

BRIDGING IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES WITH ECD SERVICES: PARTNERSHIP RESEARCH IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EFFECTIVE SERVICE MODEL

FINAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

OCTOBER 2009



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This research is funded by the United Way of the Lower Mainland



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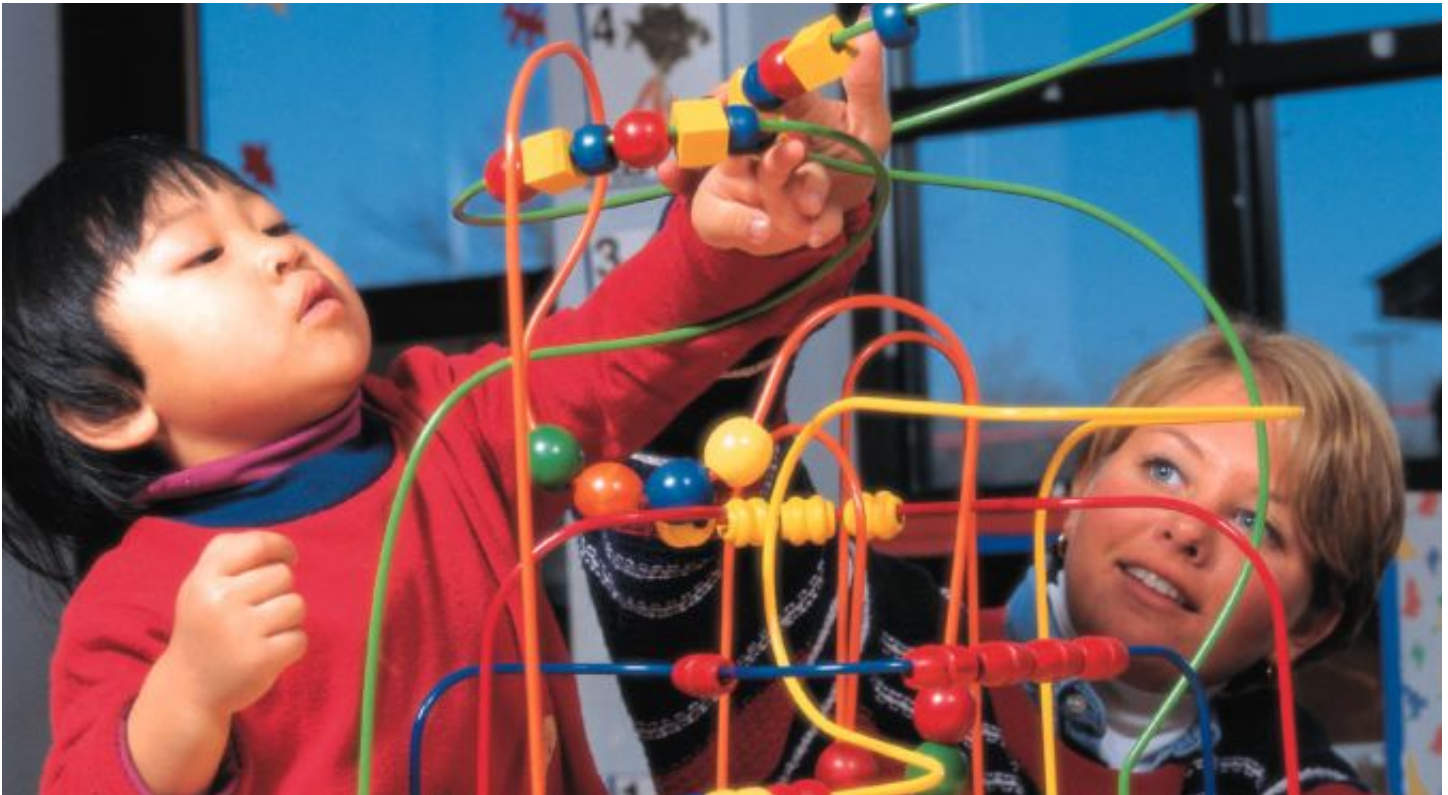
Executive Summary

*E*arly child development (ECD) is a determinant of health, well-being, and learning skills across the balance of the life course. ECD is greatly influenced by culture – not just what parents do, but also the underlying beliefs and expectations which drive their parenting practices. Different cultural views and practices related to ECD exist in the Tri-cities, (Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody, B.C.) and indicate that early childhood development is conceived of differently in the cultural context within and across nations. These cultural understandings encompass a wide range of intersecting ideas about what constitutes personhood, childhood, development, health, illness, well-being and their determinants, as well as the interactions between them. Not all of these understandings are compatible with each other nor are they always compatible with Canadian perspectives, and as such, they pose specific challenges for ECD promotion in BC. Due to the range and diversity of the cultural understanding of ECD, the aforementioned developmental domains used to study ECD in Canada (physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and communication) should not be considered exhaustive. People from ethnocultural communities may recognize different domains, such as spiritual, moral, or personality development. There is a need to focus on more culturally appropriate approaches for development work with young children, their families and their communities. Social and cultural diversity, gender sensitivity and equality and a commitment to inclusion based on respect for and acceptance of human diversity, can be addressed meaningfully through early childhood development programs. They must be sensitive to the several contexts that simultaneously influence the child's development -- the home environment the child lives in, the developmental period, families' cultural beliefs and practices, and the social, cognitive, emotional and physical domains. Cultural practices form a central component of a child's context. Therefore, culturally sensitive and contextual concepts and practices of ECD should be recognized and acted on, as: (1) challenges to overcome



in order to make ECD services more accessible and acceptable by diverse cultural communities; (2) barriers to remove to successful promotion of ECD services; (3) opportunities to strengthen cultural best practices for ECD, and (4) opportunities to enrich our knowledge of the social and cultural determinants of early child development by broadening our cross-cultural and cross-national perspective

The primary purpose of this study was to create an academia-community research team in the Tri-cities (Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody) in order to build a foundation of understanding beliefs, perceptions, and practices related to ECD among selected ethnocultural communities (Chinese, Korean, and Farsi-speaking families living in the Tri-cities), make comparison of ECD across cultural communities, and to initiate research and development of culturally-relevant ECD services and programs in the Tri-cities. In order to arrive at a consensus on the components of culturally sensitive ECD services we must first look at the range of existing services in the Tri-cities, as well as compare and contrast the concepts and definitions of ECD in selected



communities. Next, we needed input from service providers and caseworkers (key-informants). The project was funded by the United Way of the Lower Mainland for a period of three years, starting in April 2007. As part of this project researchers from UBC-HELP, S.U.C.C.E.S.S., and the Tri-cities ECD Committee, and were involved in conducting focus group discussions with parents from selected communities and also with Tri-cities key informants (who work in the area of ECD and early childhood education). The purpose of the focus groups was to assess participants' views and opinions about child development and culturally competent ECD programs; including components, barriers, challenges, and the regional capacity to evolve early childhood development education and services to meet the needs of newcomers including refugees and immigrants families and including those families with children with special needs who are refugees and immigrants in the Tri-city region.

We conducted fifteen different community and key-informant focus group sessions (13 community and two key-informants sessions) as well as seven personal/group interviews with selected service providers, during different site visits of agencies in the Tri-cities. During the group discussions and personal interviews, the participants were asked to share their self-reported views and beliefs about culturally competent ECD programs. Participants, from both types of focus groups, suggested the need for adopting culturally competent ECD programs based on the demographic reality of the ethnic mix existing in the Tri-cities region, the

cross-cultural variance in childrearing practices, and the realization that not all cultural groups are treated with equal reverence.

In this study we found out that despite the surge of interest and some capacity to provide culturally competent ECD services in the Tri-cities; the extent to which early childhood development programs are culturally competent and the factors that mediate competency in the Tri-cities have yet to be determined. Consequently, there are still many gaps that may prevent people from different cultural backgrounds in accessing and using the existing ECD programs properly.

Significant findings from community focus groups were:

1. Major dilemmas identified by many parents for participating in an ECD program:

- Problem of accessibility: Physical and financial accessibility (e.g., distance, timing, and cost) as well as the issues of linguistic and cultural access to the services.
- Inadequate skill in English to express their emotions and needs.
- Discriminatory attitude of case workers.
- Isolation from the mainstream society and the services.
- Difficulty in integrating with the Canadian system.



