

7-9-2008

# Promoting Healthy Development: Educating Somali Mothers and Children on the Importance of Outdoor Physical Activity

Rebecca S. Wawra  
*Augsburg College*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://idun.augsburg.edu/etd>



Part of the [Nursing Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Wawra, Rebecca S., "Promoting Healthy Development: Educating Somali Mothers and Children on the Importance of Outdoor Physical Activity" (2008). *Theses and Graduate Projects*. 484.  
<https://idun.augsburg.edu/etd/484>

This Open Access Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Idun. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Graduate Projects by an authorized administrator of Idun. For more information, please contact [bloomber@augburg.edu](mailto:bloomber@augburg.edu).

RUNNING HEAD: PROMOTING HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

PROMOTING HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT: EDUCATING SOMALI MOTHERS AND  
CHILDREN ON THE IMPORTANCE OF OUTDOOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

By

Rebecca S. Wawra RN

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Augsburg College Nursing Program

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a Master of Arts Degree in

Transcultural Care Nursing

Augsburg College

Minneapolis, MN

**Augsburg College  
Department of Nursing  
Master of Arts in Nursing Program  
Thesis or Graduate Project Approval Form**

This is to certify that **Rebecca Wawra** has successfully defended her Graduate Project entitled **“Promoting Healthy Development: Educating Somali Mothers and Their Children on the Importance of Physical Activity”** and fulfilled the requirements for the Master of Arts in Nursing degree.

Date of Oral defense July 9, 2008.

**Committee member signatures:**

Advisor: Susan K Nask Date July 9, 2008

Reader 1: Cheryl Luning Date July 9, 2008

Reader 2: Stephanie Hendrich Date July 9, 2008

## ABSTRACT

### PROMOTING HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT: EDUCATING SOMALI MOTHERS AND CHILDREN ON THE IMPORTANCE OF OUTDOOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.

Rebecca S. Wawra RN

June 29, 2008

Integrative Thesis

Field Project

This paper describes an educational program that was designed to provide education and awareness for Somali mothers and children about the importance of outdoor physical activity on healthy child development. The program is based on Margaret Newman's nursing theory of Health as Expanding Consciousness and Hartrick-Doane & Varcoe's concept of *walking with*. A comprehensive literature review was completed to exemplify the need for outdoor physical activity education in the immigrant population.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge Sandy Finn and Michele Evans for the wonderful friendship, and support as we made it through school. I have had a blast with you guys, both inside and outside of the classroom, and will always cherish our friendship. You guys bring out the best in me, and I thank you for that. I do not think that I could have done it without you.

I would like to acknowledge my wonderful family. For their understanding when I had things to do, for the encouragement when I needed it the most, and for loving me through this wonderful journey. As I made the attempt to juggle a busy life, you were all a great support. Mom, Dad, Andy, Aggie, Molly, Jon and Brittni, you guys are amazing.

I would like to recognize my professors at Augsburg College. Cheryl Leuning for sharing all of your incredible experiences, expertise, knowledge, and insight, I will always be inspired. My time in Namibia and Pine Ridge were incredible, and for both of them I have you to thank. I would also like to recognize my advisor Sue Nash. Thanks for all of your patience, encouragement when I needed it the most, and most importantly for your expertise as I worked to complete my project and paper. I would also recognize Ruth Enestvad and Katherine Baumgartner for my experiences in Mexico and Guatemala, a part of my education that I will always cherish.

I would like to recognize the Eden Prairie family Center, and everyone that took the extra time to make sure that I was able to meet my goals. Especially Marilyn Gitter for graciously finding the opportunities that I needed, and the people that I needed to get in contact with. Stephanie Hendrickson for taking the time to read my paper and your wonderful insight. Thanks to Hodan for all of your wisdom and insight into the Somali culture, I had a wonderful year and I am glad that I got to know you. Also to Pam Nelson, thanks for allowing me to spend time in

your classroom this year, you are a wonderful example, and I am glad that I had the chance to learn from you.

