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"Say it in Polish!": The Role of Heritage Language in preserving culture among families of Eastern European Origin

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"Say it in Polish!"
The Role of Heritage Language in preserving culture among families of Eastern European Origin

College of Education and Human Services

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Abstract

This project is part of a larger qualitative research study exploring the relationship between Eastern European American parenting styles and children's academic achievement. Seven mothers who were either first- or second-generation Eastern European American participated in semi-structured individual interviews. This project focuses on heritage language preservation. It revealed motivations, strategies, and outcomes of parents' desire to transmit their heritage language to the next generation. All participants had at least one child between ages five and eighteen. Based on our findings, four themes have emerged: 1) Motivations for heritage language preservation; 2) Resources and strategies to foster heritage language learning; 3) Family factors affecting heritage language transmission and fluency; and 4) Children's evolving attitudes to heritage language.