3) the psychology or beliefs of the caregivers. These

three subsystems work in tandem to harmoniously mediate an individual's developmental experience within the broader culture. Each component operates in a differential, conditional, and mutually interactive manner with other aspects of the culture. Thus, each niche is considered an open system. As a child advances through developmental stages, continuities within and between subsystems provide a child with the information they need to make sense of the social, affective, and cognitive rules of their culture. Through the lens of the developmental niche, a child and their environment are continuously influencing one another, evolving together over time (Super & Harkness, 1986). Figure 2 offers a visual representation of this theory.

Figure 2. Developmental Niche Model

I intended to explore factors related to each system within the ecological model as well as each key component in the conceptualization of the developmental niche. Both of these theories emphasize the importance of reciprocal interactions between a child and multiple environmental

systems informed by cultural values. In addition, both theories highlight the immense influence adults can have on a child's lived experience. Specifically, as the individuals who most dir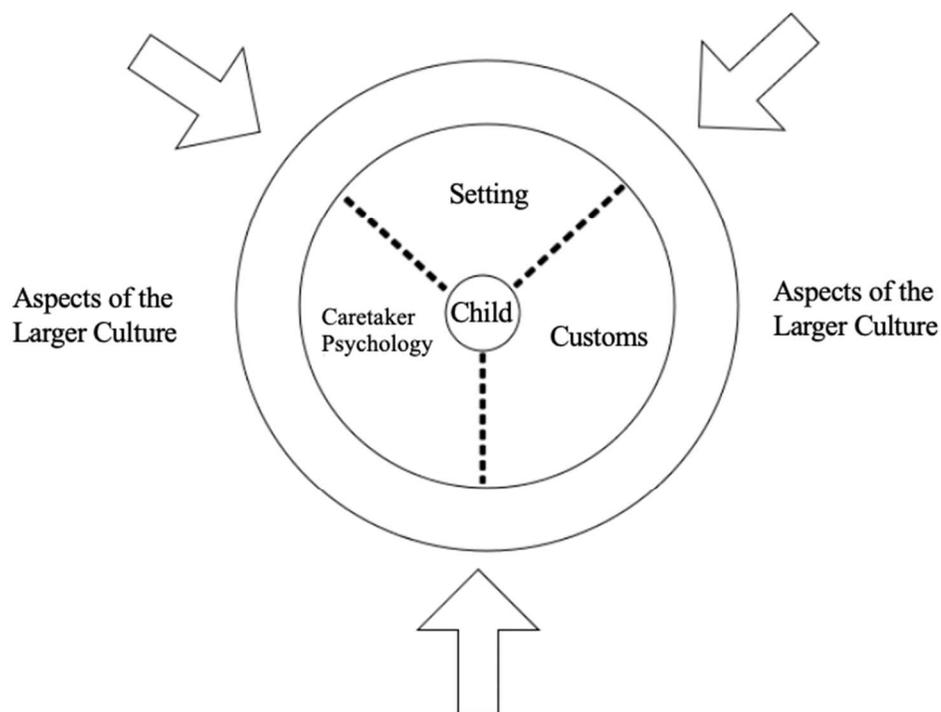ectly and consistently provide care to children throughout their development, parents and teachers exhibit great power to control a child's access to a number of different environments, experiences, and knowledge. In order to understand child development within context, it is essential to attend to research on practices employed by caregivers and educators.

Parenting

For decades, Baumrind's (1966) research on parenting styles has shaped the way the field of psychology conceptualizes successful caregiving. The parenting styles identified in this seminal research are classified as authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Repeatedly, research has indicated that more positive child outcomes are associated with an authoritative parenting style characterized by a respect for autonomy, discipline guided by logical rules, and affirmations of a child's unique interests (Baumrind, 1966). Consequently, this particular parenting style has long been regarded as the gold standard for child rearing practices (Simons & Conger, 2014). Despite the widespread acceptance of Baumrind's (1966) research, much of the literature concerning this typology was based on data provided by white, middle-class, two-parent families within the United States. The demographics of these samples severely limited the generalizability of these research findings to families who held cultural identities and maintained family structures distinct from the sample. In an attempt to acknowledge diversity in parenting, researchers applied this typology to caregivers and communities with differing cultural identities, resources and needs. Unfortunately, when this model was used to describe these populations, findings reinforced negative stereotypes and perpetuated deficit perspectives of these groups which further marginalized families. Studies reflect these parents as "harsh," "punitive,"

"controlling," and "at-risk" (Chao, 1994; Lee, 2013; McWayne et al., 2017). In resistance, some scholars have tried to uncover the strengths and needs of diverse families by designing research focused on extending parenting dimensions via a person-centered approach (McWayne et al., 2017).

For example, researchers have identified the no-nonsense parenting style as an adaptive approach used by African American mothers of preschool age children living in low-income areas (Carpenter & Mendez, 2013). Although some qualities of no-nonsense parenting fit the definition of the authoritarian parenting style in that this style emphasizes a strong degree of control over children's behavior, a no-nonsense approach is strongly influenced by a parent's mission to protect and nurture (Carpenter & Mendez, 2013). More specifically, no-nonsense parenting is a parenting style defined as a combination of high levels of control *and* high levels of warmth (Brody & Flor, 1998; Carpenter & Mendez, 2013). This style is intended to promote self-regulation and protect children from unsafe surroundings (Brody & Flor, 1998). For families living in more dangerous environments, this parenting style is a highly functional strategy for keeping children safe and developing their autonomy (Brody & Flor, 1998).

In addition, parenting styles employed by Chinese mothers have traditionally demonstrated that Chinese mothers most often assume an authoritarian parenting style and demonstrate significantly higher levels of control than European-American mothers (Chao, 1994; Lin & Fu, 1990; Steinberg et al., 1992). However, when Chinese caregiving ideologies were assessed, findings noted the importance of *chiao shun* and *guan*. Together these terms can be conceptualized as "training" which emphasizes the demonstration of appropriate behavior or morals within a relationship with a highly involved and caring parent (Chao, 1994). At times

when important cultural concepts are scrutinized outside of their sociocultural ecologies, they may be unfairly viewed as weaknesses or deficiencies (Chao, 1994).

Further, research designed to examine parenting dimensions based on a sample of Latino parents demonstrated that Baumrind's (1966) traditional parenting categories did not accurately capture Latino families (Domenech Rodríguez et al., 2009). Rather, data indicated that Latino families engaged in eight possible parenting styles with a majority of parents considered "protective" which was defined as high on warmth and demandingness and low on autonomy (Domenech Rodríguez et al., 2009).

Given that studies have indicated that factors such as neighborhood context, ethnicity, and class significantly impact socialization goals and parenting practices (Pinderhughes et al., 2001; Hill & Tyson, 2008; Lareau & Horvat, 1999) it is necessary that researchers take a culturally responsive and strength based approach to understanding the goals parents have for their children and what they deem effective parenting practices (Domenech Rodríguez et al., 2009; McGroder, 2002). While some previous research has met this task by aiming to define effective parenting practices among individuals who identify with a common cultural group (McWayne, Mattis, et al., 2017; McWayne et al., 2016), there still exists a need to understand how effective parenting is defined by caregivers with differing cultural identities who all attend a common Head Start program. Thus, it is important to assess both the depth and breadth of caregiver perspectives within the Head Start setting.

Early Childhood Education

The field of early childhood education in the United States is undergoing dramatic changes (Halsip, 2018). For decades, the landscape of early childhood education has been strongly influenced by the notion that problems occur "within" individuals and that social

improvement results from the efforts of individuals rather than whole systems to "do better" (Bloch, 1992). Therefore, in the past, the significance of socio-political forces surrounding individuals has been neglected and little research was conducted concerning how ideologies and practices in early childhood education maintained or amplified race, class, and gender inequities (Valencia, 1997; Bloch, 1992). Consequently, this deficit approach perpetuated detrimental myths about the character and value of individuals holding marginalized identities (Ullucci & Howard, 2015).

More recently, the field of early childhood education has begun to see movement toward a commitment to holistic child development and social justice (Halsip, 2018). Environmental systems are increasingly recognized as immensely influential developmental forces and educators are encouraged to take a strength-based approach where the children and families are appreciated for their assets, resourcefulness and resiliency (Halsip, 2018). However, as much of the research on effective early childhood education practices is conducted using class wide observational systems (Raver et al. 2008; Stormont et al., 2007), it is unclear how teachers themselves conceptualize effective teaching practices. In addition, educators hold their own unique beliefs, knowledge, and training which are likely to influence their interactions with children (Pajares, 1992). It is important that future research understand how educators define effective teaching practices to better understand how the field is making a shift from a deficit perspective toward recognizing the promise of families living with low socioeconomic status.