Table of Contents

Page Number

I.	Chapter 1: Introduction	
A.	Background	1
B.	Purpose of project	4
C.	Significance of project	5
D.	Nursing Theory Guidance	6
	1. Margaret Newman	6
	2. Hartrick - Doane & Varcoe	6
II.	Chapter 2: Review of relevant literature	
A.	Conceptual framework	
	1. Newman's theory of Health as Expanding Consciousness	8
	2. Learning theory – children	
	a) Constructivist theory	12
	b) Child-initiated learning	14
	c) Play and learning	14
	d) Educating Immigrant children	16
	3. Learning theory – adult	
	a) Malcolm Knowles – Adult learning theory	20
	b) Parent education	21
	4. Developmental appropriate practice	24
B.	Scholarly work on topic	
	1. Health promotion	26
	2. Barriers to outdoor physical activity/play	27

3.	Childhood sedentary lifestyle	29
4.	Overcoming obstacles/barriers	30
5.	Importance of play/outdoor activity in development	31
6.	Working with Immigrant families	33
7.	Bilingual paraprofessional	36
8.	Parental involvement in education	38
	a) Parents as partners	40
	b) Importance of parental role	41
9.	Family and culture	41
10.	Early childhood programs	43
C.	Background about participants	
	1. Discussion of relevant health inequities	43
	2. Specific population of interest to the project	
	a) Somali culture	43
	b) Eden Prairie Family Center	45
III.	Chapter 3: Development of educational curriculum	
	A. Project description	46
	B. Program	
	1. Elements	48
	2. Activity selection	49
	C. Implementation of project	49
	1. Research (literature)	49
	2. Future plans for implementation	49



IV.	Chapter 4: Evaluation		
	A.	Relevant literature	51
	B.	Program evaluation	52
V.	Chapter 5: Discussion		
	A.	Implication of findings for APN	54
	B.	Implications for decreasing health inequities	55
VI.	Chapter 6: Conclusions, Recommendations, Reflections		
	A.	Next step in implementation	57
	B.	Things to consider	57
	C.	Implications for future projects or future research	58
VII.	References		60
VIII.	Appendix		68

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### *The Need for Education on Outdoor Physical Activity*

Historically, the focus of healthcare has been to treat the illness and cure the disease. In today's society, trends are changing. The focus is now on the prevention of disease and the maintenance of health through a holistic approach as well as an orientation towards wellness (Godchaux, 1998). Research shows that the amount of physical and outdoor activity that is present in the life of a child is often predicative of the lifestyle habits that they will experience as an adult (Ferreira, van der Horst, Wendel-Vos, Kremers, van Lenthe, & Burg, 2006). The literature states that when children are able to spend time outdoors, and given the opportunity to be physically active, both their health and well-being are impacted. Because of the importance of this impact, there is a great need to look at ways to promote increased participation in youth, specifically in immigrant youth (Fein, Plotnikoff, Wild, & Spence, 2004; Sallis et al., 2000).

Studies done throughout the nation show children from racial, socio-economic and ethnic minority groups are less likely to take part in outdoor physical activity than children of Caucasian decent (Floyd, Spengler, Muddock, Gobster, & Suau, 2008; Lareau, 2003). One of the major issues leading to the lack of activity in culturally diverse children may be a result of the neighborhoods they reside in, which are often physically unsafe. They may live in areas that are isolated from mainstream American society, where exposure to poor living conditions, unsafe streets, and economic distress is common (Zhou, 2003). Neighborhoods where the houses are so close together they seem like one continuous building, yards that contain no grass, and 3 bedroom homes, that at any given time could house up to eleven people (Lareau, 2003). These

may all play a role in the sedentary life of children, and a parent's belief as to why they don't want their children playing outdoors.

According to Lareau (2003), social science research studying the parenting values of middle class and working poor, fears that parents have may include exposure to adults with addictions, the wrong kind of friends, or people that may deal drugs. These are all legitimate concerns. They want the best for their children, but these parents are forced to deal with many barriers in order to achieve this. The challenge is to work together with these parents to help them understand the importance of physical and outdoor activity, so that they can work towards providing a life filled with more safe physical and outdoor activity for their children. While all parents believe that they should provide good care for their children it is the definition that is used to define good care that differs among societies. Lareau found in her research on the working poor that these parents define care in terms of natural growth; if they are able to provide shelter, food, clothing, and adult supervision, they are meeting their child's needs, and see that as an accomplishment (2003).