Significant findings from key-informants focus groups and interviews were:

1. Principal barriers to accessing quality ECD programs by newcomers:
 - Cost of services (e.g., childcare, services for children over age 5).
 - Staff attitude (stereotyping, discrimination).
 - Parents' lack of awareness of available services and early childhood programs.
 - Language limitations and cultural beliefs and practices.
 - Unavailability or inaccessibility of some services to immigrant families due to distance, timing, inconvenience, cultural insensitivity, and cost.
 - Irresponsiveness of some services and programs to the diverse needs of children of immigrants and refugees, in particular among families with special needs children.

2. Practical channels of reaching cultural populations:

- word of mouth
- ethnic media
- phone
- internet
- group email
- local library
- school
- community agency

3. Recommendations by the parents to improve access to needed services:

- Involvement of parents from cultural communities (as volunteers) in the development and delivery of early learning and education programs.
- Training of all service providers about how to work and deal with people from different cultural backgrounds to meet their own and their children's needs.
- The presence of bilingual workers/volunteers or "champions" (e.g., parents who speak their mother tongue) in the program.

2. Solutions suggested by key-informants to remove barriers:

- Changing the focus of the existing services on providing more culturally relevant programs for parents; supported and advocated by regional stakeholders and non-health sectors.
- Need for cultural competency and communication skills workshops and trainings for staff and volunteers.
- Reaching out to the hidden newcomer families who need urgent services and families who are not yet in the social service system/network (e.g., refugees and families with children who have special needs).
- Using a variety of mass media (TV, news articles, pamphlets, and brochures) and the local library to reach families in ethnocultural communities.



Recommendations made by study participants (community members and key-informants) to improve accessibility and availability of services

1. Promote cultural competency.
 - Need for further training of staff about the cultural relevance of their program.
 - Staff need to respect cultural values and practices.
 - Staff need to recognize the impact of their positive attitudes on parents’ full participation in early childhood education and programs.
 - Staff need to support familial cultural values that are vital for many parents to participate and engage actively in the program.
2. Bilingual/bicultural staff.
 - Need to hire bilingual and multicultural workers that know the newcomers’ needs for early childhood education and programs, and can communicate with the families.
 - Need to train the staff before deploying them; for both bilingual/multicultural staff and those from mainstream culture.

"When I participated in Mother-Goose program, almost seven other moms from my home country came as well. At the second session, I was the only woman from my country who came back... The others disappeared , afraid of doing English storytelling."
 (Korean mom)

3. Use a variety of methods for reaching out to target audiences.
 - No single method would be effective. Methods most often suggested included: broadcast, print, and internet media. Other suggested outlets included: schools, health care providers, government offices, libraries, and local businesses.
4. Translated materials.
 - Develop and translate information about early childhood Childcare services to languages in minority communities, including information about eligibility for child care subsidies and other ECD programs.
5. Relevance of eligibility documents.
 - Ensure that ECD program guidelines and eligibility procedures and materials are linguistically appropriate, culturally sensitive, and accessible for those living in immigrant communities.

- Reach out to providers in immigrant and refugee communities to help improve access to materials and information about the eligibility, ECD programs for families with special needs children, and child care subsidy system.

6. Community-based network.

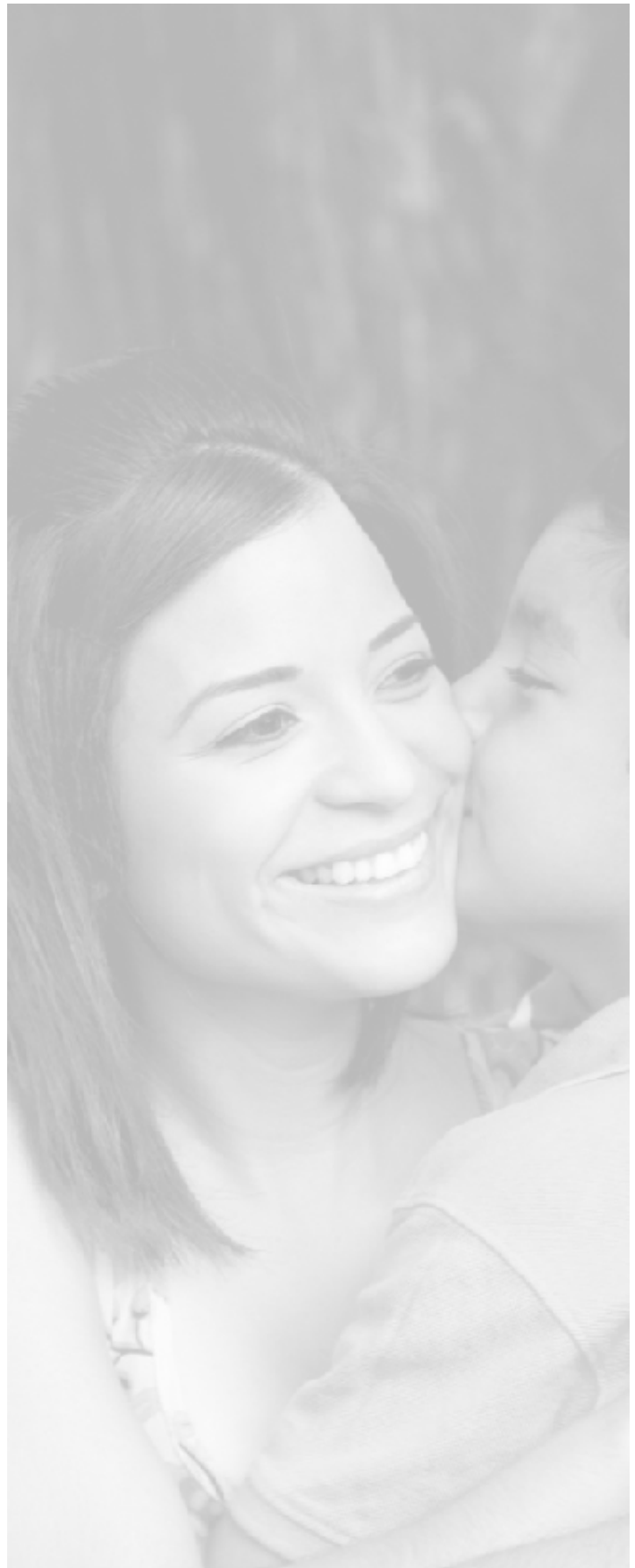
- Promote community-based networks of immigrant and language minority providers to provide mutual support and assist with access to professional development, training, and technical assistance.

*"I did not know that a special need kid could go to normal school when I first came to Canada."
(Chinese mom)*

7. Promote early childhood programs that include services for families with special needs children.

- Necessity of developing special programs for newcomer families with special needs children. Approaching these families to involve them and also bring their children into the program must be different from the ordinary approach used in the existing programs for families with special needs children, as parents in cultural communities may hide their children's problems and special needs due to shame, stigma, cultural issues, etc.
- Include a parent education component, making it particularly strong for low-wage or refugee families that receive some sort of subsidy to access ECD and child care programming.

In summary, the research team realized that culture is positioned at the core of parenting child rearing styles and practices in the studied communities. Culture consequently plays an important role in defining the developmental pathways that influence child health and development in these communities. Parents from the target cultural groups are likely to have different views and goals for child development and different strategies for achieving them. Therefore, programs designed to increase the attendance of parents and their children from diverse cultural background in the existing ECD services may be more effective if the service providers improve their awareness about the underlying cultural issues affecting child development in newcomer communities. A more culturally competent approach would be to respect parents' cultural beliefs and practices in terms of child development and parenting. It is important to explore how the cultural and language barriers can be acknowledged to enhance parents' participation from cultural communities.