Home School Collaboration

Consistent with an ecological and holistic approach to understanding child development, research supports parent involvement in their child's education as a way to promote student success (Epstein, 2001; Castro et al., 2004). That is, children are more likely to demonstrate

increased school readiness and greater academic achievement when a parent is involved in their education (Epstein, 2001; Marcon, 1999; Castro et al., 2004). While initiatives to foster family school collaboration hold great promise for enhancing a child's educational journey, it is important for schools to attend to how they define parental involvement. This definition may hold important implications for the development and maintenance of strong family-school partnerships. For example, past research has indicated that a majority of educators often take a schoolcentric approach to conceptualizing parental involvement in that they see meaningful parental involvement as volunteering in their child's classroom, being present at school activities, and assisting in the completion of homework (Lawson, 2003). While this style of involvement may be possible to achieve for some families, it may be especially challenging for other families.

Given that interactions between families and schools are influenced by complex sociocultural and political factors, there are a variety of reasons a schoolcentric approach to family involvement may not inspire strong family-school collaboration (Lawson, 2003). Racial and cultural issues play a large role in how comfortable parents from marginalized backgrounds feel participating in an educational setting especially when schoolcentric definitions of parental involvement are informed by dominant cultural norms (Lawson, 2003). For example, earning a low-income may impede parents from contributing in appreciated ways due to full-time work schedules, potential transportation limitations, or previous negative experiences in a school setting (Lawson, 2003). Such a schoolcentric structure can lead parents to feel as if their ideas and opinions are only valued if they comply with the school's needs (Lawson, 2003).

In order to better understand how to support home-school connections for families impacted by low-income, research has been conducted within the Head Start setting. In an effort

to encourage parent involvement, one group of researchers developed and tested an intervention aimed at enhancing school readiness with Head Start families and educators (Mendez, 2010). Although overall engagement in the intervention remained low, parent satisfaction was high (Mendez, 2010). In addition, parents increased the frequency with which they read to their children and children showed stronger receptive vocabulary and higher levels of social competence at the end of the year (Mendez, 2010). Further, a positive correlation was found between parent-teacher relationships and parental participation in the intervention (Mendez, 2010). Importantly, this intervention highlighted parent excellence as opposed to deficits which may have contributed to strong satisfaction ratings (Mendez, 2010).

Other researchers interested in the significance of parent-teacher collaboration at Head Start interviewed mothers of preschool children to gain a sense of their perspectives on parent involvement (Bruckman & Blanton, 2003). Researchers learned that mothers who felt valued chose to contribute in positive ways to their child's preschool education by being present in the classroom and working with their child at home (Bruckman & Blanton, 2003). Results demonstrated that parents who felt teachers responded to their unique situations with sensitivity felt more appreciated and comfortable collaborating (Bruckman & Blanton, 2003).

It is important that early childhood settings like Head Start continue to move away from a schoolcentric ideal and toward community centric collaboration such that the environments most immediately surrounding a child foster similar goals for their development (Castro et al., 2004). As family involvement is an essential component of the Head Start mandate to promote healthy development of children and families, they seek to develop these relationships in a variety of ways. For example, the Head Start program of current interest strives to involve families by keeping the center open to families during regular program hours, holding parent conferences,

allowing opportunities for parents to volunteer in the classroom, conducting home visits, holding activity nights for families each month, and inviting parents to participate on the policy council. Given the multitude of ways this center attempts to connect with families, it is important to understand how caregivers perceive these efforts. With regard to the Head Start setting, it is necessary for there to be ongoing research aimed at understanding the needs and perspectives of both families and educators; such information may hold important implications for how relationships between a child's home and school are forged.

Further, there is a paucity of information about how parents and teachers conceptualize the effective practices of their counterparts. The goal of the current research was to assess perspectives of parents and educators with regard to how they define effective parenting and teaching practices with their children.

The Present Study

There is a need for investigators to continue to conduct research that seeks to understand and affirm the strengths of families affected by low socioeconomic status. Head Start plays an essential role in providing support to families with low income through a variety of collaborative services. In an effort to better understand a Head Start child's development in relation to their physical, social, and political contexts, the goal of the present research was to create an opportunity to examine caregiver and educator perspectives on effective parenting, teaching and home-school connection practices. Each of these questions was inspired by facets of ecological systems theory and the developmental niche (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Super & Harkness, 1986). Specifically, the current investigators conducted a qualitative analysis aimed at answering the following questions:

1. What are the short-term goals caregivers[1] and educators hold for preschool children?

2. What practices make an effective[2] caregiver, teacher, home-school relationship within the

Head Start setting?

3. What is the role of the physical, social, and cultural environments in caregiver and

educator perspectives?

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[1] The terms parent and caregiver are used interchangeably to acknowledge the diversity in who partakes in a caregiving role for a child and Head Start.
[2] Ultimately, the term effective will be defined by participants in the study. Here, I have chosen to use the word "effective" to mean "a high quality way of achieving a desired goal." For simplicity, and to prevent confusion, the term "good" will be used with participants.

CHAPTER III: METHOD

Research Design

I collected and analyzed data using practices consistent with grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This approach allowed me opportunity to build theory based on the voices of those most likely to be historically oppressed by traditional research methodology (Levitt et al., 2018). Through a systematic and inductive research process, I intended to deepen understanding of the unique perspectives Head Start caregivers, educators, and advocates hold regarding effective parenting and teaching practices. Further, research findings may inform Head Start service provision by elucidating which practices to reinforce (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008; Merriam, 1998).

Participants

I recruited caregivers, educators, family resource advocates, and education managers of children enrolled in a Midwestern Head Start center. I chose to conduct the investigation at just one site as opposed to multiple sites around the state to better understand the unique experiences of participants in that geographical area. Because the purpose of this study was more about developing theory depth of analysis was favored over breadth. This site served both metropolitan and rural areas. The term caregiver was defined as anyone who engages in a primary caregiving role for a Head Start child ages three to five years old. Classroom teachers were described as individuals who comprise a teaching team and who work directly with the children in their classroom. Family resource advocates (FRA's) were defined as individuals responsible for supporting families by working directly with caregivers to help them access community resources best suited to meet their family needs. Lastly, education managers were described as those who serve a supportive, supervisory role over classroom teachers and who have power to

indirectly influence classroom practices through interactions with the teaching team. Head Start classrooms at this Midwestern center were housed either at the same structure of buildings as the central program office or within churches, schools, or community centers.

All participants were recruited via informational postings on bulletin boards at the Head Start location, email, the Head Start Facebook page, and a program-wide broadcast text messaging system. In addition, I shared flyers in person with Head Start staff members and caregivers during hours of operation and at after-school family functions. Across all recruitment methods, I used a script stating the purpose of the study, benefits and risks associated with their participation, the incentives available to participants, and necessary scheduling details.

Further, to advance understanding of multiple, often underrepresented perspectives within the Head Start setting, it was important for me to allow as many caregivers, educators, and advocates the opportunity to share their viewpoints as possible. Thus, aside from the inclusionary criteria stated below, I did not limit participation based on identification with a particular demographic group. Criteria for inclusion required that each participant: (a) be at least 18 years of age, (b) be a caregiver, educator, education manager, or family resource advocate of a Head Start child ages three to five years old, and (c) be able to participate independently in focus groups or individual interviews in English. While I wanted to make participation accessible to families who communicated in a language other than English, I was not able to secure the financial or personnel resources to make translation and interpretation on this scale possible. Through the assistance of the Illinois State University Dissertation Completion Grant, I was able to provide a meal, gift cards, and childcare to participants.

As the aim of this qualitative investigation was to uncover culturally honored dimensions of experience by drawing upon grounded theory practices, I followed recommendations to recruit

a small number of participants (i.e., 20 or less) to therefore enhance the depth of inquiry (Levitt et al., 2018; Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). A small number of participants proportionate to the number of individuals who assumed each distinct role within the Head Start Program were recruited. A total of six caregivers, seven teachers, and three family resource advocates participated in the study. Unfortunately, no education managers volunteered to participate in the study. In addition, one family resource advocate from a rural site volunteered, yet their data was lost due to technology failure. No other parents or teachers from the rural site volunteered to participate; therefore, their experiences are not represented in the data.