“Although no person or government planned it, habitats for children, especially in industrialized countries, have been greatly altered –often destroyed- in this century, especially in recent decades” (Rivkin, 1995, p. 1). Children may be kept inside for a variety of other reasons; including a lack of parental education on the importance of the outdoors and physical activity in healthy development, certain values and beliefs that are instilled before and after immigration, lack of resources, time, and fear of safety. Since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the street has always been a vital area for children to play. However, in today's society mainly because of increased traffic this is no longer a safe place (Rivkin, 1995).

The literature also states that there is a gigantic need for health education, particularly in the area of outdoor physical activity. The level of physical activity has been decreasing in children, when in fact the number should be increasing. The physical activity level of immigrant children is of particular concern, as they tend to be less active (Bornstein & Cote, 2004). Statistics show that an increasing number of preschoolers in today's society are raised in poverty, an environmental condition that has a negative effect on all domains of child development (Children's Defense Fund, 2002; Horowitz, 2003).

Ginsburg (2007) states that play is an essential component in the healthy development of a child. It contributes to the physical, cognitive, emotional, and social well-being of children. In today's society, children are deserving of the right to develop to their own personal and unique potential. Advocates for our children must take into consideration all of the factors that have the potential to interfere with a child's optimal development and at the same time work towards promoting circumstances that allow children to fully experience the advantages that come from play. The forces that may be present that prevent children in poverty and the working-class from experiencing these benefits deserve even greater, more urgent attention.

The literature shows that schools are the optimal place to educate children about making informed choices concerning their health (Mcloughlin & Kubick, 2004). The main reason to engage in wellness promotion in schools is that health and one's sense of wellness are recognized throughout literature as a precedent to improving a child's achievement on a physical, mental, social, and cognitive level (Schultz, 1998). While it has been determined that there is a need for education, there are few structured programs in schools that intentionally incorporate this concept of "wellness." Wellness is defined by Mcloughlin & Kubick (2004) as not

necessarily the absence of disease or illness, but the presence of mental, physical, and emotional health and well-being.

By working with the parents to identify barriers to physical and outdoor activity, and exploring ways to eliminate or work around the barriers, we are not only providing parents with the tools necessary to promote healthy development in their child, but providing the children the opportunity to experience a healthy sense of well-being.

### *The Thesis Statement*

The purpose of this project is to develop an educational program for Somali mothers and children that emphasizes the importance of outdoor physical activity in the health and development of children, identifies barriers to physical activity that may be present, and to develop ideas that may eliminate these barriers in order to allow children a chance to achieve an increased sense of health and well-being. The program is designed to be culturally safe and appropriate for the Somali families.

The following goals have been developed for the educational program:

1. Provide information on normal child development and the impact of outdoor physical activity in healthy child development, and situations where it can be applied.
2. In collaboration with the mothers, identify barriers to outdoor physical activity as well as ideas to overcome these obstacles.
3. Enhance a mother's self-confidence to contribute to their child's well-being and development.
4. Empower mothers and children to connect activities to their own social and cultural situations.

### *Significance of Project*

According to a report done by the Federation of American Immigration Reform, in 2006 1 in 8 United States residents was foreign-born, nearly 37.4 million people. In Minnesota, there were 355, 050 immigrants, accounting for 6.5% of the population. According to the U.S. census in 2000, one in every five children in the United States lived in a home in which a language other than English was spoken. By the year 2030, white native English speakers will account for less than half of the student population in the U.S. (Beykont, 2002).

“It is important that we as a society start paying more attention to the plight of African immigrant children and their families” (Obiakor & Afolayan, 2007, p. 269). This population is one that continues to grow as a result of refugee situations, lottery visas, asylum seekers, and commonplace emigrations (Obiakor & Afolayan, 2007). It is a proven fact that in our society African immigrant children and parents are in need of culturally sensitive educators in order to allow them to maximize their fullest potential in the United States.

Research states that a lack of physical activity is a major health concern in United States, and is especially a concern within the minority and the low-income population. Research also suggests that people with a lower income are more likely to be less active, and are at increased risk for a variety of physical and psychological diseases (Floyd et al., 2008). As a community, every effort made to increase the level of physical and outdoor activity in children, will have the potential to make a positive health outcome (Bremberg, 1998).