BRIDGING IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES WITH ECD SERVICES: PARTNERSHIP RESEARCH IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EFFECTIVE SERVICE MODEL

FINAL REPORT

1. Introduction

The province of BC is becoming increasingly diverse due to continuing immigration with 25% of current residents being foreign-born. The impact of these demographic changes is being felt more rapidly in the early childhood population than in any other group. These population trends present very real challenges to early childhood service providers in their quest to meet the needs of young children and to respond to increasing diversity in the languages and cultural traditions of families living in different parts of BC, including the Tri-cities region. It is because children of Canadian newcomer families (immigrants and refugees) face a complex developmental task; that of growing up within the context of their heritage culture while adapting to the values and expectations of the mainstream culture. Traditionally, the predominant formulation has stressed how satisfactorily newcomers acculturate by adopting mainstream values, customs, and behaviors. This formulation is inadequate to describe the socio-cultural influences on child development as well as on the experience of these children in the new environment. It is hard to imagine an area of health, education, or social service where culture plays a bigger role than in early childhood. Most early childhood experiences are shaped by parent cultural beliefs, practices and routines. Parents are the primary influence in a young child's development not only through what they choose to do in the home, but also through decisions they make about what services they are going to access on the child's behalf. Research has shown that even in basic care-giving activities there are characteristic differences in the strategies used by different cultural and ethnic groups. Overall, there is evidence that parents from different cultural groups have in mind different "goals" when raising children, which may have profound influences on the patterns of everyday parent-child interactions.

Organizations serving immigrant families in the Tri-cities have realized the importance of integrating cultural practices and local knowledge in all child development contexts. These organizations alongside with academia, policy-makers, and community researchers have identified a gap in a culturally relevant framework and tool that can systematically analyze and evaluate whether programs, policies and practices promote the concept and

principles of cultural diversity. Through brainstorming and literature review, our research team (including S.U.C.C.E.S.S., UBC, and the Tri-Cities ECD Committee) have also recognized a critical gap in current knowledge, namely the socio-cultural and economic factors influencing early childhood development (ECD) service access and use by newcomer communities in the Tri-cities region of BC. To respond to the existing knowledge gap, our research team conducted a comprehensive study of the existing related services available for cultural communities in the Tri-cities. This was done through the direct contribution of all stakeholders and key-informants, including Tri-cities' ECD service providers, community members, and community/academia researchers. The primary subject group for the project was the immigrant and refugee children and families



from three newcomer communities (Chinese, Korean, and Farsi-speaking groups) living in the Tri-cities region. Secondary subject groups included ECD service providers, community researchers/educators, and experts involved in ECD programs and services in Tri-cities communities in BC. The study employed a participatory, community-based approach, aiming to: 1) Assess the different meanings, understandings and practices relating to ECD among the target ethnocultural communities in the Tri-cities; 2) Examine the ways in which behavioral, cultural and institutional norms, practices, and limitations may influence ECD access and use in these communities; and 3) Contribute to the development of a culturally-competent definition, measure and model for ECD that are applicable to ethnocultural communities in the Tri-cities and beyond. It is our research team's principal belief that if early childhood programs in Tri-cities are to be *effective* at the population level, then they must be able to provide accessible ECD programs to all the ethnic and cultural groups that they serve. We also believe that ECD services should be designed to be flexible, accessible and responsive, and that the developmental needs of children and families be understood and incorporated into service delivery, and that all people are treated with dignity and respect. Finally, we believe that ECD programs need to be culturally competent - an approach to providing an entire range of high quality, accessible and affordable ECD services to all families, including those from ethnocultural communities, by ECD service providers whom they know and trust. We applied these core beliefs in our attempt to develop a culturally competent ECD framework for the Tri-cities region in this study.



INTRODUCTION

2. Background

2.1 The Partnership

While a particular strength of this teamwork is the “solid relationship” existing among the “team members”, “key partners” and “academia and community researchers”, the strong point of the “extended network” is also very impressive. We have concrete connections and networks; working closely with the members of the Tri-Cities ECD Committee, Tri-cities ECD service providers/agencies, S.U.C.C.E.S.S., and HELP-UBC with common values, assumptions, and methodological approaches to develop, test and validate our proposed framework and measurement tools.

Setting:

The research project and data collection took place in the Tri-cities (Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody) region of BC. The work was based at S.U.C.C.E.S.S. and HELP-UBC and conducted in partnership with ECD service providers and immigrants’ community organizations in the Tri-cities region, as well as with the Tri-Cities ECD Committee.

2.2 Research questions and goals

The major questions in this study were: 1) what are the major, self-reported health and development issues of children reported by the parents in the studied groups? ; 2) what are the links between parents’ culture, literacy and language and their beliefs, attitudes and practices regarding early child development in the studied groups?; and 3) What are the characteristics and components of a culturally competent ECD framework from key-informants, academia, service providers, and community members’ point of view?. The project goals were: 1) to identify the service needs of the multicultural population in the Tri-cities region related to ECD; 2) to recommend a working model of culturally competent ECD services that effectively serve the multicultural population in the region and beyond.

2.3 Methodology

Design:

To respond to the study questions and achieve the its goals, the research employed a qualitative and participatory approach that built on the research team’s previous work with refugee and immigrant communities in relation to ECD and related issues. In this study we conducted an environmental scan /needs assessment on the existing ECD services in Tri-cities region. We also reviewed relevant literature and available documents. Furthermore, we conducted some field visits, personal interviews and focus groups with project collaborators (e.g., Key-informants and ECD service providers), as well as focus groups with parents

from the three selected cultural communities. The Environmental Scan yielded useful information that is used to define the development of the components and format of the proposed culturally relevant ECD framework.

Study subjects:

Three bilingual facilitators (one from each of the Chinese, Korean, and Farsi-speaking communities) were hired to recruit the parents and facilitate focus group sessions in this study. The sample population was selected in consultation with the project’s facilitators and collaborator agencies. One set of participants was selected from three ethnic (4 languages) groups in Tri-cities; Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin speaking), Korean, and Farsi-speaking families. These selections were based on the data obtained from Canada Statistics and Census Canada 2006. A second set of participants was selected from service providers and community Early Childhood Educators working with newcomer communities in the Tri-cities region with the assistance of our study community partners (S.U.C.C.E.S.S. and Tri-Cities ECD Committee).

Data collection:

During the course of this study we conducted 13 focus groups with parents from Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, and Farsi speaking communities; in total 119 parents participated in the focus groups. For each language group, there were at least 3 focus groups and 28-35



respondents from each ethnic group participated. Each focus group took between 90 to 120 minutes to complete. All participants were adult parents or the main caregiver (e.g. grandmother) with at least one child is 6 years old or under who have lived in Canada for 15 years or less, and are residents of Tri-cities region. In each focus group, we invited 5 to 14 parents from the targeted communities. The community focus groups were conducted in the community languages (e.g., Cantonese,

Mandarin, Farsi, and Korean) and the data was transcribed and translated into English by the study facilitators.

The following questions were asked from the participants during the community focus groups:

1. What do you think 'Early Childhood Development' is?
2. What are your needs from ECD services?
3. What encourages you to approach the services?
4. What are the barriers to access the services?
5. Suggestions you have for better ECD services for your child?



We also interviewed Key Informants (service providers and early childhood educators) to exchange ideas, perceptions, and experiences about ECD services for parents from the target ethnocultural groups. For the interview section, we conducted 7 individual/group field interviews with 16 ECD related staff in the Tri-cities region. Each interview took around 90 minutes to complete. We also conducted 2 focus group sessions with key-informants including 13 staff from a variety of ECD programs and 8 childcare providers. Each focus group took at least 120 minutes to complete. Finally, in order to brainstorm, discuss and get feedback for the research design, questions and the findings of the study, we conducted a series of meetings with the Tri-Cities ECD Committee and Research Sub-committee, which had 5 – 15 staff attending per meeting.

The following questions were asked of the participants during the key-informant focus groups and interviews:

1. How do you define: 'Culturally competent ECD services'?
2. What are the components of culturally competent programs: 'What is working?'
3. What are the challenges in the delivery of culturally competent ECD services?

4. What suggestions do you have for better ECD services for immigrants and refugees

Exchange of knowledge and information:

To disseminate the initial findings of the study, community presentations (oral and poster) were held in different symposia, seminars, and round-tables across the Tri-cities region and beyond. The participants included providers of ECD services, community researchers, government and policy-maker representatives, program planners, and potential committee members.

Data analysis methods:

The community focus group data were transcribed and translated to English. The interview and focus group data were analysed using NVIVO software. NVIVO has the ability to compare and contrast themes and categories of the qualitative data generated in the focus groups and interviews.