Researcher Description

I approached this investigation having studied infant and child development, counseling, and critical theory. I had served as a mental health consultant at Head Start between 2016 and 2019, and during which this time, and I built relationships with teaching staff, children, and families. In addition, I had experience leading parent groups in a clinic setting. These experiences likely assisted me in my exploratory approach to comprehend the unique perspectives of caregivers, educators, and advocates. It is important to note that I am of European descent and I identify as white, cis-gender, heterosexual, and upper middle-class woman. Within the Midwest of the United States, these identities reflect a dominant and, often, oppressive culture. For this reason, it was essential for me to approach this work with cultural humility as well as skillful management of potential biases. In order to manage the impact of bias and previous relationships with participants, I relied on a semi-structured script, avoided providing examples, and refrained from using evaluative verbal language and non-verbal mannerisms. I moderated conversations such that the focus remained on participants' viewpoints and experiences as opposed to my perceptions. Ultimately, I chose to engage in this inquiry in an

attempt to deepen my understanding of the strengths and needs of Head Start families and service providers. Further, I welcomed this as an opportunity to practice the qualitative researching skills needed to validate and empower lived experiences.

<div align="center">**Measures & Materials**</div>

Demographic Survey

A demographic survey solicited information regarding each participant's age, gender, ethnicity, race, relationship to child, caregiver title, highest education level, language, and family structure (see Appendix A). This survey was intended to help me better understand how each of the participants identified. It is important to note that one participant did not complete the demographic survey and many participants did not complete the question that inquired about race and ethnicity. However, the participants that did stated that they identified as white, bi-racial, Black, or African American. All participants reported that English was their primary language and some participants also indicated that they identified as Christian. See Table 1 for descriptive information regarding participants demographic characteristics and the interview format in which they participated.

Table 1

Demographic Survey Information

Name	Role	Interview Format	Family Structure	Age Range	Gender	Race
Shannon	Biological Parent	Dyadic Interview	3 Adults, 3 Children	25-34 years	Woman	White
Kurt	Biological Parent	Dyadic Interview	3 Adults, 3 Children	35-44 years	Man	White
Hannah	Biological Parent	Dyadic Interview	Not Specified	35-44 years	Woman	White
Mark	Biological Parent	Dyadic Interview	2 adults, 3 Children	45-54 years	Man	African American
Emma	Biological Parent	Dyadic Interview	1 Adults, 3 Children	25-34 years	Woman	Not Specified
Taylor	Biological Parent	Individual Interview	Not Specified	Not Specified	Not Specified	Not Specified
Kate	Teacher	Dyadic Interview	2 Adults, 3 Children	35-44 years	Woman	Not Specified
Tina	Teacher	Dyadic Interview	Not Specified	45-54 years	Woman	Not Specified
Andre	Teacher	Focus Group	2 Adults	35-44 years	Man	Black
Charlie	Teacher	Focus Group	3 Adults	18-24 years	Man	Biracial
Melody	Teacher	Focus Group	1 Adult	45-54 years	Woman	White
Barbara	Teacher	Dyadic Interview	1 Adult, 1 Other	55-64 years	Woman	Not Specified
Lisa	Teacher	Dyadic Interview	1 Adult, 3 Children	35-44 years	Woman	Not Specified
Jane	Family Resource Advocate	Individual Interview	3 adults, 1 child	55-64 years	Woman	White
Mary	Family Resource Advocate	Individual Interview	2 adults, 3 children	45-54 years	Woman	White

Note: One Survey was not completed

Table 2

Participant Grade Level and Income Range

Role	Surveys Completed	Highest Grade Level	Income Bracket
Caregivers	5	High School Diploma-Graduate Degree	<$12,140-$38,060
Teachers	7	High School Diploma-Bachelor's Degree	<$12,140-$33, 740
Family Resource Advocates	2	Some College-Some Graduate School	$38,060->$102,860

Note: One survey was not completed

Semi-Structured Interview

I used a semi-structured interview protocol to assist in the moderation of focus groups (see Appendix B). The interview protocol encouraged participants to reflect on and to share their viewpoints about what it means to be a good parent, a good teacher, and to have a strong home-school relationship. A semi-structured interview format provided participants with a point of conversational convergence while still allowing a discussion to flow naturally (Fetters et al., 2013; McWayne et al., 2017). The overarching goal of each interview was to create an environment in which participants felt comfortable to share their ideas, beliefs, and experiences genuinely with myself and one another (Shank, 2002).

Audio Recording

A digital audio recorder assisted me in capturing focus group conversations for later transcription. Audio recording was preferred to video recording as participants were likely to feel more comfortable having only their voice recorded as opposed to having their physical appearance captured through video. I maintained confidentiality of the participants by keeping

all audio recordings stored in a locked lab and guaranteeing the destruction of recordings following the completion of the study.

Procedure

Following recruitment of participants, I conducted individual, dyadic, or group interviews with primary caregivers, teachers, and family resource advocates. Whether or not participants were assigned to an individual, dyadic, or group interview was dependent solely on the timing of participant availability during the data collection process. I conducted nine interviews altogether. Five parents and four educators participated in the context of dyadic parent interviews (one parent participant's data was discarded as their child was not yet three years old); whereas, one parent and all family resource advocates participated in individual interviews. In addition, one teaching team participated in an interview of three. Recruiting research team members proved challenging given course and practica schedules of eligible students; therefore, interviews were conducted without the assistance of moderators. Participants who shared the same role description to a child at Head Start participated in focus groups together. That is, parents participated in interviews with parents, teachers with teachers and so on. All interviews were conducted between March and December of 2019. See Figure 3 for the project timeline.
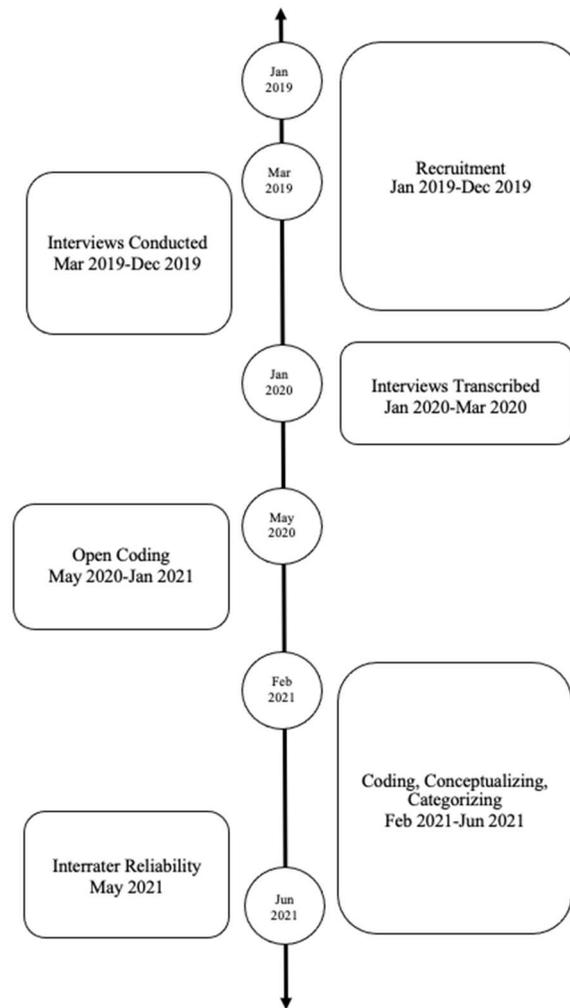
Figure 3. Project Timeline.

Participants were reminded of their meeting time via text prior to the session. Focus groups were selected as the initial format for data collection as they provide a forum for understanding differences in perspectives between groups of people, uncovering factors that influence beliefs and behaviors, and allow for ideas to emerge through group member interaction (Krueger & Casey, 2009). Dyadic interviews appeared to produce a similar effect while individual interviews allowed some participants additional time to elaborate on their ideas. All

interviews were scheduled at a time that was convenient for participants and they took place at a Head Start center in quiet space without disruptions.

Prior to the start of each focus group, I set up a table for discussions to take place. I arranged the audio recording equipment in a manner that clearly captured conversations between all group members and I laid out the provided meal and gift cards. When participants arrived, they were asked to complete an informed consent form and a demographic survey before discussion or audio recording began. I began each group by providing a general opening statement, laying ground rules, and conducting a small ice breaker activity (Krueger & Casey, 2009). Following these introductory processes, I used the semi-structured interview format to guide discussion. Due to the small number of participants and the timing of interviews, no additional research assistants were needed to assist with data collection. Each interview lasted between 45 and 120 minutes with an average length of 90 minutes (Krueger & Casey, 2009). Due to scheduling difficulties, no follow-up interviews were arranged. Participants were thanked for sharing their time and perspectives, and in addition to the meal and childcare participants received, they were also provided with a $10 gift card.