It is important that there are early childhood health and safety curriculums within schools. There is an overwhelming need “to create an integrated, well-financed system of early care and education that has the capacity to support learning and development in all children, including

children living in poverty, children whose home language is not English, and children with disabilities” (Bales, Walling, & Coleman, 2006, p.).

### *Nursing Theory Guidance*

Margaret Newman’s (2008) theory of Health as Expanding Consciousness (HEC) is used as a guideline in the course development. Newman’s theory focuses on developing an expanded consciousness through the recognition of patterns. During one’s life, one experiences times of chaos and complexity. Sometimes, a sequence of events contains patterns that, if recognized, one can gain insight. It is the process of pattern recognition that provides the opportunity for change to emerge, growth to happen, and can result in the development of an expanded consciousness (Newman, 2008).

As stated earlier, it is common for children of the Somali culture to spend many hours indoors, in small apartments, taking part in sedentary activity such as watching television and movies and playing video games. The aim of this course is to work with Somali parents to recognize and understand the importance of physical outdoor activity in a child’s development; barriers that may be present; and together develop ways to eliminate these barriers. This program will provide parents with the education and tools they need to improve their children’s lifestyle; both parents and children would potentially develop a level of expanded consciousness. Children are resilient yet impacted by the world around them. They look to their parents as role models, and for this reason it is important to involve the children in this educational process.

By *walking with* these parents, rather than seeing them as problems that need fixing (Hartrick-Doane & Varcoe, 2005), a course can be developed that emphasizes the importance of physical and outdoor activity, incorporating culture values, beliefs, and practices. The outcome of the course will be that parents will understand the need to increase the levels of physical

activity, and see the value of spending time outdoors. The program will reflect the values of the Somali culture. Involving parents in the development of this curriculum will insure that it is truly something that is important to them and that the content is respectful of their values and beliefs. By walking with them and building relationships, we learn to appreciate the important role parents play in the healthy development of their children.



## Chapter 2: Review of Relevant Literature

### *Newman's theory of Health as Expanding Consciousness*

The focus of Margaret Newman's theory of health as expanding consciousness is on defining disease as an aspect of health. Health and disease are viewed as an integral relationship rather than on two different ends of the spectrum. In other words health is defined as a "process of expanding consciousness, along with this is the ultimate goal of nursing that is to foster a higher level of consciousness" (Hartrick - Doane & Varcoe, 2005, p. 103). Newman defines consciousness as information, the how and what people know of themselves. Her theory proposes that as people continue to gain information and knowledge, or expand their consciousness, one is able to identify life patterns, and experience a sense of transformation (Newman, 2008). As time is spent working with parents, discussing the importance of outdoor activity, both parents and educators have the ability to identify the patterns of activity that are present, and if present identify ways to overcome the barriers. By doing this it is the hope that all persons involved will experience a sense of transformation, or an increased sense of health and well-being.

Newman believes that in order to fully understand the health of a person, one must be able to view that person as a whole. Bentov (1977) defines health as a totality of life's processes, which is evolving toward expanding consciousness. The theory of HEC "asserts that every person in every situation, no matter how disordered and hopeless it may seem, is part of a process of expanding consciousness—a process of becoming more of one self, of finding greater meaning in life, and of reaching new heights of connectedness with other people and the world" (Newman, 2008, p. 6). When looking at patterns, it is important to not intervene with a solution

in mind. Newman believes that we must enter into this process with a state of mind knowing that the achieved result is unpredictable (Hartrick-Doane & Varcoe, 2005).

### *Paradigm shift*

Ferguson (1980) states that there has been a major shift in the health field: from a focus on disease to a focus that includes health and pattern. Rogers further identifies the shift from treatment of symptoms of disease to include a search for patterns; a shift from viewing pain and disease as wholly negative to begin viewing them as a pattern of the whole; from seeing the body as a machine in good or bad repair to seeing the person as a dynamic field continuous with the larger environmental field; from seeing disease as a separate entity to seeing it as a unitary process. (as cited in Newman, 2008, p. 12)

In the context of this paradigm shift, the attempt must be made to study the participants in a manner that does not “fragment its unity” (Newman, 2008, p.13). Working with clients in a manner that does not disrupt their natural state, involves the professional allowing the patient/family to reveal himself or herself without any sort of interruption (Newman, 2008).