2.4 Anticipated outcomes

- A) Identify different perspectives and views of the target cultural groups as well as key-informants on culturally sensitive ECD services, including: comparing and contrasting different meanings, understandings, beliefs and practices related to culturally competent child development, via stories and experiences reported by the participants (key-informants and community members);
- B) Building a local network. Identifying key-informants and professionals/experts in ECD field including: ethnocultural communities, policy-makers, service-providers, researchers, and practitioners in the Tri-cities, who would willing to join in a research network team
- C) Developing a culturally-competent conceptual model and strategies for addressing ECD issues in Tri-Cities' Chinese, Korean, and Farsi-speaking newcomer communities,
- D) Knowledge translation. Exchanging knowledge with the community members, key-informants, case-workers, other stakeholders, and research team members, and disseminating the findings in local and provincial events and seminars.

2.5 Future plans

- 1) Prepare and publish papers from the results in peer-reviewed journals
- 2) Use the developed framework to investigate, from a cross-cultural perspective, the effectiveness of the proposed culturally competent ECD services and programs. Of specific interest will be the access and use of the services by the target communities and other ethnocultural groups in the Tri-cities and beyond.

3. Research Findings

Each focus group session offered a great deal of information and knowledge regarding how community members and key-informants viewed culturally competent ECD programs and what they identified as the strengths and weaknesses of present policies and programs in reaching families from ethnocultural communities.

3.1 Summary of community focus group discussions by language and cultural groups

Overall, the self-reported information revealed that language, culture, and lack of information are the three major factors that prevent parents in the Chinese, Korean and Farsi-speaking communities from accessing ECD services in the Tri-cities. Many parents in these communities indicated they felt isolated and found it difficult to integrate with the broader community system.

3.1.1 Farsi-speaking parents:

In this section, we summarized the results from Farsi-speaking community focus groups, including; Iranian immigrants and Afghan refugees.

Understanding of and practice about Early Childhood Development (ECD):

- Most Afghani participants had difficulty explaining what ECD is or what its components are. Overall knowledge about ECD in both Afghanis and Iranian participants was low. They referred to ECD as the programs that are offered in society, that children receive from outside of the house. They perceived little role for themselves to get involved in different aspects of childhood development.
- Almost all parents from this community (both immigrants & refugees) believed that in Canada they pay more attention to their kids' overall development and have more respect for their children.
- Some parents in this community were confused about differences between emotional and behavioral development.
- Physical development was the least important feature of ECD from the point view of many Farsi-speaking moms, due to their perception that in Canada there is enough nutritious food for their kids.
- The main concern for some of the parents in this community was their children's emotional/behavioral and social development (many believed that young



children, especially newcomer kids, feel like a stranger and face emotional challenges in Canada). Others also indicated communication skill development is crucial as well. Mental development was the first priority for some others.

"In issues related to ECD, there are differences in beliefs and practices among people because of the culture, tradition or religion, in spite of raising their kids in Canada." (Farsi-speaking mom)

- For many parents the cognitive part of development was not a critical issue to pay enough attention to.

- Exclusively all participants from this community felt that in their home country one of the most important things is how to develop a child's spiritual growth/moral development (something not paid enough attention to here in Canada).
- For parents who have been living here for a while, a peaceful life style gives them more time to spend with their children. For those newcomers who are still struggling with making money, supporting their family, and adjusting to this new environment, not being able to spend enough time with their children is a concern.

Cultural and traditional beliefs / practices and child development:

- General belief that there is stronger relationship between parents and kids in their home country than here.
- Cultural clashes (the home culture and tradition vs. main stream culture) may affect the parenting values.
- Many believed that since Iran is a multicultural, multiethnic country, there might be differences in their cultural beliefs and practices related to ECD. In addition, Afghans and Iranians (who both speak Farsi) have different views and socio-economic status.
- Canadian way of child-raising is not acceptable to many Farsi-speaking parents: too much freedom and being too lenient with children.

"I was more involved with my children when I was in Iran. But here I do not have time. Life is very stressful here and we inject this stress to our children." (Farsi-speaking mom)

Major obstacles to receive ECD services:

- Language and communication problems are the biggest obstacles
- Transportation and distance issues
- Discriminatory attitudes of caseworkers
- Time conflicts (people work, study or are busy at certain time of the day; most of the programs are offered during the day, no program in evenings and on weekends): Too many responsibilities at home and not enough time to attend different programs
- Lack of bilingual caseworkers available
- Lack of programs for children over 6 yrs of age
- Cost; fee paid programs are expensive
- Lack of awareness about existing programs and eligibility criteria

- Most of the programs are in English and that makes it very hard for newcomer children and their parents to be attracted to those programs
- Repetitive programs make it boring to attend
- Not enough educational programs for the kids (kids just play and sing),
- Lack of enough programs designed for 0-2 yr olds.

"The reason I do not take my children to ECD programs is that the programs have not been promoted properly or the staff do not actively involve parents." (Farsi-speaking mom)

Practical ways to create culturally relevant ECD programs:

- Advertising the programs offered in community in Farsi (S.U.C.C.E.S.S. has helped a lot to bring the Iranian community together)
- Providing all the services in Farsi (if possible) or at least provide interpreters in all programs
- Using bilingual/bicultural staff who are familiar with their culture and know what works and what does not work with their people
- Add more culturally relevant psychological support as part of the programs
- Running more drop-in programs that have no set time to attend and leave
- Provide more fun programs for kids, and use friendly staff

Suggestions for improving the accessibility and quality of ECD services:

Due to cultural diversity, many parents believed one approach/program does not satisfy the need of everyone, and they suggested the following:

- Providing transportation
- More free or cost-reduced programs
- Providing a booklet about the educational system in Canada before children enter pre-school, translated in Farsi
- Parenting and counseling classes for new/young moms
- Classes about how to "live" in Canada and how to adapt to new system
- Making the programs more educational for both parents and kids
- Hiring bilingual/bicultural staff to teach different areas, including eligibility criteria

"Translation is very important for new immigrants. I might not pay attention to a flyer in English, but I would pay more attention to a flyer written in my own language." (Farsi-speaking mom)

- Provide lectured programs rather than group discussion to eliminate incorrect information going around
- More Farsi educational materials for parents (developed by Farsi-speaking people, or translated materials) such as videos, books, CD (about ECD), and how to discipline the kids/child protection law in Canada
- Bring Farsi-speaking together through media, mail, group e-mail, or phone
- Train staff to act friendly
- Providing lunches for children (supported by government) during ECD programs and daycares (suggested by all refugee parents).

3.1.2 Chinese parents:

In this section, we summarized the results from Cantonese and Mandarin speaking focus groups.

Understanding of and practice about Early Childhood Development (ECD):

- For many Chinese parents, ECD means different education classes for kids, which can be started from birth until school age
- Most respondents were able to mention ECD programs and practice in Tri-cities, but had difficulty explaining the components of ECD.
- They indicated that ECD means language, personality and psychological development
- For many, ECD starts from teaching the pregnant women about parenting and how to take care of herself and the fetus
- Social development (for older kids; e.g., 7+), physical development (for kids ages 0-3 years) and cognitive development (for kids 3-5 years) were the most important components of ECD for some parents.
- While for some parents in this community, mental and cognitive development and learning were more important than the other aspects of ECD for kids under 5 years of age, a few parents stressed the importance of emotional development. They indicated that they should help their kids to develop proper social and behavioral conduct.