Data Analysis

Data coding and analysis was a dynamic and fluid process informed by grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In keeping with this approach, coding categories were allowed to emerge from the data and were not determined prior to data collection or analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; McWayne et al., 2017). Although taking a grounded theory approach allowed for flexibility in data analysis several general elements guided the process: open coding, conceptualizing, categorizing, and axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

After focus group interviews were transcribed, I used the online service, Rev, to obtain rough draft, machine-generated transcripts. Once I had secured the rough draft transcripts, I listened to each recording and edited the transcripts to increase the accuracy of the text. Following the transcription process, all interviews were coded in Microsoft Word using the comment function. After all codes were generated, I installed a macro provided by DocTools that allowed me to extract the comments from each word document for later organization in Microsoft Excel (Fredborg, 2013). I engaged in open coding so as to examine meaningful units of text (e.g., word, sentence, and complete thought). Open coding is defined as an analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Once all individual units were coded, they were compared and contrasted to one another in order to develop specific concepts and categories of themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Next, I engaged in axial coding, a process involving the relating of categories to their subcategories to link concepts at the level of their properties and dimensions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The process of conceptualizing, categorizing and axial coding was repeated multiple times prior to uncovering the final overarching themes with the goal of best representing participant viewpoints. In order to reduce the risk of bias in the coding process, a fellow graduate student in school psychology, who was not involved in the generation of themes, independently coded a small portion of the data. Based on this process, interrater reliability of 78% was achieved. While Miles et al. (2014) state that interrater reliability of 80% or greater is an acceptable level for qualitative analysis, other researchers note that seeking interrater reliability is less desirable when there is a single researcher and when codes are initially being developed (McDonald et al., 2019).

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The themes, which emerged through the coding and categorization process, are presented in relation to the research questions they help to answer. First, I describe themes associated with the goals caregivers and educators hold for preschool children. Second, I detail themes connected to participants' ideas about effective parenting, teaching, and home-school relationships. Finally, I report patterns which depict the influence of physical, social, and cultural environments on participants' perspectives. While every participant thoughtfully offered many important and distinct ideas, discussed below are the core patterns that arose from the wealth of information each participant contributed. Excerpts are included throughout to illustrate the themes described. All participants have been given pseudonyms to protect their identities.

Goals for Preschool Children

Kindergarten Readiness

Parents, teachers, and family resource advocates described preschool as preparation for Kindergarten. Participants agreed that preschool children required instruction and practice across three domains all with the goal of readying them for the demands Kindergarten would likely deliver. Key areas of skill development identified by participants included social-emotional development, functional independence, and pre-academic skills. With regard to social-emotional development, participants described the need for children to practice skills such as building relationships, managing emotions, delaying gratification, and using language to problem-solve. Participants indicated the need for children to hone functional independence such as communicating their needs clearly, managing self-care needs, and following directions. Finally, participants discussed their hope that children would leave preschool with knowledge of pre-academic concepts such as letters, numbers, colors, and the ability to recognize and to write their

names. While each developmental domain was represented in participants' responses, special focus was paid to the importance of social-emotional skills and the implication this may hold for their children's future development. Excerpts are presented below.

Excerpt from an Individual Parent Interview

Taylor: I think my goal is to have them be better prepared interacting with other kids.

Excerpt from a Dyadic Parent Interview

Shannon: Kindergarten prep. Hands down. That's my biggest concern.

Kurt: Gaining his independence a little bit, being able to do things for himself, being able to do more for himself. He's getting there.

Excerpt from a Teacher Focus Group Interview

Andre: Honestly, for starters, my firm belief and what I want them to learn in kindergarten is what I actually start off at the beginning of their preschool. The social-emotional, I am such a stickler for you, caring for others, caring for yourself. Once you get that socio-emotional under control, learning is a breeze.

Excerpt from an Individual Family Resource Advocate Interview

Mary: We call it kindergarten readiness. Essentially, it's recognizing their own name, being able to spell them, write their own name, I think is one of the big goals. Knowing, of course, their letters and numbers, I'm not sure what they want. I think maybe 20 is what they want them to know? And of course, their colors and shapes. Also, a social-emotional part too, is getting them ready that way because that is a huge part of kids going to kindergarten.

Pertaining to my first research question, the theme Kindergarten Readiness appeared to reveal the significance both parents and educators placed, not only on skills that would serve children well in grade school, but also on skills that would help them form and maintain relationships.

Effective Parenting

Meeting Basic Needs

Participants across each group indicated that effective parenting included meeting the basic needs of children such as securing adequate shelter, food, and safety for their family. Sometimes, the theme of basic needs appeared in response to the interview question, "What does it mean to be a good parent?" Other times, this pattern arose from conversations about the thoughts parents experience or why parents rely on particular places in the community. Most participants did not elaborate extensively on the topic of basic needs, rather they noted the importance of meeting needs matter-of-factly. Below are examples of this theme from parent and teacher interviews.

Excerpt from a Dyadic Parent Interview

Mark: You know, this is what I gotta do to make sure everything's in order for them. You know, make sure the budget is together for the house, you know, and make sure the bills are paid, make sure there's food, make sure to cook a meal for two or three days so I don't have to worry about cooking dinner tomorrow or the next day, you know, so I can have a break in between [to finish higher education coursework].

Excerpt from a Dyadic Teacher Interview

Interviewer: What kinds of things do you feel like good parents think about?

Kate: Oh gosh, well your children, like my case, your children all the time.

Tina: Safety

Kate: I'm like, "Oh my gosh, is that too big? Can you, can you chew it? Can you swallow it? Like are you okay? Okay." And then it's like, I don't know, as a parent, I'm a helicopter parent. Like everything is about them. Like, "Oh my gosh!" Like, where are you? What are you doing? Are you getting into something? Are you doing something that you are not supposed to do?

Tina: Right.

Kate: Like, okay, be careful in the bathtub. If you fall, you're gonna hurt yourself.

Tina: Safety. Keeping them safe.

Improving on the Past

Across five out of the eight interviews with parents, teachers and FRAs, effective parenting appeared to involve giving kids something better than what parents themselves experienced growing up. While this theme was not represented across participants unanimously, when participants spoke about wanting better for their children they did so passionately and in reference to deeply personal experiences. The participants' comments seemed to suggest that the idea of giving children an improved experience shaped not only their perceptions of parenting, but also their perceptions of themselves as parents. While some participants also described positive childhood experiences, the anecdotes they shared did not follow as distinct a pattern as the theme of "Improving on the Past." Those experiences were captured under the theme "Past Informs Present Beliefs." The excerpts below provide examples of "Improving on the Past."

Excerpt from a Dyadic Parent Interview

Interviewer: What might good parents think about?

Shannon: I, as far as their children are concerned, I for me, like I worry about their futures. I want better for them than what we have. You know what we had, what we, you know, like my oldest, I'm on her about school because, you know, I wish I would have taken it seriously. I wish I would've listened to so-and-so about taking it seriously 'cause I did not. And here it's like, oh you're on honor roll child, keep it up, get a scholarship, go to college, do something. You know.

Kurt: I don't want to see them have to struggle as hard as we had to get where we are at in life.

Shannon: No, I don't want to have to see them struggle. I don't. I want them to be able to make something of themselves.

Kurt: We spend a lot of time worrying about making sure that they don't have to go through the same struggles that we went through. We both—

Shannon: We both had [sigh]

Kurt: We both came from different places, but we both had a set of struggles we came through

Shannon: We know what not to do. Ya know?

Kurt: We've been there so I don't want him to have to go through the same things that I had to go through to get where I'm at in life. Cause you know, we could always be doing better than what we are…

Shannon: …but, but we could always be worse off. And we also know that.

Kurt: You know, you're not,

Shannon and Kurt: You're not defined by your past

Kurt: You're defined by what you do.

Shannon: Yup. How you take it and move on…

Excerpt from an Individual Family Resource Advocate Interview

Mary: I want just, like my, you know, I grew up afraid of my dad. I don't want my kids to be afraid of me. I want them to respect me, but I don't want them to be scared of me, you know? So, we might really make a conscious effort to not repeat those same patterns.

