

EARLY CHILDHOOD INCLUSION: A SILVER LINING IN THE DARK CLOUDS FOR AFRICAN IMMIGRANT CHILDREN?

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This article presents preliminary findings of an ongoing study that attempts to gauge the level of access to and support for early childhood education and care programs for sub-Saharan African immigrant families living in Melbourne Australia. Using the Australian Early Years Learning Framework as a guide, we explored 30 parents' perception of their children's care experience through face-to-face in-depth interviews. Initial findings show that the parents felt their children are Othered, labelled and denied citizenship, and that their children's future is uncertain. We provided discussions of these issues alongside offering suggestions for improving the research and conditions for children from African families.

Introduction

Since the break-out of civil wars during the late 1990s and early 2000s in some sub-Saharan African countries such as Liberia, Sudan, and Sierra Leone, substantial numbers of African refugees have entered Australia (Vicker, 2007). The conspicuous presence of dark-skinned African people in a 'white' dominated nation, Australia, makes them a target for public and media scrutiny (Casimiro, Hancock & Northcote, 2007; Hancock, 2009; RRAC, 2002). Hancock (2009) acknowledges "sweeping, unverified claims, and stereotyping impacts on community perceptions and treatment of African people, creating fear and suspicion" (p. 2). Suspicion and a feeling of exclusion are sources of potential tension and harmful consequences for individuals from African immigrant community (Andrews & Sibbel, 2003; RRAC, 2002). For example, in 2007, the then Australian Immigration Minister, Kevin Andrews, claimed that young African refugees are involved in "race-based gangs" and nightclub fights (Hancock, 2009), coupled with engaging in crime and drinking in parks at night ("Evidence' sparks new refugee row", 2007; Lampathakis, 2007). Concerns have been expressed by some politicians in Australia about the general lack of African immigrants' inability to integrate properly into Australian society (Hancock, 2009). The Canadian Council for Refugees, refugee rights NGOs in Australia, the Refugee Council of Australia, the Victorian Human Rights Consultation Committee, and members of the public have denounced the discriminatory comments by the Government of Australia. Yet, on 14th August 2009 racist leaflets warning residents of an influx of Africans moving to live in their neighborhoods have been sighted in some suburbs in Victoria, Australia. The first spate of material was sighted on car windscreens in Mildura, in northwestern Victoria, claiming the local council had tried to "sneak" 30 Sudanese refugee families into their city. The leaflet claims Sudanese refugees "will cause endless social terrorism" and bring "a primitive lawless tribal culture and a pack mentality" into the community. It asserts that people of Sudanese origin are 400 to 800 per cent more likely to commit a serious crime than an Australian national and that "many of them are infected with AIDS". In Frankston, a suburb of Melbourne, an anonymous leaflet under police investigation after it was found in mailboxes and on car windscreens reads: "Do you want Frankston to become like Dandenong?" "The levels of violence in Dandenong and Noble Park have risen sharply since the huge increase in the African population" (Last.fm., 14/08/2009). (Note: Dandenong is a suburb in Melbourne where this study was conducted. It has a high population of African migrants).

With research suggesting that there is increasing discrimination against African immigrants in Australia (Casimiro, Hancock & Northcote, 2007; Hancock, 2009; RRAC, 2002), there are compelling grounds for research to investigate the perception of sub-Saharan African immigrant parents regarding their children's wellbeing in early childhood settings in Australia. This pilot study was conducted in light of a current major reform designed to improve and provide for quality and equity in early childhood education in Australia. The Australian National Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) supports the provision of inclusive-based approach to delivering services to children and families. It is a program geared towards holistic education of all children (socialisation and childcare). The framework is consistent with a rights-based approach that emphasises high quality, integrated, seamless systems of early childhood education and care (DEEWR, 2009).

The purpose of the national quality framework is to drive systems-wide quality to provide education, care equity and support to all children, and families (DEEWR, 2009). It is consistent with Article 2 of the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child:

State parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status (United Nations, 1990, p. 2).