- They expressed interest to learn more about emotional development and communication or behavioral development



"Child development is an issue for parents from birth until school age; however, they have different features in mind; such as mental, cognitive, and physical development in different periods of the child's life." (Chinese mom)

Cultural and traditional beliefs / practices and child development:

- In China/Hong Kong, ECD means different education classes for children
- The main objective for many parents about child development in their home country, is to prepare the kids to go to a good school, then a good university, and find a good job. In their home country, they pay specific attention to child educational attainment and intellectual development
- In Canada, the Chinese parents tended to think that the learning process is more important than just educational achievement
- They tend to help their kids in Canada to learn different skills, while taking the feeling and interest of the kids into consideration. For many Chinese parents, child intellectual and academic development should not be the main focus in Canada
- They have found more freedom in Canada in terms of parenting their kids since the pressure and expectations from society and family were not so prominent
- The child's happiness and improved self confidence are more important while in Canada.
- Some had the feeling of being lost and confused sometimes due to the difference between their own and the Canadian approach to child development, in particular social, behavioral and communication development, as well as the educational system

"Here I learn not to compare my kids to others. In China, you need to compare. Even in those interest classes, the kids need to compete with one another. I will let my children to learn what they enjoy now." (Chinese mom)

- They acknowledged that the Canadian education system to builds "problem solving" skills and "creativity" amongst their kids
- They respected the individuality and uniqueness of their child more and did not compare their child to others
- They tended to let their kids grow happily
- Chinese parents generally felt that they learned to put attention to different aspects of development other than cognitive and intellectual development, in Canada. They realized that they could pay more attention to the physical, social, behavioral, and even spiritual development of their kids
- They expressed willingness to meet and observe how other parents are interacting with their children, as they can learn a lot from parents of different cultures and have the opportunity to exchange parenting ideas

Major obstacles in receiving ECD services:

- Language and cultural barriers and judgmental attitudes of ECD staff
- Difficulty communicating with staff who speak English only
- Culture is so different among parents participating in the ECD programs, as they are coming from various parts of world and the parenting styles are different. So, they believed that one approach may not be working with a multicultural society
- Social and emotional distance with the staff and other parents who are attending the programs, is the main reason that they tended not to go there regularly
- Found it difficult to share and discuss the parenting issues with the staff and other parents
- Being too busy with other aspects of life in Canada prevents them from attending the existing ECD programs
- Lack of knowledge and awareness about the existing programs is perceived as an obstacle to the access and use of the services
- They indicated both physical and psychological barriers in accessing and using the services

Practical ways to create culturally relevant ECD programs:

- Translation is a very important factor to new immigrants, as they might not pay attention to an English flyer, but if the information is in their mother tongues (Mandarin and Cantonese), they will look at it
- Hiring more volunteers; e.g. S.U.C.C.E.S.S. and YMCA programs organize some children's programs using Chinese staff or Chinese volunteer moms

- Involve multicultural parents in simple tasks to promote their engagement and sense of fit in the program
- Development of Chinese language CD, films, and story books to be distributed in the ECD programs and/or at the local library
- Need structured and organized programs for kids according to Chinese cultural beliefs and practices
- Employing more multicultural and bilingual staff

"There are not so many government services for these (special need) kids (in my home country). People use strange eyesight to look at the kids and parents also....They will hide themselves and not to go public.. ." (Chinese mom)

Suggestions for improving the accessibility and quality of ECD services:

- Develop a centralized system (for example S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Multicultural ECD team in Tri-City) to promote the services and provide necessary information (translated in their mother tongue) about the existing programs, including their content and objectives
- Introduction of new members to other parents in the program by the staff; many Chinese parents are shy and do not know how to start a conversation
- More flexible opening hours, in particular for working moms, during evenings and weekends
- ECD or Family programs must provide them enough information on how to access and community resources, Canadian ways of parenting, child protection policies, and home safety issues
- Produce relevant informational flyers and mail them to the individual households
- The school system can help to introduce and promote the programs through the kids, since the kids go to school everyday and can inform parents of the relevant existing services
- Including parenting style education for young newcomer Chinese
- More structured and organized programs for kids (not just play and sing programs) and providing hot lunch to the kids
- Include transportation for both kids and parents
- For newcomers, they suggested introducing and promoting the existing programs through public nurses and family doctors, since all new moms need to visit

- them frequently, as well as using Chinese multimedia, such as: newspapers/magazines, TV and Radio stations and Chinese supermarkets
- Hiring professional interpreters to assist the parents with limited knowledge of English
 - The necessity of developing Dad's programs (e.g., father involvement) in family Centers to engage fathers in child development services. For fathers, the best timing for programs is evenings and weekends.

"Because we are in a special situation of bilingual setting, I do not know whether it is a language development delay or the normal development only showing a situational difficulty." (Chinese mom)



3.1.3 Korean Parents:

Understanding of and practice about Early Childhood Development (ECD):

- Many Korean parents know that ECD starts at even pre-natal period and is related to age appropriate development. For many parents, the prenatal period is more important than the later period for child healthy

development. For some others, early childhood is a best time (0-6 years of age) to provide a lot of chances for the kids to explore their talents and possibility

- Mental and social development are considered the most crucial features of ECD by many Korean moms. Overall, parents in Korea pay more attention to their child's cognitive, intellectual development and educational achievement, starting at very young age. In contrast in Canada, they normally give more value to social, health, child safety, child encouragement, independency, and self-responsibility
- They perceived ECD services as educational programs for baby, toddler or preschoolers, and are less likely to think of ECD services as services for the parents
- Exclusively all Korean parents have some problem with the educational system in Canada
- Korean mother's high value on children's educational attainment still remained firm in Canada, but the practical methods of educating the child have been changed. For instance, in Korea, most parents are dependent on commercial educational materials/programs. In Canada, they use their own way of educating the kids (play group for English learning, library program, play outside, various free ECD programs, etc)
- Some Korean parents believed that in Korea they are not paying attention to early childhood development as they do in Canada and they just learned about its importance in Canada, while many others indicated that in Korea parents really give huge efforts to the children's development from an early age, especially in cognitive, intellectual and brain development

*"ECD is age appropriate development of the kids."
(Korean mom)*

- In Canada, they give much attention to the physical and emotional development
- In Korea, they had a better chance to access and use ECD services because in Korea there was no language barrier in communicating with service providers and in accessing and using the services
- They face some discrimination by the caseworkers in Canada
- The cost of the services was relatively lower in Korea than the similar services in Canada

- All Korean parents acknowledged some good parenting styles of Canadian moms such as reading books to the kids by mom/dad or grandparents, and also they do a lot of dialogue with the kids
- Father involvement was an issue brought to attention as important factor for child development by some moms
- The major issue of child development in Korea is too much attention to a child's 'educational attainment' and 'comparing and presenting' the children to others, something they don't practice that much here in Canada
- In Canada they prefer to give more freedom to their kids in an aim to allow their own way of learning (e.g., to learn from outside of home and from different sources such as peer group and various approaches) and develop their creativeness

Cultural and traditional beliefs / practices and child development:

- Korean parents believed that learning from their own culture, beliefs, and practices are crucial for growing kids. Also, they believed culture has many advantages in teaching the children about moral, communication, and emotional issues
- They don't want their children to do anything free like many North American children normally do. Concerns about moral issues and respecting others, especially elders, were mentioned by many Korean parents
- Prefer keeping their culture and consider their traditions in raising their children in Canada
- Many parents acknowledged the ease of communication between parent and children in Canada; however they also feel that there should be certain boundaries between parents and children
- Hard to communicate in English with other moms from different communities in ECD programs and felt uncomfortable, and had the feeling of not being welcome in the program
- Delivery of the ECD service information in their mother tongue is very important for encouraging Korean parents to attend.
- Language of the program is very important to keep the parents participating; when the language is English only, many parents leave the program
- While language is the major obstacle for their understanding, accessing and using of the ECD services, cultural differences was not a major barrier of their access to ECD services
- Feel confused about how to discipline their children for educational failure

- Lack necessary knowledge about the child protection law in Canada, which is perceived a crucial issue for educational, social, psychological, and health interventions in this community
- Acknowledged Canadian parenting style as more shared-oriented style than the Korean self-oriented/achievement-oriented method; which promotes high competition, even in parenting issues, which sometimes causes isolation among couples

"The rules and regulations are different here in Canada and sometimes Canadians find our expectations inappropriate." (Korean mom)

Major obstacles to receive ECD services:

- Language barrier perceived as paramount concern in ECD services
- Costs of services (some services are too expensive and no lunch provided to kids)
- Less chance for working moms to participate
- Transportation issue and physical accessibility
- Lack of ESL program /services for parents participating in the ECD programs
- Lack of knowledge/awareness about the services
- Age limitation for the sibling participants (moms who have multiple kids cannot participate)
- Unwelcoming attitude of the ECD staff or some of the participants moms from mainstream community and lack of social network outside of Korean community (e.g., isolation/exclusion or emotional distance even in the program due to lack of communication with parents from other cultural groups) are also pointed out as major barriers
- Lack of proper information from right channels
- Communication difficulty with staff and other moms in the program
- Mom's child-related tasks are much heavier in Canada compared to Korea