Effective Teaching

Making Learning Accessible

Participants shared many ideas about effective teaching, from differentiating instruction to providing children with structure and consistency. While the beliefs differed across parents, teachers, and FRA's, the responses appeared to follow one common thread: making learning accessible. For some participants this was described as teachers approaching the work with patience, flexibility, and humility while others mentioned the importance of sequencing instruction so that it best matched a child's developmental level. Other effective teaching actions reported included engaging in good behavior management, capitalizing on unexpected "teachable" moments, keeping students engaged, and remaining calm so as to help children through their own emotional experiences. Excerpts of how participants discussed effective teaching consistent with this theme are below.

Excerpt from a Dyadic Parent Interview

Interviewer: What kinds of things do [good teachers] do that makes you say, "that." That is what I like. I like to see that.

Emma: They break it down in so many little baby steps.

Excerpt from a Dyadic Parent Interview

Hannah: Is it effective? What they're teaching. You have kids that learn in so many different ways. You can't just teach them all in one way expecting them all to learn 'cause they don't, you know?

Mark: Right.

Hannah: You got one kid who will learn by watching a movie, you've got another kid that'll learn by you actually doing it. You got another one that'll, that can learn by just giving it to him and just being imaginative all on their own. Um, just making sure you're, you're reaching all of them and that you're not leaving any behind.

Interviewer: Questioning that effectiveness piece. Is it working?

Mark: I would say I'm 100% on that. I, I'll say maybe they might question not just the effectiveness, but also the relevance of it is, is this really relevant to them or the time or what they're learning and how beneficial is it to go down this road and teaching them this subject or this item because okay, her kids are potty trained. Uh, so what good is it to teach them how to go to the bathroom again, you know, so it's like, yeah.

Excerpt from a Dyadic Teacher Interview

Barbara: Uh, you have to be open to change. You need to have goals set that you want the children to obtain, but then you also have to be able to help them, give them the skills or the tools to meet those goals so they can be successful.

Excerpt from an Individual Family Resource Advocate Interview

Jane: And I think, um, I think you have to respect the kids and you, I think you have, it's very important that you talk to them in, uh, a tone that they can understand. Also, to get at eye level with them. And I think, um, if you tell, even if you tell the little kids, if you're

going to do something you really need to follow through because they don't forget. That

helps them to trust you just as it does with the parents also.

Interviewer: Yes, so it's that tone, that respect.

Jane: Yes, I think so. And I think the way you talk to them, because I think if you raise

your, you know, even, you know, I have a four-and-a-half-year-old grandson and you

know, I work with his father and that if you raise your voice, you're going to make him

angry and he's gonna raise his voice and you're gonna get nothing accomplished. You

need to keep up with just a calm voice. I think that helps a lot. I think you go further that

way.

Effective Parenting and Teaching

Nurturing Relationships

Throughout all interviews, participants described the importance of nurturing

relationships with children. This theme encompassed multiple actions such as engaging with

children in play, listening to children, or simply spending time with them. In addition to these

elements, parents, specifically, expressed their desire to communicate messages of unconditional

love and support to their children. With regard to effective parenting, statements by parents were

also characterized by the hope that investing early in their relationship with their kids would lead

to feelings of increased closeness in future years. When teachers spoke about developing

relationships with students, they sometimes used personal stories to describe their perspectives.

These narratives appeared to indicate that building relationships was not only highly rewarding,

but also meaningful to their work as educators. Further, some parents explained that witnessing

their children develop positive relationships with their teachers offered a sense of comfort when

they had to leave their children at Head Start. Traces of "Nurturing Relationships" appeared

across various parts of all interviews, and when describing their thoughts, participants often did so with sincerity. These trends seemed to imply that contributing to relationships functioned as a cornerstone in participants' conceptualization of effective parenting and teaching. The excerpts below provide some examples of how this theme appeared during conversations with participants.

Excerpt from an Individual Parent Interview

Taylor: …So I just came to like, "I love you no matter what. I am here, no matter what." And I think even letting them know younger and hence with the little ones, like I'm here. "Oh, you fell down? Come here, I'm here." You know, like, and just reiterating that like I'm here no matter what. You know, my [older children], you know, are 20 and 18 and I'm the first person they call when something happens, you know?

Interviewer: Because you are there with them.

Taylor: Yeah. I'm walking with you, man, you, you can fall down, scrape your knee, lock you up. I'm like, I'm your mom. Like, I'm here. Let's just talk about what happened. What can you do different? What's a decision? What are we going to do moving forward? You know?

Excerpt from a Focus Group Teacher Interview

Andre: *Andre tells a story about an observation he made at a public library.* That grandmother, she was exhausted in her face because she just kept talking to her [granddaughter] and was like, "When I was your age…" I'm like, this girl is not listening to you. She's too busy running and you trying to catch her, and you can't. But she reminisced about a time where, "We used to sit outside, and we would just talk, and the wind would blow pass our face and the flowers would move." And little girl paused, and

she caught on to it because she said, "Grandma, tell me about the flowers." She got her! And so, she kept talking to her and that little girl listened...*teacher began to talk about the artwork in the public library*...Yeah, so that quality time, that grandma stayed on with her [and] pulled that little girl in and so yeah, that's so true that if you just, kids just want to be noticed.

<p style="text-align:center">Excerpt from a Dyadic Teacher Interview</p>

Interviewer: …so from your perspectives, what do you feel makes a good teacher?

Barbara: Makes a good teacher…

Lisa: I think you're able to connect with the kids. Um, you have a balance of, you can play with them, but they also know, okay. Which I believe we have that balance. Um, the kids will, when you're teaching, they, they get what you're teaching. Um, it's not difficult and if they need help there, they feel that you can come to them, that they can come to you and ask for help. It's, they're not afraid for that.

Barbara: A little girl, I won't call her name, but she'll be doing something [she's not supposed to be doing] and I say, "Okay, Wilma," but she has figured it out so then she'll say, when she's talking back to me, she'll say, "I got you Betty."

Lisa: Yup! She figured it out.

Barbara: Or, if I say, "Okay Betty," then she'll go, "Okay Wilma."

Barbara: She'd be like, my name is not [Betty/Wilma] and I said, I know, that's not your name. But right now, you are not doing what I need you to do and I'm trying to get your attention and you weren't listening. So, when I called you Wilma then you, you listen 'cause you was like that's not my name.

Barbara: So, I've been doing it. I was doing it all last year, but this year then she started doing, cause I used to say "Oh, Betty and Wilma was friends."

Interviewer: That's so funny.

Barbara: They don't have a clue who Betty and Wilma is in real life. So, then she goes, she goes, "I got you Wilma," and I say, "I got you too Betty" and I just roll cause she does it just like me… I'll be like you're too much for me. Go, go you're just too much.

Excerpt from an Individual Parent Interview

Melody: Just kind of being in tuned with, with their child and kind of knowing what they need from, you know, from each other to…

Interviewer: yeah

Melody: Everything is about relation, if you've got that relation—

Interviewer: Relationship?

Melody: If you've got the relationship, you will get the respect and they will want to do what you ask or you know, who set your gut on this. Like, Oh, okay…

Andre: Yup, yup.

Melody: I want to do good for you because, and people, you know, they're like, well, what? I'm like, I'm telling you that's, that's the beginning. If you get that bond and they have that respect for you, then you know you're not going to have the troubles and the hassles, you know, they're gonna want to, you know…

Excerpt from an Individual Family Resource Advocate Interview

Jane: You know, like I said, as a classroom, they have a relationship, but just one on one, just to take the extra couple of minutes just to hug them or tell them good job or just, you

know, I'm so happy to see you today or whatever. Just words of encouragement. I think they definitely need it.

Overall, four key themes assisted in defining effective parenting and effective teaching which helped to answer my second research question. First, all participants appeared to place a high degree of value on the formation of relationships with children in both parenting and teaching. Second, effective parenting was described by both parents and educators as providing for a child's basic needs. Additionally, perspectives from parents and family resource advocates indicated that effective parenting also meant giving children something more than parents had received in their youth. Finally, participants shared many ideas about effective teaching, all of which appeared to center on the idea of making learning accessible for children through self-management, instructional techniques, and environmental supports.

Effective Home-School Relationships

Two-Way Street

Parents, teachers, and FRAs agreed that effective home-school relationships were defined as a mutual commitment made by families and educators to actively engage with one another. Data suggested that there were specific actions both parties expected from one another to help move the home-school relationship forward. For example, many participants described the opportunities Head Start creates for parents to connect with the school (e.g., Home-visits and Parent-Child Connection nights) as well as the opportunities parents seize to be present in their child's school experience (e.g., showing up to school events and bringing children to school consistently). Participants noted the significance of engaging in open communication with their counterparts and their responses suggested that both parents and educators take building home-school relationships seriously.