The current drive to equity and excellence is based on research evidence that the lack of access to, care and equal participation in early childhood education for diverse families lead to a widening gap in children's well-being (Heckman & Masterov, 2007; Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggart, 2007). Comprehensive all inclusive early childhood education, grounded in social justice promotes effective development of all children (Fleer, & Williams-Kennedy, 2008; Gonzalez-Mena, 2009). In this study we conceptualised early childhood inclusive education as 'Belonging, Being and Becoming' (DEEWR, 2009). We used this framework to analyse and make sense of our research data.

Belonging is the basis for children to live a fulfilling life both in and outside their childcare centres as it draws on relationships (Billman, Geddes & Hedges, 2005). The purpose of this study was to find out the extent to which parents feel that the early childhood centres are accepting of their children. In other words, do the children of sub-Saharan African immigrant truly belong to the preschool community they attend? Research supports the idea that belonging develops through relationships that children form with families, teachers and society (Fleer, Hedegaard, & Tudge, 2009; Fleer, & Williams-Kennedy, 2008; Gonzalez-Mena, 2009). 'Being' is the current state of life of children, be it in their learning centres or with parents. We were also interested in 'being' because "the learning and development that young children experience" shape their identity formation and determine their later adult life (DEEWR, 2009, p.7). Further, we believe that belonging and being precludes becoming. Becoming is related to "children's identities, knowledge, understanding, capacities, skills and retaliations change during childhood" (DEEWR, 2009, p.7). These characteristic changes are essentially shaped by many events and circumstances that the child experiences.

Quality inclusive practice in the early years leads to better experiences such as a reduction in poverty, narrowing the exclusion gap, raising the standards of communities, and increases educational outcomes in later years of schooling (Farquhar, Croad, 2005; Daniels, 2001; Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggart, 2007). Given the above claims children who are denied access to and experience of an all inclusive quality early childhood programs are more likely to remain uncompetitive, poorer and become limited in their right to exercise other rights (Heckman, 2006; Heckman & Masterov, 2007). Ironically, where children are denied equal opportunity issues of deviancy may be entrenched. Researchers argue that children who are denied opportunities early in life grow to experience further exclusion in later life (Heckman & Masterov, 2007; Waldfogel, 2004). It is therefore significant to assess the perceptions of sub-Saharan African immigrant parents about inclusion and exclusion.

Method

This inclusion research assesses sub-Saharan African immigrant parents' perception and description of their children's belonging, being and becoming in an early childhood setting. The sample for the study comprised 15 families of the sub-Saharan African immigrant community in south eastern suburbs of Melbourne, Victoria. From each of these families both fathers ($n = 15$) and mothers ($n = 15$) were selected making a total of 30 participants. Selection of participants was by free invitation to participate. Immigrants who do not speak English and who do not have children attending early childhood programs were excluded from participation as the researchers want to avoid interpreter biases and the exorbitant cost associated with transcription into other African languages. The participants were Sudanese ($n=24$), Sierra Leonean ($n=2$) and Liberian ($n=2$). All the participants included in this study fled civil wars in their home country and lived in refugee camps in Kenya prior to relocation to Australia. Twenty-two of the participants were living and working in urban areas in their respective countries before the wars broke out. All the participants have lived in Australia for more than five years and have been granted permanent residency status. A native African research assistant was employed to help negotiate entry to the families, and to assist in the interview process. This made the families felt at home to communicate with us during the time we interviewed them. This pilot study was approved by the Monash University Ethics Committee on Research Involving Humans and funded by Monash University Faculty of Education Small Research Grant.

Data Collection

The data were collected during individual home visits at a time chosen by the participants. Both fathers and mothers were interviewed together making up 15 interview sessions which lasted no more than one hour at each site. Prior to the interview, the researchers obtained informed written consent from all participants. Participants were provided with explanatory statement that detailed their rights and responsibilities to the research process. The interview protocol contained questions about participants' demographics and about their perception regarding their children's belonging, participation, care and parental involvement in school programs. The demographic questions included: how did you come to Australia? How long have you been living in Australia? What is your current resident status? The main questions were: What is your perception of the childcare your child attends? How do you participate in your child's early education? What challenges do you or your child face in accessing early childhood care and education for your child? How do you perceive how your child will fare in Australian society? Do you perceive yourself to be a valued member of the school team and why? What other general issues confront you as a parent whose child attends child care? These trigger questions led to in-depth discussions of participants' tacit lived experiences in regard to their children which were recorded on digital voice recorders and later downloaded direct into the computer.