### *Pattern recognition*

The shift from a problem orientation mind set to that of pattern recognition involves a shift to a higher dimension of knowledge (Newman, 2008). Throughout the process of pattern recognition, the focus is on meaning, or the meaningfulness that the pattern has to the client (Newman, 2008). The main focus of pattern recognition should be on the evolving pattern, rather than on the pattern itself. By telling stories, important relationships are revealed in their unfolding patterns, and begin to provide an understanding of the evolving process (Newman, 2008).

Newman (2008) believes that our task “is not to try and change another person’s pattern but to recognize it as information that depicts the whole of their life” (p.104). It is the role of the professional to be able to understand patterns, in order to be able to understand health. Because everyone has their individual unique patterns, Newman uses her theory to propose that nursing actions cannot be generalized, but instead must be in response to people in certain situations (Hartrick-Doane & Varcoe, 2005).

### *Entering into relation*

In her theory Newman defines change as unpredictable and transformational. For this reason it is important to be in-relation with one as they truly are. It is the role of the nurse to view one’s experience and behavior both as an indication of their life patterns they are currently in, and then relate this information, to the expanding of their consciousness as it unfolds. According to the theory of HEC, as people are able to expand their consciousness and really gain information about their life patterns, their choice of action, and the power that they have will be enhanced (Hartrick-Doane & Varcoe, 2005). The theory of HEC “articulates nursing intervention as a relational process where the nurse enters into partnership with the family, often at a time of chaos, with the mutual goal of participating in an authentic relationship through which the nurse and the family may emerge at a higher level of consciousness” (Hartrick-Doane & Varcoe, 2005, p. 105). Hartrick-Doane & Varcoe (2005) state that walking along side a family is an essential part of relational nursing practice. While current family literacy programs that are focused on culturally diverse families tend to take a neo-deficit approach, it is important to emphasize the Hartrick-Doane & Varcoe’s concept of walking along side (2005). In order to achieve this goal of walking with both parents and children of culturally diverse backgrounds, it is important to recognize and build on a family’s strengths and recognize and incorporate the

wealth of knowledge, skills, and information that parents are able to provide (Ordonez-Jasis & Ortiz, 2006).

As one enters into relation with families, it is important to follow their lead and listen for what may be meaningful and significant. Together the nurse and family can begin to gain more knowledge of the situation of health and healing, and recognize patterns that may be present in the family's life situations (Hartrick-Doane & Varcoe, 2005). There may be patterns of experience, response, adversity, and there may also be patterns of capacity. The process of pattern recognition is supported through the processes of 'letting be' as well as collaborative knowledge development. In the recognition of these patterns, it is important to be able to understand how these different patterns are meaningful for the family. Relational practice provides direction for the nurse to get in sync and at the same time focus on inquiring into the health experience of the family, intentionally looking for patterns of capacity and adversity (Hartrick-Doane & Varcoe, 2005).

### *Nursing Praxis*

The concept of nursing praxis is grounded in a unitary, transformative paradigm. It is a dynamic partnership between a nurse and client, as well as a dialogue of an evolving pattern of insight, meaning, and action. The concept of nursing praxis is transforming for both the nurse and the client (Newman, 2008). This process of research as nursing praxis is viewed as a process of integrating theory into practice (Yamashita & Tall, 1998). When participants are invited to engage in dialogue about the events and persons in their life that are the most meaningful, they are provided the opportunity to experience awareness as well as reflection. While some may choose to use dialogue others may choose to use aesthetics, or a combination of both. The participants in this program will be empowered to take an active role in the education that is

shared exemplifying of how this process is able to help transform the information that was gained into the nursing practice. The HEC praxis is representative of a knowledge development shift that was an objective, logical, and rational approach to an approach that is intuitive, unitary, and resonant. Praxis focuses on a transformation from one point to another point and incorporates the guidance of a theory. “The definition of praxis enables a person to change by encouraging self-reflection as well as a more in depth understanding of one’s particular situations” (Lather, 1986, p. 263). It has been stated by several researchers that participants in the process of partnership view this partnership as a both a source of strength and along with that an opportunity for insight (Picard & Jones, 2005).