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While many conversations with participants involved expressions of gratitude for the home-school relationships that had been successfully fostered, some educators also openly shared frustrations about observations they have made of parents within the school setting. Specifically, these educators discussed how, in their view, seeing parents on cellphones during pick up, drop off, or school events, conveyed a message of disinterest in the child. As conversations about home-school relationships unfolded, it appeared that participants privileged behaviors such as carving out time to interact with one another, engaging in conversation, and solving problems collaboratively. Further, by asserting the importance of the home-school relationships, participants appeared to reveal how great a value they placed on the institution of education. Excerpts are included below.

Excerpt from a Dyadic Teacher Interview

Barbara: 'Cause the goal is, if I'm going to be working with your child, I've got to get along with you.

Lisa: Yeah

Barbara: And if I feel one thing and you feel another, then we gon' have to try to work out to get as close to—

Lisa: uh huh, uh huh, uh huh, uh huh

Barbara: --agreement, you know, as much as possible. So, I think that's very important that, you know, you have to listen to the parent. I think the parents should listen to the teacher and then, you know, you come up with something that, that works for both of you.

Excerpt from a Teacher Focus Group

Andre: I think, like, for me it's like when I searched for that one breakthrough in a parent that don't consider us a daycare. If I can get you to totally convert your mind to knowing that this is a school, we've got you.

Interviewer: You feel like you've done your job.

Andre: I feel like I've done my job because you have some parents who just come in and they'll be on their phone, drop the kid off and alright like out the door. Like, how many ways did you interact as you prep your child for the day? You know? What's more important, your child's education or that phone call? And can it wait that extra 10 seconds for you to walk out the door, you know? Or the one kid who comes in on a, on a cell phone, they're playing a video game, walking in. You had all the previous day, you've had all prior to the ride to school where it could have been a motivational speech like, "Hey, what do you plan on doing in school today? What do you want to learn?" I would be that parent, but you know, everybody's not that ideal.

Interviewer: So, engaging the parents in the classroom.

Charlie: Yeah

Andre: Engaging yes, oh goodness yes! Even just from the outside.

Charlie: That too yeah.

Andre: And you can come reconnect with your child, by the end of the day. Review with your kid, what have you done? What have you learned today? At first, they might say nothing, but if you constantly engage sooner or later the kid's going to say I spelled my name, I counted the ten.

Excerpt from an Individual Family Resource Advocate Interview

Interviewer: So, from your perspective, what makes for a good relationship with your child's school and then the child's home?

Mary: Um, like I said, communication, um, you know, we, at the beginning of the year, the kids' schools had started to offer the open house day before school starts. And that's a great time to go in and meet the teacher. So, you know what they look like, they know what you look like, you know, they know that you're involved, you're interested enough to know about them. Does that make sense? Like, you care enough to go to this open house to meet their teacher. Um, and I think that right there starts out the relationship because then when you send them an email asking a question, you know, they feel comfortable answering or if they have a question or concern or something they feel they can call you or email you or text you, you know, and get that information.

When asked to define effective home-school relationships, parents, teachers, and family resource advocates agreed that such a connection required active involvement from both families and educators. Although participants indicated the desire for balance in the home-school relationship, behaviors descriptive of parent involvement reinforced a school-centric lens. These themes, in combination with themes related to effective parenting and teaching, helped to answer my second research question.

Influencing Factors

In addition to the themes discussed above, the following patterns emerged across multiple questions and participants. These themes appeared to describe both the more interior experiences of parents and educators as well as some of the broader contextual factors impacting their

practices. Overall, the following themes seemed to support participants' conceptualizations of effective parenting, teaching, and home-school practices.

Social Support

Throughout all interviews it was clear that participants drew significant support from their social connections. For parents, frequently cited social resources included family, friends, and childcare centers; whereas, for teachers, support was gleaned from their relationships with the members of their classroom teaching team and parents. These patterns held consistent when parents were asked to describe the resources they believed educators relied on and vice versa. Participants spoke about social support as something that assists them not only in meeting the needs of children, but also as something that helps them cope with the demands of caring for others.

Excerpt from a Dyadic Parent Interview

Mark: I would probably add other teachers because they know, I'm sure they have to ask each other questions, draw off each other's experiences, you know, and help each other out in that way. You know, cause maybe the teacher had them in a classroom. Yeah. 'Cause you have repeat students coming back the next year. And so now they're in a new room and new teachers trying to adjust to them and they're like well you had them last year and what did you do? Or what worked? So that probably.

Excerpt from a Dyadic Parent Interview

Hannah: Family is my first go to. Um, and then I help other friends of Head Start too. So, you know, it's, "Hey, can you keep? Okay when? Sound cool?" "Hey, I need a, you know, they're in school, I'm in school, you know, hit me up, you know." Um, plus it gives time for kids to interact with each other outside of school too, on a different level. Um,

but then I'm not, I have, uh, the [local] crisis nursery. I, if I'm like in a bind and I can't find nobody to help me with the kids and I have to…I call them up. So, Gavin, I'd be like, "Look, mom's frustrated." He's like, why don't you just take us to a place where we get to go play mom? Oh sure. Yeah. So, I mean, in that aspect, I will utilize outside sources when it's necessary. So yeah.

Excerpt from a Dyadic Teacher Interview

Interviewer: Sure. What kind of resources or people do good teachers draw on?

Kate: Like use?

Interviewer: Yeah, or what helps them.

Kate: Well, I mean, Ti—Tina. Like—

Interviewer: Each other.

Kate: Yeah. Each other. Yeah, that's huge. Huge. I mean like there's no way I could be here without Tina, and I mean, I could have another TA, but it wouldn't be the same. Um, our FRA, you know...

Excerpt from an Individual Family Resource Advocate Interview

Jane: Sometimes I go in the classroom like and if they're having a behavior problem, I always ask the teacher 'cause I don't want to step on their toes. Would you like me to help? Can I help you? And yes. And I also, sometimes the teachers just need to get away for five or 10 minutes because they've, they're just drained. And I've done that many times to the teacher. So, I'm like, oh let me come in here. You can just, just go, go to the bathroom and go get something to drink or just, you know, walk outside for a minute.

And that helps them a lot 'cause they can kind of just regroup.

And I've done that many times. That's what they need to do because I, I mean I love all the kids. I mean I, I love them.

Past Experiences Inform Present Beliefs

When asked from where ideas about good parenting, teaching, and home-school relationships emanate participants above and beyond discussed the role of their personal experiences as children, students, caregivers, and teachers. Parents and educators discussed formative experiences that were perceived both positively and negatively.

One main difference that appeared between parents and educator perspectives was that educators also referenced aspects of their training that had played a role in their understanding of parenting and teaching (e.g., coursework or professional development seminars); whereas, parents mainly stated that their lived experienced informed their ideas about parenting and teaching. When describing influences on home-school relationships, multiple participants indicated that it was specifically their exposure to Head Start practices that shaped their views on home-school connection. Notably, no distinct patterns appeared to emerge across individuals who reported similar racial or gender identities.

Excerpt from a Dyadic Teacher Interview

Barbara: Well, I think, you know, a lot of times you learn from example, so maybe like from your parents or from somebody who was important in your life, if it was an auntie or uncle or you know, somebody that's older that maybe steered you in the right direction. So, then therefore they will try to steer other people and you know, in the right direction. So, I would say for me, you know, from this learning from others who are, who are close to you.

Excerpt from an Individual Family Resource Advocate Interview

Interviewer: So where do you think your ideas about being a good parent come from?

Jane: My mother. My mom was a single mom. I told you she had children very young and uh, all of us are very close. Um, we love each other. We all live in different places. My brother, I live where my brother lives at now, but when we see each other, we hug and kiss. And whenever we're on the phone, all of us, we always say, I love you.

Place Supports Practice

Many participants thought carefully about their responses when asked to reflect on the role place plays in caregiving and teaching. Parents and educators described how they believed that they did not need particular structures to parent or teach, but that often times these physical settings supported the tasks of caregiving and teaching in important ways. For example, participants mentioned essential spaces such as grocery stores, doctor's offices, and safe caregiving facilities as well as libraries, museums, and playgrounds. While some of these physical settings were described as offering basic needs, others were cited as providing children with novel experiences to assist in their social-emotional, cognitive, and physical development.