Data analysis

Data analysis began with data reduction immediately after fieldwork. The data were transcribed by one of the researchers for the second researcher to compare with the audio recordings. The approaches we adopted to analyze the data are consistent with Richie and Spencer's (1993)

analytic framework: familiarization with the data; identifying a thematic framework for the data; indexing or coding; charting by using headings from the thematic framework; and mapping and interpretation of themes. While doing this we were mindful of our criteria for inclusivity which is belonging, being and becoming (DEEWR, 2009).

Results and discussion

This paper attempts to present information from interview conducted with sub-Saharan African immigrant families in south eastern suburbs of Melbourne. A novel feature of the study is that it provided insight not only into the parents' perceived experiences of their child's early childhood education and care but also into their psychological state. The results suggest that the Australian EYLF is relevant in quality early childhood inclusive practice. Three important themes were extracted for discussion.

Othering identities

All the parents interviewed felt that there is a culture of 'us-them' relationship in the preschools that their children attend which turns to undermine the children's sense of belonging. In socio-ethical and cultural terms, the "Other" refers to the social and/or psychological ways in which early childhood teachers either consciously or unconsciously exclude or marginalize children from other cultures (Nasser, 2003). By constructing some children as the "Other," is to concentrate on what makes them dissimilar from the 'dominant' group (Johnson, 2002; Moss & Pence, 1994). All the parents interviewed did not feel that their children are experiencing inclusive practice, or felt belonging in the preschools they attend. They felt that their children were being 'othered' in terms of the day to day care the preschools provide to their children.

They don't take good care of my child...they never get a blanket to cover the kids and they just lie down even without pillows...when my child comes home he says pain in the neck and I ask... the child says they don't give them pillows when they sleep (P2)... I went to pick my child and they say he is sleeping but he had no pillow under him. The other children had pillows and I don't know why. I am not happy because everyone is paying the money why all the children don't have pillows? (P4) When it comes to sleeping they pick the white kids and put them in bed but they don't do this to the African kids (P8). When I go to take my child the child is not clean when I asked the teacher she said they are a bit busy (P10). They never clean the child and change the nappy on time... all the nose running into the mouth and the child is drinking that you see? Can't they wipe it? (P15)...Most of the teachers don't take care of the African kids and they don't treat them like human beings so I took my child from there to another child care (P11). What I dislike is how they leave my daughter unclean or unattended sometimes when I go to take the child I take a tissue and clean the nose, change the nappy and take her home...I don't know why they leave the child like that without cleaning when the other children are clean. It is like our children are not the same as Australians but they were born here and not in Africa. (P6)

The parents' comments suggest a widespread disaffection from the preschools towards their children. Despite the Australian government's explicit efforts to be culturally sensitive, responsive, and inclusive, it appears the parents were bitter about the care and acceptance given to their children. Consistent with inclusive practice is belonging, which is teachers' ability to notice, recognize, and respond to all children's needs (Billman, Geddes & Hedges, 2005). A true belonging should make parents and children feel that they are part of their preschool community, connected in productive and meaningful relationships (Noble, 2007). In contrast the parents felt that the early childhood centers are just places where they drop off their children. A recurring theme in the sub-Saharan African parent interviews involves related concerns about inconsistency in the provision of care and building of relationships:

I and my friends who also have kids there...we approached the director...why do you differentiate African kids? ...You put the African on the floor without covering them! Then they start to do improvement in the child care...they do it for two three weeks because we complained then they come back to the old thing again (P12). What worries me is that most of the time if you go to the school to pick our kids they leave them dirty, nobody is caring for them, the nose is running, the mouth is "yaak" ...my own eyes saw the kids when I went to take them. When you come in to pick your child, and then they pretend to be running to clean the kids this is not good at all (P6). The teachers when they see your face they show that they are respecting you but when you turn your face they do other things (P1). We are not valued at all, we are like strangers...We are not part of it all, like they do not like us, and we take it like that. I am thinking of moving the child but I don't know what the new place also will do to my kids (P13). We came here because there is war but our kids are also at another war, this war is discrimination because nobody recognises them...they only see them as bad kids. (P2)

These quotes from parent interviews exemplify a common conflict between parent expectations in accessing early childhood services in a new country and the service provision to their children.