When working with the parents and children that will be involved in this program, it is important to take into account Newman’s thoughts of pattern recognition. As stated earlier, it is not our job to try and change the activity habits that one currently follows, but to assist them in understanding the importance that outdoor activity plays in healthy child development. By listening to the stories that they have to share and inquiring into the role that these stories are currently playing in their life, one is able to make sense of these patterns and work together towards a sense of transformation or more specifically a sense of a more healthy development for children.

### *Constructivist learning theory*

A successful teacher is one that is able to understand the role that culture and language play in a child’s learning. The constructivist learning theory provides students the opportunity to use prior beliefs and knowledge to make sense of the new experiences and ideas that they may encounter in the school environment. It is the role of the teacher to support a child’s learning by

bridging the knowledge that they already know with the information that they are yet to learn (Villegas & Lucas, 2007).

Piaget, Maria Montessori, and Lev Vygotsky all utilize the constructivist perspective of development and readiness. Although there is definitely variation in their work, the context of each theory is quite similar. One is led to believe that development and learning occur when children are given the opportunity to interact with people and the environment around them. It is important that young children are viewed as active participants in the learning process, allowing them to initiate their participation in activities required for development growth and learning (Baily & Pransky, 2005). In a constructivist learning environment, the physical environment where the education takes place is of equal importance as the curriculum that is taught.

Children that come to school may come from communities where learning preferences and traditions are different than that of the dominant society (Bailey & Pransky, 2005). The education that is received by children in Somalia is similar to the educational models in the United States; it is the learning style that is different (Hodan, personal communication, June 8, 2008). In Somalia, the teacher educates and asks questions. If a student does not answer the question correctly, they are punished. In the United States teachers ask nicely and say please. Children do not have to feel constricted all of the time. This is similar to the guidelines that state the importance of allowing children to know that it is okay to mistakes...it is the effort that they make that counts. In a conversation with Hodan, a paraprofessional in the school readiness classroom at the Eden Prairie Family Center, it was noted that in this environment, a child is able to see that they do not have to be right all of the time, but it is the effort that they put into it that matters (Hodan, personal communication, June 8, 2008). Friere (1970) states "the processes of

learning cannot be divorced from the cultural contexts in which they occur” (as cited in Bailey & Pransky, 2005, pg. 21).

### *Child initiated learning*

Utilizing children’s ideas and interests as a guide in their learning is proven to have many benefits in their education. The utilization of child-initiated learning experiences “capitalize on the child’s attention and motivation” (Widerstorm, 2005, p. 37). By listening and watching we are able to take cues from children. Providing activities that are child-directed in the preschool years are an important part of their development. These activities provide a context where children are taught to share, take turns, cooperate, and consider the perspectives of others (Lobo & Winsler, 2006). Research shows that child-initiated creative and exploratory activity, is the primary way in which they are able to develop concepts and an understanding about the world that they live in (Espinosa, 2002; Tapperman, 2007).

Advocates and researchers emphasize the importance of involving children in decision making that may ultimately affect their lives, including decisions that have a particular focus on their education. Clark (2007) points out the importance of viewing a child as an active participant; as “beings” rather than viewing them as “becomings.” Learning is facilitated by giving a child the opportunity to decide what they want to create, a choice between a variety of activities, and providing the opportunity to engage in conversation with friends (Espinosa, 2002). In today’s society, educators recognize that students *need* to be a part of the learning process. It is the teachers’ job to let them be a part (Kolbe & Berkin, 2000).

### *Play and learning*

Play is considered the central focus in the development of young children, and is a powerful element in their education. The power of a child’s developing ideas and interests can be

used as a tool to promote learning through circle-time, play, and different small-group activities. Tapperman (2007) states that play is one of best ways to implement a curriculum. Rather than a being a break from the curriculum, it should be the curriculum.

“Play is an excellent medium for achieving learning goals for many reasons related to acquisition, practice, mastery, and integration of learning” (Widerstorm, 2005, p. 4). It creates a noncompetitive and safe arena that allows a child to experiment with materials, people, and objects. It also allows children to test hypotheses and gives them the ability to try out new roles, new skills that they have learned, and achieve a sense of mastery within the environment, leading to an increased sense of self-esteem. Through play a child is also given the opportunity to learn through trial and error (Widerstorm, 2005).