Excerpt from a Dyadic Parent Interview

Emma: Yeah. Like with church and all that good stuff. It'll help you balance, realize things, uplift you. Which is what you need now, groceries and gas and all that those are essentials, and we actually need them.

Excerpt from a Dyadic Parent Interview

Mark: Yeah, it's a, I mean, between family and Head Start. For me it like, a load off of my shoulders, just like, okay, cool. And it's having a backup. Um, cause like Head Start

helps me with all the stuff that I know I can't do. You know, it's like if I had to sit with

Kenneth for four hours and try to teach him or do stuff with him—

Excerpt from an Individual Parent Interview

Interviewer: What places or physical settings are important to teachers too?

Taylor: Probably their safe classroom. Um, you know, they're focused on the children

and teaching the children, not probably so much like the gates in place and toilet

overflow, you know what I mean? So probably just, you know, knowing that they have a

support team behind them, making sure that things are fixed that they need, or you know,

things are running on time cause they're focused on the kids and, you know, trying to

make sure that they're doing what they need to do. So…

Excerpt from a Teacher Focus Group

Melody: I think that like, when they come together here, they kind of have that support

system that I'm not the only one. You know, they see others who are like in their same

situations, and they can kind of lean on each other and kind of build those bonds. Okay.

You know, hey, we can get together and even outside of school.

Full Spectrum of Feelings

As participants began to describe the emotions both they experienced, they often laughed

or sighed heavily. These reactions seemed to suggest that the task itself of considering feelings

was perhaps emotionally charged. Participants indicated that they experienced a full range of

feelings in their role and that they believed their counterparts felt similarly. Participants

frequently stated that they had "every feeling" or that they were on a "rollercoaster ride" of

emotions. When asked to elaborate on significant emotional experiences many participants

described feelings associated with two main emotional categories: joy and fear. It seemed that

parenting and teaching were both perceived to yield feelings of pride, compassion, and love as well as anxiety, concern, and stress. Interestingly, many parents noted that they believed teachers felt a sense of accomplishment in their occupation which was indeed a sentiment that teachers expressed. In discussion about emotional experiences, participants described how their social relationships aided in their emotional regulation.

Excerpt from a Dyadic Parent Interview

Interviewer: What do you think good parents feel? What kind of emotions do you think--?

Shannon: Are you kidding me? I have felt it all from, oh, you're doing so good to, oh gosh, not so good. Oh, everything.

Kurt: I think that we've had every emotion on the spectrum from—

Shannon: We've had every sort of emotion from every age baby on, you know, I know when they were all babies, it's like, am I doing this right? Am I failing them? Like this is all I'm doing. Is this enough? Am I talking to them enough? Am I doing, I know it was like when they were babies it was just, yeah.

Questioning

When participants were asked about the types of thoughts that went through the minds of effective parents and teachers, responses followed a pattern of questioning and uncertainty. This theme was represented plainly as participants listed questions they asked themselves or questions they expected others in parenting and teaching positions may entertain. The responses implied that these cognitions were related to feelings of fear and doubt as well as a desire care for children competently.

Barbara (teacher from dyadic teacher interview): Sometimes I wonder if maybe like if I handled that situation right. Um, that the child does, does the child know that even I tried to tell them, I don't maybe like your behavior or what you're doing, but I still like you. I just don't like your response or how you acting right now. But that doesn't mean that I don't like you or, or, or want the best for you. I'm just not happy with your behavior or your actions and I want them to work some kind of way together so we don't keep having these actions.

Child-Centered Thoughts

Finally, by and large, parents and teachers reported that their cognitions focused on children. Participants reported planning their days around them, making decisions for them, and designing their lives with them in mind. It was clear that all participants considered effective parenting and teaching to involve placing children at the center of their lives.

Excerpt from a Dyadic Parent Interview

Interviewer: What kinds of things do you feel like, um, good parents think about? What thoughts are on their mind?

Taylor (parent from individual interview): I don't know. For all good parents, I don't really know. All I know for me, my entire day is around like my kids, you know what I mean? Like, sure, I have to go to work, I have to do that. But anything like beyond that, it's like, hold on, I've, I've got the kids, you know what I mean? Every, every step you make, every decision you make. In my mind, my kids are there, you know what I mean?

In relation to my final research question, multiple themes arose that began to describe how physical environments, social relationships, and personal experiences shape perspectives. That is, participants discussed how the relationships with family, friends, and community members helped to reduce stress as well as how the physical spaces they relied upon offered resources to strengthen their parenting and teaching. Finally, participants disclosed the thoughts and feelings they experienced regularly which may influence the beliefs about parenting and teaching practices that they hold.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

The present study developed out of a need for strength-based research examining how Head Start caregivers and educators conceptualize effective parenting and teaching. Drawing upon grounded theory practices, researchers sought to uncover the short-term goals caregivers and educators hold for preschool children, the practices they deem effective, and the broader contextual factors that influence their perspectives. Taken together, the themes that emerged evoke discussion on the meaning of relationships, the value of education, and how personal experiences shape perspectives.

Relationships

In many ways, participants indicated that building, maintaining, and relying on relationships is an essential aspect of parenting and teaching. Caregivers and educators alike highlighted the importance of interacting and standing with children in addition to cultivating connections with the adults in their complementary role. Participants also shared how the social support they gleaned from family, friends, and colleagues offered significant relief during times of stress. Such ideas call to mind research on attachment theory as well as how recent world events have impacted the social networks of those who care for children. For decades, research on attachment has supported the theory that early relationships play a significant role across multiple areas of development (Cassidy et al., 2013). Participants in the current study echo this value within their own definitions of parenting and teaching perhaps suggesting that many of the benefits of relationship building can be experienced and appreciated in real time. Attachment theory also emphasizes the importance of meeting a child's needs in a consistent and predictable manner (Cassidy et al., 2013). Participants within the current study shared this aim. In the future,

it may benefit researchers to ask parents of Head Start children how the task of meeting a child's basic needs influences their conceptualization of parenting practices.

Additionally, this past year has ushered in complicated waves of unimaginable change, suffering, and fear as well as feelings of immense gratitude, victory, and hope. It is undeniable that the social worlds of so many have undergone tremendous transformation due to the impacts of monumental biological, environmental, social, and political events. For example, due to the Covid-19 pandemic many were asked to learn how to navigate life with considerably less face-to-face social support. Parents, especially, were faced with the impossible task of serving multiple roles for their children, often at the same time (Lee et al., 2021). Preliminary cross-cultural research indicates that the perception of one's social support reduced feelings of loneliness thereby facilitating feelings of hope and acting as a buffer against stress (Bareket-Bojme et al., 2021; Szkody et al., 2020). In addition, social justice movements have incited essential action toward greater equity for minoritized groups. Given that many Head Start families face disenfranchisement by nature of their socio-economic status there has perhaps never been a more meaningful time to seek to understand their lived experiences. Thus, it is essential for future research to make efforts to learn about how the social resources of Head Start parents and educators were depleted, disrupted, restored, and strengthened over the past year.

Education as a Value

As indicated by the goals participants possessed for preschool children, the effective teaching practices they described, and the attitudes expressed about home-school relationships, education surfaced as a shared value among caregivers and educators. The goal of greatest priority among Head Start parents and educators was preparation for Kindergarten. As the organization of Head Start strongly emphasizes the concept of Kindergarten Readiness, it may be

beneficial for future investigations to examine how this value is communicated with families as well as how Head Start staff members may respond should parents hold alternative goals for their preschool child (U.S. Department of Health, 2020). With regard to effective teaching, participants described a desire for teachers to employ instructional practices that reach all students which suggests that parents and teachers want children to benefit from their time in preschool. By stating that effective home-school relationships required a mutual commitment from both parties, participants communicated the message that such a relationship was worthy of their time, energy, and care.

Personal Experiences Shape Perspectives

Through the process of coding and categorization, it became evident that the experiences of participants, past and present, strongly influenced their ideas about parenting and teaching. While all participants were forward about the developmental periods, people, and opportunities that had informed their views, parents, in particular, discussed how some personal experiences caused them to see effective parenting as giving children something better than what they had. Intriguingly, this theme calls attention to the individual experiences of parents and how the term "effective" may change based on one's frame of reference. Given the personal meaning of this theme to each participant it may be particularly important for future research to investigate the specific parenting practices individuals would like to continue, those they would like to replace, and the resources they made need to realize their aim. Moreover, as this theme was not expressed by Head Start teachers, it is important that these findings are shared with educators in the hopes of promoting empathy and laying groundwork for productive home-school collaboration.