The participants in this research have collective sense of suffering due to previous traumatised experiences of civil wars in their home countries. Some people may consider this as a precursor to the ways in which they are reacting to current issues in relation to their children. Researchers found that suspicious thoughts often occur in the context of emotional distress (Fowler, Freeman, Smith, et al., 2006), which are often preceded by stressful events such as difficult interpersonal relationships, conflicts and isolation (Freeman & Garety, 2003). Some researchers argue that previous experience of stresses accumulated from civil war and living in refugee camps can contribute to beliefs about immigrants' self as vulnerable, and of the teachers in host countries as potentially dangerous, and the school system unjust (Fowler, Freeman, Smith, et al., 2006). It is likely that this previous persecutory experiences may lead the African immigrants to excessive anxiety ideation of the anticipation of danger (Freeman & Garety, 2003) for their children in a 'foreign' school environment. It is possible, typically, therefore, in their paranoid thinking, the African immigrant parents having unusual experiences in relation to how their children are cared for, which they find it hard to relate with in terms of their own cultural identity, may interpret them in line with their emotional state. A true anxiety may cause them to interpret every situation they experience in relation to early childhood provision as threats to their children. It is argued

that anxious thoughts are truly persecutory when they contain the idea that harm is actually intended by the majority towards the minority, a situation that may lead to a lack of trust and further suspicions (Bentall, Kinderman & Kaney, 1994). Yet these are just our thoughts as researchers, which is not suggesting that the parents lied about their situations, we think that the study provided opportunity and gives agency and voice to a minority to group to air their concerns. Voice enabled the immigrant parents in this research to communicate the emotional nature of their lived experience, capturing the dynamic nature of these lived experiences and some understanding into social constructions of reality that they are situated within their storied accounts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Labelling and denial of citizenship

We want to state here first, that we do not intend to convince readers of the truth of our subjective interpretations, instead to present our findings, taking into consideration the voices of the research participants. Parents' comments suggest hidden tensions and concerns regarding perceived labelling and verbal contesting of citizenship in the preschools that their children attend.

Something happened...my little one came home crying and I asked what happened? ...he said the teacher called me monkey...they said I am doing monkey things and other children also were calling monkey, monkey... I went to the centre to complain and the matter is solved (P5). It happened to my child too, I ignore it first but it happened again then... I went to the school and I said I am not happy about that word monkey and I told the director that we are all equal only the colour is different and I don't like that word. I was sad for a week because of that word. The director told me she will solve the problem. (P13)

Pervasive of parents' concerns is the feeling that their children who were born in Australia are often referred to as Blacks, Africans or Sudanese by their teachers despite the children claiming that they were born in Australia.

Many of my friends in town feel the same thing... they call the kids blacks even the children who were borne in Australia...the teachers ask them, where are you from? If the children say we are Australians but our parents are Africans and the teachers tell them no, no, no... you are not Australian you are African, you are Sudanese because you are black. The teachers don't see the African kids who are born in Australia as Australians because of colour...this is bad... if kids tell you that they are Australian you don't have to separate them by telling them they are not from here and they are black, this make them feel bad and they lose their confidence (P15). I don't understand... what is wrong with our kids calling themselves Australians... The schools say we are multicultural but this is a lie, it is not true they only say it with the mouth but what they are doing to our kids is not multicultural. They don't accept that the African children who are born here are Australians. We want to know why our kids are being treated so badly (P14)... the racism that goes on is bad. Why are the kids being told that they are not Australians? ... I hope to get my answer back to this. (P11)

In addition to these comments the majority of the parents complained about their children being persistently singled out as ‘naughty.’ Coupled with this is the lack of communication between parents and the teachers which make them feel less valued.