Play provides new understandings in all domains of development (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2006; Widerstrom, 2005) for children from all cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds (Zigler & Bishop-Josef, 2006). Educators must facilitate play in a conscious manner in order to achieve these new understandings. It is through play that children learn to solve problems, develop critical thinking skills and leadership skills and at the same time feel good about the ability they have to learn (Tapperman, 2007). Play provides the opportunity for a child to use their creativity, at the same time they are developing dexterity, imagination, as well as physical, emotional, and cognitive strength. At a very young age, through play, a child is given the opportunity to engage and interact with the world around them; conquering their fears as they practice adult roles (Ginsburg, 2007).

The literature states that by encouraging unstructured play in a child’s life, one is also playing a role in increasing the levels of physical activity level in children. Free play is an essential and healthy part of childhood. Pediatricians everywhere should emphasize advantages



of active play, while taking the time to discourage the overuse of passive entertainment (Ginsburg, 2007). In today's society, activities such as video games, TV, going to movies, and shopping, have over taken many outdoor activities. Because children are not allowed to explore and run unsupervised, these types of activities are becoming more common in the lives of children (Wridt, 2004). This is an example of the transformation that is taking place as play and recreation continue to be commercialized, and children are starting to spend more and more time indoors. Studies show that the amount of time spent indoors is increasing, and the amount of time that is spent outdoors participating in physical activity is decreasing (Pristin, 2001). The change includes more play in private spaces, where technology replaces playtime in the park. "Some of the most popular babysitters in the city are named Nintendo, Bugs Bunny, and the Brady Bunch" (Wridt, 2004, p. 94).

During a parent education day at the Eden Prairie Family Center, when asked what types of activities they were involved in as a child, many of the mothers spoke with excitement about the different toys that they played with when they were young. It is important for the mothers to recognize that the toys that were mentioned are of great benefit to a child's development. These simple toys and activities have since been taken over by electronic gadgets and other expensive forms of technological sedentary play. Parents are looking for support to emphasize the benefits of these simple toys that they once played with, and by pointing out the benefits that they received as a child and helping them see that their children too would receive the same benefits is extremely important.

#### *Educating immigrant children*

Culturally sensitive programs that are child-centered, with curriculum models that are authentic and meaningful are of benefit to culturally diverse children and families. The extent of

parental involvement is also of benefit. It is essential that the program supports the development of the “whole” child, by recognizing that cognitive development, emotional, social, and physical development are all integrated in unique ways into which a child is influenced by both nurture and nature (Quintero, 1999).

The education for this course will take place in a similar format that is currently being utilized at the Eden Prairie Family Center. The parents will participate in the parent portion of the education program in a setting that is separate from the children. After this portion is complete, the parent-child interaction portion of the program will be presented in a setting where children, parents, and teachers are all present. Quintero (1999) believes that collaborations such as these may enhance multidirectional participatory learning. This means that learning is not only transmitted from teacher to students (child or parent), but teachers are also able to learn from the students, and at the same time students may learn from each other (Quintero, 1999).

Tong, Huang, and McIntyre (2007) have identified several different ways in which one is able to make a more meaningful attempt at reaching the immigrant student. Of great importance is taking the time to learn about a student’s culture. The author spent time in the school readiness classroom at Eden Prairie Family Center with students of the Somali culture to learn and observe more about their culture, values, and beliefs. Time was also spent speaking with Hodan, a Somali woman who is filled with great wisdom, and those that have spent time educating and working with Somali children and their families. It is common to find a difference in learning styles between different cultures. Adapting a learning style that coincides with the learning style of the students is quite beneficial. It is also important to mention that culture may have the greatest influence not only on one’s learning, but teaching style they respond to. While it is important to provide education in the preferred style, these authors also state that these students may also

benefit from being taught and develop competence in other learning styles as well (Tong, Haung, & McIntyre, 2006).