"In the programs conducted in English, it is hard to endure the break time in the middle of the program. We are supposed to communicate with the other English speaking moms but it is so uncomfortable and I don't feel welcomed." (Korean mom)

Practical ways to create culturally relevant ECD programs:

- Provide a space for their cultural heritage in the services that allow them to share their cultural and traditional practices related to child development with other mothers while learning from them
- Having a bilingual staff /translator is the crucial factor for culturally relevant ECD services
- Training of ECD staff to avoid stereotyping/discriminating because of their accent or language shortage
- The necessity of developing ECD materials in Korean language by Korean people, or at least to translate the available materials to their mother tongue
- Cultural sensitivity workshop for the preschool teachers /daycare staff

"In most centers, they teach English singing and storytelling. The staff could involve some multicultural parents to sing simple songs in another language or tell the stories from different countries." (Korean mom)

Suggestions for improving the accessibility and quality of ECD services:

- Improvement of the ESL program /services for parents participating in the ECD programs, as well as more ESL preschool /kinder program in the Tri-cities to prepare their children for the elementary school
- Developing and distributing the integrated service flyers (guidebook) available in the local libraries and also flyers in the welcoming package for newcomers
- Posting the ECD-related information on the bulletin board of Korean grocery stores, as well as the local libraries
- Receiving ECD-related information through Internet and/or "Group e-mail"
- Libraries and community programs perceived as the most accessible locations to receive information about ECD programs
- Late afternoon/evening and weekend ECD programs for moms who have young children at home or work outside of home during the daytime
- ECD services offered in walking distance or offering programs in a more popular location such as a local library

3.1.4 Common findings from three community groups

- The mother is perceived as the first teacher and caregiver for the child. The mother teaches the child how to behave, and more importantly how to behave correctly
- Diverse newcomer communities have different cultural beliefs and practices, and different understandings of ECD, therefore people have different perspectives about ECD. For instance, people may refer to the same thing in different ways in respect to child mental/emotional/behavioral development. Regardless of the cultural groups they belong to, many parents wondered about the status of moral development and love in children's overall development in the Canadian approach to ECD, and they expressed interest in learning more about emotional development and its difference from other aspects of development such as love, moral, and behavioral.
- Many expressed their different viewpoints about child education, learning, and communication development when they were in their home country compared to the same issues here in Canada. For many in their home country, children normally learn everything from parents, including; communication with others, moral issues, respecting elders, and controlling emotions. Here, these issues are handled differently and parents have less control over their children's education and learning issues. These differences sometimes make conflicts and cultural clashes between parents and their children

"I always felt that I need to fit into this society rather than to suggest changes. I seldom think about my ability to make a change for a better society. When I answered the questions that you asked us at the Focus Group, I started to consider myself as an important part of this society." (Korean mom)

- Some misunderstanding (or lack of enough knowledge) about the educational system in the Tri-cities was mentioned by all parents
- Parents expressed less concern about cognitive and physical development but more concern about their children communication, emotional and social development and moral and respect issues here in Canada

- The emotional development was considered of high importance in Canada. Many of the participants felt that in their home countries because children receive lots of love and attention from outside (e.g., family members, grandparents) as well as inside the house, parents do not need to worry about their emotional development. But in Canada, children are deprived of the outside love and attention and also the parents have less time to spend with their children. Therefore, they may suffer from emotional issues
- Important concerns were the issues related to children's freedom in the educational system here and also the parents disciplining their kids for their behavioral, learning and education matters
- While "educational attainment" of the child was the first priority for Chinese and Korean parents; for Farsi-speaking moms, the first priorities were emotional and behavioral issues
- Parents were confused about punishing or disciplining their kids and child protection laws in Canada
- Many young parents indicated they may ask their own parents (back home) or search the internet to find answers for their questions and concerns related to ECD, child-protection, and educational and behavioral aspects of their children daily life
- "Social gatherings" and meeting parents from their own culture and learning from other parents in different cultures and languages, were identified as one of the important features of ECD programs in the Tri-cities

"Through this project, I was amazed with the various understandings about what 'ECD' is. Also, I saw the difference between each ethnic group's attitude in expressing their own opinion in public. This experience widens my perspective regarding multiculturalism in Canada." (Farsi-speaking mom)

3.2 Summary of Key-informants focus groups and interviews

Perceived barriers of the parents in accessing Early Childhood Development (ECD) Programs:

- Most of the participants cited cost as the principal barrier to accessing quality ECD programs
- Participants cited lack of awareness of available early childhood programs and misunderstanding/misconception about the goals and

aims of the programs as access barriers among many parents in the studied communities

- All participants recognized that the changes in the existing services necessitate a focus on providing more culturally relevant programs for parents
- A variety of mass media (TV, news articles, brochures) and local library were recommended for reaching out the families within ethnocultural communities
- Collaboration from local community leaders (non-health sectors) were suggested by the participants

"I think it (cultural competency) is a sensitive understanding of the client's culture, considering their experience and perspective and not jumping to conclusions easily." (ECD Service Provider)

Practical ways to create culturally relevant ECD programs:

- Staff training , e.g. cultural competency workshops about: 1) how to make their program more culturally relevant, 2) The need to respect cultural values and practices, 3) the impact of their positive attitudes on parents' full participation in early childhood education and programs
- The need to support familial and cultural values are vital for many parents to participate and engage actively in the program
- Include a parent education component, making it particularly strong for low-wage or refugee families that receive some sort of subsidy to access ECD and child care programming
- Involve parents from cultural communities in some activities related to the ECD program (for instance in the planning process) to respect and acknowledge their cultural beliefs and practices
- Hiring of multilingual and multicultural service providers that know and understand the community's real needs for early childhood education and programs, and can communicate with the families
- Some cultural relevance training should be conducted before deployment of new staff
- Using a variety of methods for reaching out to target audiences: broadcast, print, and internet media
- Using schools and health systems, government offices, libraries, and local businesses to promote and advocate for culturally relevant programs

"(To improve the cultural competency of ECD services) I will invest the best in working with the staff. There are huge gaps in training in terms of cultural competency. We also need to find the appropriate staff to do the work." (ECD Service Provider)

Perceived challenges to deliver culturally competent ECD services:

- Maintaining staff and volunteers
- Disconnection between services and parents due to cultural and language barriers
- Lack of adequate social and communication skills among some staff and volunteers
- Funding limitations to expand the effective existing projects or proper multicultural direction
- Case workers vs. parents perceptions about and understanding of ECD
- Limitation of ECD programs in the community – *not just for newcomers*
- Limitation of interpreters/volunteers in the existing programs
- Interpreter is not welcomed by some clients
- Limitation of translation

"Each department (or staff) are focused on their own job description and cannot see the whole structure. We are quite overloaded with the workload. Immigrants need more supports, absolutely." (ECD Service Provider)

Promote ECD programs for families with special needs children:

- Need to develop special programs for newcomer families with special needs children
- Parents in cultural communities may feel great pressure from the society and family in taking care of a child with special needs, and may hide their children's problems and special needs due to shame, stigma, cultural issues, etc. Therefore, a different approach should be used to encourage families to bring their children into the program.
- Parents struggle with their own attempts to understand their child's place in the world



- Reluctance to disclose the nature of a child's developmental delay because of a concern that this would reflect negatively on the family has precluded requests for assistance
- In some cultures, parents strongly deny the special needs of their children regardless of staff members' persistent suggestion for assessment
- Transportation a challenge for those who don't drive
- Lack of time because of competing responsibility/demand of work: As immigrants, they have to try to maintain their family by working hard and long hours
- Language barrier (therapist not speaking their mother tongue)
- Long waiting list for assessment and lack of culturally appropriate assessment tools
- Lack of knowledge and awareness of the existing program in the region: Parents do not know how to access the service for their special needs child. They need more information to help their kids. They do not know what kind of service they can get

Suggestions for better ECD services for immigrants and refugees:

- Integrated services (ECD and other parenting/family services)
- Advocating for services by stakeholders
- Develop both community-based and individually-based programs (for instance for *refugees & families with children who have special needs*)
- Involvement of fathers in ECD programs

- Use culturally relevant approaches and methods; need to consider language and culture as key issues (e.g. *translated information is not enough*)
- Centralized information and services and supports for bridging newcomers to services
- Cultural competency and communication skills workshops and trainings for staff and volunteers
- Reach out to the hidden newcomer families who need services the most and those who are not yet adapted to the social service system/network (e.g., *refugees and newcomers parents*)
- Trust building between staff and the community members – *welcoming attitudes of the staff*
- BC's policy and decision makers need to establish cultural sensitivity initiatives: more funding for services, enhancing awareness, staff training, research at the community level, etc.