One of the teachers talked to me when I went to the meeting and said your child is being naughty so this month you have to end it here, you have to find another place for your kid and this is a bit surprise because the teacher has no right to tell the child to go home. Is it the only child who is misbehaving? This is what I want to know? (P3). First, my child was attending a childcare but now he is not anymore. Many things happened in the childcare, when the child came home I looked at him he has many scratches... but there is no report, It happened many times but they said he is a trouble maker. (P5)

By applying ontological lenses to the parent interviews there appears to be alienation of the children from the childcare they attend. An ontological account of early childhood community attempts to analyze for the corporeal dimensions of belonging together and to places “as well as for the sharing of sociopolitical meaning that this involves” (Diprose, 2008, p.49). There is embodiment of socio-cultural dimensions in all childcare; they are places where multiple identities are enacted and practiced (Ngo, 2010). Inclusion early childhood learning spaces warrants shared identity and community through which all children and their parents experience meaningful belonging (Billman, Geddes & Hedges, 2005). In contrast, the parent interviews suggest enactment and the practice of dispersed identities within the early childhood space. Diprose (2008) posits:

conceiving of community in terms of belonging...allows a way to understand how sociopolitical meanings of... race, and place together constitute diverse and dynamic personal and social patterns of existence (that are empowering and disempowering) without recourse to an idea of common, shared, or even hybrid identity. (p.29)

Diprose’s statement goes further, indicating that one cannot divorce interpersonal and ethical dimension of community from the political. For instance, belonging to a community between African immigrants and Australians has not been portrayed favorably in the public space. Efforts at belonging have been thwarted by negative political commentaries, projection of fear and build up of negative inclination of mainstream Australian society towards people of color (Diprose, 2008 p.49). These negative tendencies appear to affect the ways the early childhood teachers legitimize or openly contest the African children’s claim of Australian citizenship. It shows that being born in a particular country does not guarantee that one is accorded full rights by all the members of that society. We concur with Ngo’s statement that citizenship is constructed through discourse and representation (Ngo, 2010) and the play of power. Hall (1996) reiterates:

Rather than whole, seamless, or naturally-occurring, culture and identity are the result of differentiation in social relations precisely because identities are constructed within, not outside discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies. Moreover, they emerge within the play

of specific modalities of power, and thus are more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion, than they are the sign of an identical, naturally-constituted unity. (1996, p. 4)

The experiences of parents can thus be located in Hall's statement of how the teachers use historically grounded and modalities of power and supremacy to create a discourse of 'Australianness' and 'non-Australianness' for the children of sub-Saharan African immigrant families. This has serious educational, economic and socio-cultural ramifications for the present and future generations of African migrant families as argued by Figueroa (1999) that "citizenship is a political asset; and the individual's personal characteristics (identity) are his or her cultural assets, which give the individual either social prestige or social stigma, leading to discrimination and segregation (p.1). He further argues that when rights are discriminatory, or when formally universal rights are not effective in practice, some people are excluded from some rights.

One worrying aspect of this is that once these discourses and practices become engrained through repetition, children born to African families in Australia will continue to experience exclusion as the other, the refugee, or the Black African. Ngo (2010) cautions, "... all discourses are political. All discourses position individuals with specific power relations and prompt us to attend to certain issues but ignore others" (p. 5). We acknowledged these as serious concerns in regard to the data we obtained from the first part of our study, however, the discourses of Whiteness and Blackness, coupled with pejorative labelling in preschools need to be further examined through multiple approaches to triangulate this initial findings. It is then that we can offer comprehensive rectification to the problem.

Hanging dark clouds

The data suggested a further area of inclusion, which is one of the key concepts in the Australian EYLF. The experiences that the parents expressed in relation to their children are akin to hanging dark clouds. The data sufficiently show that the parents are apprehensive about the future of their children as they felt racism is ripe in the preschools that their children attend.

We flew from a war zone but our kids are also at another war zone, the war zone of discrimination because nobody recognises them. If things start this way, the children are young what future is there? We are not sure if they will give them jobs if they grow because you can see it now. They don't need to mature before you know what will happen to them, it is already happening; I mean the discrimination is there in the preschools. (P7)

This concept of 'becoming' is futuristic as it is measured in terms of change that the children would experience. Becoming according to the EYLF reflects "children's growing understanding of different situations, and their growing ability to meet challenges associated with learning to participate as a member of a group, whether it be family, the community or a particular culture (DEEWR, 2009, p. 6). The second concept of the Australian Early Years Learning Framework used in this analysis is 'being'. This is related to the issue of citizenship, and is about the present. Being is concerned with living now, the current experiences of children and how their parents feel about such experiences. The future is uncertain if the present (being) is loaded with

rejection. Inclusion is about living in a community. The critical component of being for children is that they know that other children and the adults they come into contact with care about them. Importantly, preschool teachers must be accepting of children for whom they are. They must show respect for the children through the comments that they make, their relationships, their actions, and the ways they show they recognize African immigrant children born in Australia as Australians and listen to what children have to say. Further, ‘being implies that “when engaging with children, educators need to be aware of how young children are experiencing a moment of engagement, and be sufficiently flexible to respond accordingly” (DEEWR, 2009, p. 6).