This pattern seems to encourage researchers to leave space within the definition of parenting and teaching to account for how ideas may evolve in response to personal experiences

over time. Previous research on parenting practices among Black Head Start families found that there was no single profile of positive parenting (McWayne, Mattis, & Hyun, 2017). Instead, variation existed within and across ethnic groups with regard to positive parenting practices and the parenting profiles that emerged were differentially linked to parent's resources and social ability (McWayne, Mattis, & Hyun, 2017). Results from the current study also remind researchers and practitioners that parenting is a cultural enterprise, an essential factor often neglected by traditional models of parenting styles (Baumrind, 1966; Simon & Conger, 2014). Given the immense diversity in experiences people bring to the work of parenting and teaching, these findings remind us that it is exceptionally important to continue to create safe spaces for marginalized people to share their stories and to use these perspectives to build theory.

Strengths

By drawing upon grounded theory methodology, Head Start parents and educators had the opportunity to contribute their unique perspectives on effective parenting and teaching practices. As traditional research methodologies have often highlighted deficits among families impacted by low socioeconomic status, this investigation offered a chance to focus instead on the wealth of this population's knowledge, experiences, and insights. Further, this is the first known study that used grounded theory to understand how parents and teachers conceptualize the effective practices of their counterparts.

Limitations

While the sample size of this study is ideal for developing theory, readers should be careful not to over-generalize the results. Interviews provided a small snapshot of participants' views across many topics and the perspectives from a multitude of other Head Start parents and staff were not captured in the data.

During data collection, it was challenging to recruit participants with overlapping availability to attend focus groups. This meant that interview data was collected through a combination of individual interviews, dyadic interviews, and one group with three participants. Previously, researchers have found that individual interviews are effective at generating a vast number of codes; whereas, focus groups often allow participants to make more personal disclosures (Guest et al., 2017). In the future, it will be important for researchers to consider which interview structure(s) will help them to best answer the research questions at hand.

In addition, while having the principal investigator take the primary role in the data analysis process is an accepted practice, especially when using grounded theory, to increase rigor, future investigators could consider involving more than just one additional coder during the process of data analysis so long as appropriate, clear, and systematic procedures are in place (Cornish et al., 2013; Miles et al., 2014). Finally, participants in the current study were all native English-speakers and lived within one metropolitan area in the Midwest United States.

Future Directions

Future investigations should consider exploring the themes that arose more deeply by reducing the number of topics discussed during interviews and taking time to conduct follow-up interviews as needed. Additional research may consider integrating quantitative methodologies as well to better understand how theories can continue to be understood and developed across multiple methodologies. It continues to be crucial that researchers strive to create opportunities for participants of all marginalized identities to feel comfortable contributing their perspectives. While such work involves many carefully organized factors, perhaps of most importance is to approach the work with openness, humility, and to genuinely demonstrate how the stories participants choose to share will be honored.

Implications for Practice

For all those who commit themselves to the work of caregiving and educating, the results of the current study call for reflection on how early childhood systems can continue to promote empathy and cultural humility within their practice (Lund & Lee, 2015). Although the perspectives represented in this work suggest that effective home-school connection involves a mutual commitment to relationship building by both parents and teachers, the examples presented by participants emphasized school-centric, rather than community-centric values. In order to move toward acts of deeper respect and truer justice for the families early childhood centers serve, it is imperative that the institutions and organizations use their power to impact educators by reinforcing the values self-awareness, openness, and equity through trainings and professional development.

Conclusion

Previous research on parenting and teaching practices during early childhood has often neglected to consider how caregivers and educators conceptualize their role, the role of their counterparts, and the home-school relationship. This study attempted to take a strength-based approach to understanding how the parents, teachers, and family resource advocates of Head Start children define effective parenting, teaching, and home-school connections through the use of grounded theory. The themes that arose encourage reflection on the importance of relationships, the value of education in the Midwest, and how personal experiences influence perspectives. Results encourage future qualitative and quantitative research on how the social resources of Head Start families and educators may have fluctuated throughout the past year and the degree to which other Head Start families may place value on the institution of education. Finally, this research has the potential to provide the Head Start site with information that can be

used to promote understanding, empathy, and future opportunities to listen to the experiences of those who care for children.

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Demographic Survey: Caregivers & Educators

Place a check mark beside the option that best matches how you would describe yourself or write in the option that best matches how you would describe yourself:

Relationship to Child/Children at Head Start
_____Biological Parent
_____Adoptive Parent
_____Foster Parent
_____Extended Family Member (i.e., Aunt, Uncle etc.)
_____Step-Parent
_____Grandparent
_____Classroom Teacher
_____Education Manager
_____Family Resource Advocate
_____Other: _____

Age
_____18-24 years
_____25-34 years
_____35-44 years
_____45-54 years

_____55-64 years
_____65-74 years
_____75-84 years
_____85-94 years
_____95 + years

Gender
_____Female
_____Male
_____Transgender
_____Gender non-conforming
_____Non-Binary
_____Gender Fluid
_____Other: _____

Caregiver/Educator Race/Ethnicity *(The group or groups with which I share my cultural traditions, practice, beliefs, and values)*

_____

Language

What languages do you speak?

_____

What languages do you prefer?

_____

Highest Grade Level Achieved

_____Some high school, no degree
_____High school diploma/GED
_____Some college, no degree
_____Associates degree
_____Bachelor's degree
_____Some graduate school, no degree
_____Graduate degree
_____Vocational or Trade Certification

Income Bracket

____ <12,140
____ 16,460
____ 20,780
____ 25,100
____ 29,420
____ 33,740
____ 38,060
____ 42,380
____ 46,700
____ 51,020
____ 53,340
____ 59,660
____ 63, 980
____ 68,300
____ 72,620
____ 76, 940
____ 81,260
____ 85, 580
____ 89, 900
____ 94, 220
____ 98, 540
____ >102, 860

Family Structure (Who lives in our home?)

_____Number of adults living in our home
_____Number of children under the age of 10 living in our home
_____Number of children over the age of 10 and under the age of 18 living in our home
_____Other: _____

APPENDIX B: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Semi-Structured Interview: Caregivers

Opening Question

1. Let's find out more about each other by going around the table one at a time. Let's start by having you share your name, the name and age of your child, and one of your favorite things to do with your family.

Introductory Question

2. How did you become involved in Head Start?

Key Questions

3. What are your goals for your child/children at Head Start before they go to Kindergarten?
4. From your view, what does it mean to be a good parent/caregiver?
   a. What do they do?
   b. What do they think?
   c. How do they feel?
   d. What resources do they draw on?
   e. What places are most important to their daily life as a parent/caregiver? How does this influence your definition of what it means to be a good parent/caregiver?
   f. Where do you think your ideas about being a good parent/caregiver come from?
5. From your perspective, what does it mean to be a good teacher?
   g. What do they do?
   h. What do they think?
   i. How do they feel?
   j. What resources do they draw on?
   k. What places are most important to their daily life as a teacher? How does this influence your definition of what it means to be a good teacher?
   l. Where do you think your ideas about being a good teacher come from?
6. From your view, what makes for a good relationship with your child's school?
   m. What do parents do?
   n. What does the school do?
   o. Where do you think your ideas about a good home school connection come from?

Ending Questions

7. Is there anything else you had wanted to share, but didn't get the chance?

Semi-Structured Interview: Teachers, Education Managers and Family

Resource Advocates

Opening Question

1. Let's find out more about each other by going around the table one at a time. Let's start by having you share your name and one of your favorite things to do when you are not working.

Introductory Question

2. How did you become a teacher at Head Start?

Key Questions

3. What are your goals for your child/children at Head Start before they go to Kindergarten?
4. From your perspective, what does it mean to be a good teacher?
    a. What do they do?
    b. What do they think?
    c. How do they feel?
    d. What resources or people do they draw on?
    e. What physical settings are most important to their daily life as an educator? How does this influence your definition of what it means to be a good teacher?
    f. Where do you think your ideas about being a good teacher come from?
5. From your view, what does it mean to be a good parent?
    g. What do they do?
    h. What do they think?
    i. How do they feel?
    j. What resources or people do they draw on?
    k. What places are most important to their daily life as a parent/caregiver? How does this influence your definition of what it means to be a good parent/caregiver?
    l. Where do you think your ideas about being a good parent/caregiver come from?
6. From your view, what makes for a good relationship with the child's school and the child's home?
    m. What do parents do?
    n. What does the school do?
    o. Where do you think your ideas about having a good home school connection come from?

Ending Questions

7. Is there anything else you had wanted to share, but didn't get the chance?