"To enhance the ECD services to reach the cultural communities, we need to build the capacity of whole community." (ECD Service Provider)





4. Summary & Conclusions

We found that immigrant and refugee families are not adequately aware of the ECD and early education programs and services that exist in the Tri-cities region; that some of the existing ECD services and programs in the region are unavailable or inaccessible to immigrant families due to cultural, language, and institutional barriers; and that some of the ECD services and programs may not be responsive to the diverse needs of children of immigrants and refugees.

Overall, we found out that the Tri-cities region has some capacity and has new initiatives to reach people from ethno-cultural communities; however there are still many gaps that may prevent the existing programs to meet the real needs of the community. We also found out that there are some resources available in the Tri-cities to fill in the gap and that fortunately there are numerous opportunities to improve cultural competence at all levels. A number of existing programs are being acknowledged by the community members (parents) as doing quite well in the Tri-cities--- but there are some segments of the populations who do not have adequate access to the services, in particular those with special needs children. Main obstacles in accessing and using services are fourfold: 1) Parents lack of awareness about ECD and early childhood education programs and services in their communities; 2) Issues related to language and cultural beliefs and practices. 3) ECD services and programs may not be available or inaccessible to immigrant families due to: distance, timing, and cost; and 4) some of the ECD services and programs are not responsive to the diverse needs of children of immigrants

and refugees, in particular among families with special needs children.

Summary of the findings

The majority of participants in this study expressed a desire to combine elements of both their home culture and Canadian culture when raising their children in Canada: This finding has two implications:

- Service providers and culturally-appropriate services may consider reflecting this issue in their service philosophy, staff training, program planning, and delivery.
- Enhancing/supporting the capacity of ethnocultural communities to raise awareness within the community, and support home language/culture/tradition-promotion community activities at the grass-roots level.
- Cultural beliefs, understandings and attitudes are just one among many influences on child health and development in the studied newcomer communities – the multiple issues faced by newcomers during the settlement and adaptation processes (language barriers, employment, housing, immigration and legal issues, discrimination, isolation from friends and family, etc) may be just as, or more influential.
- ECD programs will not be effective at improving child health and development outcomes in newcomer communities unless family and community needs, issues, priorities, and challenges are addressed and met. Programs/services that



biases may affect their interactions with others.

Third, culture is a learning process. Each person can learn the values, beliefs, and traditions that form his or her own culture, and also can learn the culture of others. It must not be assumed, however, that cultures are monolithic; a wide range of variation exists within cultures that affect a person's beliefs, perceptions, and practices.

Fourth, a range of interpersonal skills is necessary for effective cross-cultural

focus on family and community-strengthening may be more effective in newcomer communities than main-stream community child-focused approaches.

- Involvement of parents, grandparents and other care-givers in program planning and delivery is critical, and efficient in terms of time/cost-benefit.
- Services offered in combined/integrated services vastly enhance accessibility to newcomer families – e.g. ESL/parenting classes/settlement counselors, etc offered in combination with free or affordable child-minding services.

Observation by the Research Team on Cultural Competence

Our team believes that the issues related to cultural competent ECD programs are fivefold:

First, developing cultural competence is a process, rather than an endpoint. Because culture is not static and there are within-group and between-group differences among people, opportunities to develop skills and richer understanding of others always exists. Therefore, ECD programs should be designed to reflect the people and community in which they are embedded.

Second, the process of cultural competence must include the pursuit of self-awareness. Individuals must be working to understand their own worldview before they can understand the worldviews of others. Individuals also must recognize and acknowledge their own stereotypes and biases, and the ways these

communication. The ability to listen to, respect, and sincerely care about others' viewpoints, the ability to be flexible and nonjudgmental, and a willingness to acknowledge tension and differences are all considered essential. Training can facilitate such skills.

Finally, developing cultural competence does not mean giving up our own culture or accepting all of the demands of somebody else's culture. While it is important to be open to new learning, instances when cultural variations come into acute conflict with legal or developmentally appropriate practice require either compromise or respectful dialogue.

Here, we recommend the following suggestions to improve cultural competence:

Train early childhood development service providers in cultural competence by:

- Improving cultural awareness
- Improving communication skills
- Learning the appropriate use of translators

Improve Program/Practice by:

- Knowing the populations served
- Finding out what parents want
- Considering culture when staffing services
- Considering culture when framing important health messages.



Observations by the Research Team on the Essential Components of an Effective Culturally Competent ECD Model

- A New Definition of Cultural Competency: Cultural Competency is a two way street rather than the traditional definition focusing on service providers only --- *cultural competency* is a two way avenue where service providers/policy makers respect and welcome immigrants/refugees through understanding of their culture, values, beliefs and needs while the population receiving services also need to learn about the Canadian service system and values. *A culturally competent model refers to those components/ strategies that help bridge the gap of learning and understanding*
- Identification of barriers to service access and addressing them:
 - Concrete barriers: distance, cost of childcare, language, culture, availability of information
 - Invisible barriers: perceived discrimination/attitude of staff/service providers, cultural differences in the perception of service
- Understanding of how target clients perceive ECD (e.g. how moral development, a component heavily emphasized by many parents, fit in the Canadian definition of ECD). Taking into consideration the way parents view ECD will help making connection
- Identification of what works currently --- Continue and expanding of successful programs (e.g. Parent Ambassadors, Healthy Babies, Mountain View Drop-in, Library, etc. in the Tri-cities) --- each region will need

to examine what is working through evaluation and research data

- Identification of champions as anchors for participation --- parents that speak the same language; for instance, the Parent Ambassadors program offered by S.U.C.C.E.S.S. is perceived by parents as a successful program
- A proactive, varied promotion strategy to reach different target groups --- knowing what works for different groups (e.g. Internet/web-based information for Korean parents, community gathering for Farsi-speaking and Chinese parents, and word of mouth and/or home visits for Refugee parents).
- Partnership among service providers: allow the development of shared resources, research and promotion strategies. The Tri-cities sets a good example --- the Multicultural Early Childhood Development Service Advisory Committee, partnership between immigrant service agencies and mainstream service providers in many programs (Mother Goose, Parents and Tots Drop in), S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Multicultural Early Childhood Development Program that helps bridge parents with service providers, etc.
- Ongoing Cultural Competency training for service providers; extend Tri-cities' "Families in Transition Workshops" and "East Meets West Workshops" to other regions
- Involvement of parents/clients in the planning, design and delivery of services.
- Deliberative effort to reach the doubly disadvantaged groups --- e.g. creative promotion/education strategy to reach visible minority families with special needs children who are also newcomers
- Taking an integrated perspective by linking ECD with language, settlement, employment and counseling services in the region (parents expressed difficulties in participation because of problems in all other areas, loss of language learning opportunity when children reach age 6 as the "newcomer status" is lost, etc.)