We argue that early childhood practices that reinforce exclusive notions of belonging, difference, and superiority can only be considered as colonizing (Portelli & Solomon, 2001). Denying some children legitimacy to their birth place through subtle behaviours such as singling out nationalities in educational spaces are akin to colonialism. This can lead to children's internalizing problems, anxiety, depression, loneliness, confusion, and antisocial behavior (Downey, 2007). A feeling of colonised identities could lead to perceiving dark clouds; therefore, in discussing these findings within the Australian EYLF, we need to interrogate the power of discursive interruptions to hegemonic and exclusive practices of early childhood education that fail to account for inclusiveness, respect, wellbeing and value for all children. Full inclusion (belonging, being and becoming) when implemented well has the capacity to propel children and families beyond the dark clouds to reasonable life expectations leading to future wellbeing.

It is likely that African migrant parents may be anxious, fearful, and frustrated due to their apparent difference in language, colour and race and previous experiences but we cannot use these premises to override their voice. Doing so would mean engaging in irresponsible research to subjugate and make the participants invisible.

We strongly argue that without full inclusion the experiences of the migrants may lead to complex layers of adversity. These layers may lead to limited participation in school programs, poor relationships and unstable living situations (Downey, 2007). What we want to emphasise in this initial finding is an empirical prediction that the inequality being felt by the sub-Saharan immigrant parents in relation to their children depend on their initial historical conditions of how they have been portrayed in Australia. And given that the Australian EYLF arises from recognition of each child's fundamental freedoms and rights to the valued society, commitment is needed to strengthen partnership with parents and teachers at the policy and implementation level. Public awareness and acceptance of inclusion will be essential for the establishment of an inclusive early childhood education put forward in the national Early Years Learning Framework. More importantly, uncovering negative stereotypes, advocating unconditional acceptance, particularly for children from African families will be essential for the implementation of the Australian EYLF.

Study Limitations and Future Research

We acknowledge that our research has limitations. Firstly, the overall sample size is small considering the large number of Sub-Saharan African immigrant families resident in many parts of Melbourne. Therefore, the data presented in this study provide some indication of the

perception of a small group of Sub-Saharan African immigrant families and should not be taken as completely representative on a large, fairly representative sample. Secondly, we did not verify the quality or accuracy of the data provided by the parents with the teachers. However, we are not suggesting that what the parents told us lacked credibility.

The issues raised by parents in this research may be taken as important snapshots, and future research is necessary to provide a balanced account using observation and interview with teachers and the children in the next phase of our study. Also, research into inclusion of young children needs to analyse teachers' understanding and implementation of the concept of *Belonging, Being and Becoming*. Another area worth investigating is family-related and parenting factors that contribute to *Belonging, Being and Becoming* among vulnerable citizens. This should focus on interagency work with childcare and family support systems in promoting the wellbeing, inclusion and safety of all children. We hope that when we collect more evidence from these multiple sources as researchers we would then be in a position to further validate and respond to inclusion and exclusion issues in early childhood.

Final thoughts and Conclusion

Australia's push for inclusion to better the lives of all children and families is evident in her current EYLF. An inclusive policy such as this framework is strategic for systematic dismantling of neglect and exclusion. The framework provides further opportunity for early childhood teachers to move beyond blame and befuddlement, working to transform themselves (Howard, 2010) and their centres to serve all families. An inclusive approach such as this will prevent sub-Saharan immigrant families from languishing in future mediocrity and failure. We feel that this research enabled Sub-Saharan African immigrant families to express an authentic sense of alienation they feel from the preschools their children attend. Parents can be quite sensitive to how their children are treated. In this study, the parents being from a disadvantaged group raise more suspicion in regard to placing their children in the care of 'strangers'.

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