Recommendations for ECD Policy and Program Planning

To help the local government, policy makers, and ECD program providers to address the major barriers of awareness, accessibility and responsiveness mentioned by community members and key-informants, our research team offers the following broad recommendations:

- Promote coordination and collaboration between Tri-cities ECD programs and services and the immigrant- and refugee-serving communities
- Design ECD services and programs and policies that intentionally address the needs and priorities of immigrant and refugee families with young children and those with special needs children
- Involve immigrant- and refugee-serving organizations) and ethnocultural community members in the development of ECD guidelines and programs
- Strengthen ECD programs and services to improve and expand access for children with special needs in immigrant and refugee families
- Build/strengthen the linguistic and cultural competency of the existing ECD services and programs
- Create centralized a multicultural child development centre for the development of ECD materials in various languages, conducting culturally competent trainings for service providers and caseworkers, and dissemination and consultation with key-informants, advisory members, and community members. The centre would

also reach those in remote regions with smaller number of visible minority parents

In conclusion, the diversity of population in the Tri-cities should be viewed as an opportunity to learn more about a range of cultural groups, to involve members of different cultures in service planning and evaluation, and to develop truly comprehensive, coordinated, and culturally competent early childhood services. In doing so, the Tri-cities region has the potential to optimize the development of all its future generations.



Appendix 1- Conceptual Framework of the Study

Mapping of Existing ECD Models/Programs

- Key Informants Meeting (Group & Individual)
- Focus Group Meeting with Newcomer Parents
- Site Visits, Individual Interviews (Key-informant) and Documents and Literature Review



Development of Focus Group Questions



Piloting the questions (Face & Content Validation): One focus group with all 4 involved language groups: 4 Parents for each of the ethnic community (N=16); purpose is to ensure clarity of questions)



Pilot Testing Focus Groups (4 community focus groups: 1 for each of the 4 language group)



Revise and further develop the methodology, procedures, and focus group questions



Full Scale Research

- 8 Focus Groups for the 3 ethnic community (2 in each language group)
- 10-12 participants for each of the 4 involved language group totaling 40 – 48 parents
- Input from Key Informants (About 2-3 focus groups with 8-10 participants in each session)



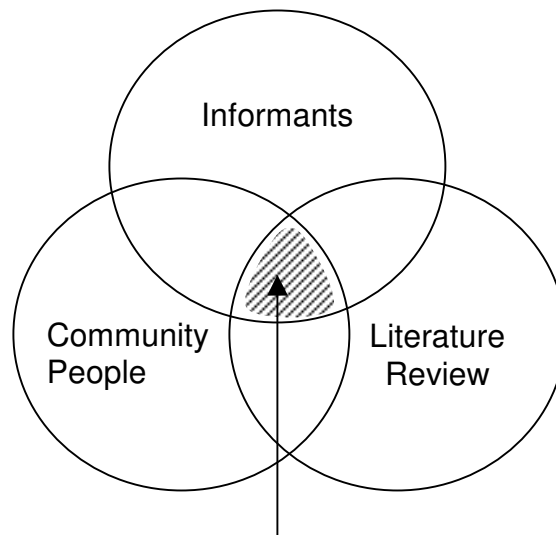
Key-informant and community focus group and individual interviews Compared for Validation of approach and methodology



Development of Cultural Competent ECD Framework for Tri-cities and beyond From Focus Groups, Interviews, and Team Members' Observations



Comparing inputs from individual interviews and focus groups with the findings from literature review to identify the most relevant needs to focus on.



Where to focus the most

Appendix 2- Focus Group Questions for Community Members

1. What is your own understanding/definition of early childhood development (ECD)?
2. Compared to your home country, in Canada which of the ECD components (including cognitive, communication, physical, emotional, and social) is/are more important to you for your child healthy development? (In this question, we just want to know what their perceptions about ECD in Canada and their home country)
3. In your opinion, what are the differences in your practices related to raising the children in Canada and back in your home country? (In this question, we want to know what are their actual practices and behaviour)
4. Do you think your attitudes and beliefs about early childhood development might be similar or different in Canada compared to those you held in your home country? (In this question, we want to assess the effectiveness of migration on their beliefs and attitudes)
5. What do you think should be the core of the cultural relevancy of early childhood development programs? (In this question, we want to know what their expectations from the systems are)
6. Do you have any suggestions to improve the current ECD services in your neighborhood? (In this question, we want to assess their critical thinking skills)
7. What are your own experiences of receiving the ECD services in Canada? (In this question, we want to assess their actual experiences with the system. These self-reported data will be then compared to the data collected in previous questions enable us to test the validity and reliability of the self-reported data)
 - What services do you know available? (List the ECD services that they know in your neighborhood)
 - Are you actively participating in the program/services? Why and why not.....
 - How did you find out about the service(s)?
 - What were/are the barriers to find, access, and use the services?
 - What were/are the benefits of the services to you, your family, and in particular to your child?
 - What connected you to this service(s)?
 - Were yours and your child's needs met with the current services?
 - How the services could be improved to meet your and your child's needs?
8. What are your suggestions to improve ECD services in an aim to be more accessible, immigrant-friendly, and culturally relevant in your neighborhood? (In this question, we want to compare their responses to other questions, in particular with questions #5 and #6)

9. If there is enough money and the manpower in your neighborhood, what would you suggest be changed? (In this question, we want to assess their participatory and involvement practices in civil society services)

-Questions about special needs families-

10. In your culture what does it mean to have a child who has special needs, either born with the disability or acquired through an accident, injury, or illness?

For example – a child who is physically disabled, in a wheel chair

- a child who has an intellectual disability, who is mentally retarded
- a child who is born deaf and/or blind
- a child with a severe behaviour problem, hurts others or self, is violent
- a child who does not speak
- a child who looks different, missing limbs, facial deformity, scars from burns, etc.

11. What is important for service providers to know when they are providing service to a family from your culture who has a child with a disability?

Appendix 3- Focus Group Questions for Key Informants

1. When thinking about ECD programs and services, what does it mean to be "culturally sensitive" (For instance, cultural relevance, cultural understanding, and cultural competence)?
2. What should service providers do to make ECD programs and services accessible (financially, physically, culturally, and linguistically) in a multicultural setting?
3. What strategies need to be implemented in order to connect with ethnocultural families that are the most difficult to reach (For instance families with kids with special needs)?
4. Do you think that culture affects how parents and families prioritize the individual domains of early childhood development (physical, cognitive, emotional, social and behavioural/communication)? Can you give an example of this?
5. How might different understandings, practices and beliefs between individuals (i.e. parents, families, service-providers and government agencies) in a cross-cultural context present challenges or opportunities to ECD programs and services?



HELP is a unique research Centre at UBC for ECD in that it involves a large number of health researchers, associates and community partners. HELP has a strong track record of peer-reviewed research funding, publications, shared facilities and resources, joint training initiatives and other work realized through common values, assumptions, activities. HELP works closely with a variety of faculty, students, staff, government and community partners, and numerous NGOs. Researchers at HELP display their cohesiveness through their past accomplishments, current endeavours, and their planned activities.



Driven by its vision of a world of multicultural harmony, **S.U.C.C.E.S.S.** has the mandate of promoting the well-being of Canadians and immigrants and to encourage their integration into the community. Started as a settlement service organization in 1973, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. has developed into a multi-service provider delivering settlement, counselling, group and community services, employment, business and economic development services, as well as engaging in advocacy for positive social change. Initially as an organization to assist new Canadians of Chinese origin, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. has become an agency serving clients of different cultural backgrounds.



Tri-Cities ECD Committee supports the community's capacity to ensure the availability and accessibility of Early Childhood Development services for children (prenatal to age 6) and their families in the Tri-Cities area. The vision of the committee is "A community where every child has the opportunities necessary to develop to his or her full potential." The committee includes a cross-section of individuals, service providers and government representatives from the Tri-Cities communities' with an interest in Early Childhood Development. The committee's work guided by a Community Action Plan.



Agencies / Organizations participated as key Informants:

Fraser Health Authority
Ministry of Children and Family Development
School District #43
SHARE Family & Community Services
Simon Fraser Society for Community Living
S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Multicultural ECD Team
Tri-City Family Place
YMCA- Tri-Cities Child Care Resource and Referral & Family Resource Programs

Childcare service providers participated as key informants:

Creative Kids Daycare
Jolly Beanstalk Daycare
Kids Village Preschool
Supreme Family Daycare
Tender Hearts Family Child Care
Terrific Kids Daycare
Westwood Christian Preschool
Westwood Montessori

Special thanks to the following committees for their support and feedback:

Tri-Cities ECD committee
Tri-Cities Multicultural ECD Advisory Committee
Tri-Cities ECD Research Committee

This research is funded by the United Way of the Lower Mainland