When educating immigrant children, one must be culturally sensitive. Of particular importance is a pedagogy that is culturally relevant, a precursor involved in the nurturing of a child's spirit in the connection that is present to their native culture. It is a pedagogy that assists the immigrant child to develop one's cognitive abilities that are on the same level as their counterparts from the dominant society (Obiakor & Afolayan, 2007). One must recognize that children in Somalia were exposed to different educational practices. In Somalia, children learn by listening to the teacher, and at the same time participating in classroom activities. In the United States, it is expected that children collaborate with teachers by actively interacting in such a way that involves asking questions about tasks that they are participating in, and by suggesting areas of changes that may occur in the content (Olgac, 2001).

Immigrant children are trying to learn new material, in a new language, and for this reason, it is important that the information that is provided should be presented in a slow manner, with emphasis being placed on the terms that are more important. When providing explanations, they should be repeated in simple terms. Children learn a lot from body language, gestures, and most importantly from visual images. When working with immigrant children, it is vital to emphasize effort over accuracy. When children know that a teacher is willing to accept mistakes if they are trying their best, they are more likely to contribute (Tong, Huang, & McIntyre, 2006).

By taking the time to develop an awareness of the values and practices of our students, one not only promotes an increased understanding, with an increased level of acceptance, but one is demonstrating acceptance of diversity. By spending time in the school readiness class at the Eden Prairie Family Center, the opportunity was presented to develop a deeper understanding of

the Somali culture via interaction with cultural informants. One of the educators that worked with these children is a bilingual paraprofessional, fluent in both English and the Somali languages. It is also beneficial to develop knowledge of the common expectations and behavioral patterns within the culture in both school and social situations (Tong, Huang & McIntyre, 2006).

In the Somali culture parental authority is an important value. At a young age parents instill in their children a profound respect for school and for teachers, and hold a high regard for teachers as authority figures. It emphasizes the belief of immigrant parents that children learn by observing the person who has the knowledge or skill that is being learned (Quintero, 1999).

The educational curriculum for an immigrant child should be goal oriented and incorporate skills and concepts from research that fosters a child's development and learning. What should children learn? There is a different answer for different contexts and ages. Toddlers should be exposed to relationships and informal, language-rich, sensory interactions. For young children of all ages, it is important the curriculum builds on and responds to the child's home language and culture. From birth to age eight, play is important to stimulate children's motivation, engagement, and learning (Bodrova & Leong, 2003). It is important that all professional development programs not only recognize but meet the linguistic and cultural needs of diverse African immigrant students (Obiakor & Afolayan, 2007).

Teachers and parents do not always share the same views and values about educational priorities, and this is something to take into consideration (Milstein & Lucic, 2004). It is the role of the educator to provide effective education to all children, regardless of their culture, background, or race. Taking the time to identify factors that may benefit the education of immigrant children is important, more specifically ones that benefit the education of Somali children.

Through observation and participation in the school readiness classroom at the Eden Prairie Family Center, the following were noted as beneficial in the education of immigrant children. Small group activities, for short periods of time worked well for this age and population of students. The recognition of the importance of articulation was evident throughout the year. New words and new tasks that were presented in a clear and articulate way were understood with more confidence. Another observation that was made was the impact of the use of the bilingual paraprofessional for interpretation and further explanation when things were important, or needed further description. The interactions that took place during story time when the bilingual paraprofessional read the story in both English and Somali was amazing to watch, and inspiring to see the impact that it had on the children. When children are speaking to you in a language in which you are unfamiliar, acknowledging what they are saying is important, regardless of the fact that you are unable to comprehend. Through observation as well as participation it was noted that routine and repetition are important concepts in the success of these children. Taking the time to acknowledge the importance of each individual child, by looking them in the eye, and greeting them each day is also an essential component that was recognized at the family center.

#### *Adult learning theory*

Malcolm Knowles identifies nine characteristics of adult learners. These characteristics are true for all adults regardless of age, race, gender, or socioeconomic background. Adult learners have a need to be in control of their learning. Learning must have an immediate utility and adults desire the ability to find a use for the information that they have learned almost immediately. Adult learners want to know that what they are learning is focused on something that is of concern to them. They also need to test their learning as they go. Adult learners have the desire to anticipate how they are going to/will use this learning, and expect that their

performance will improve as a result of the learning. Knowles also states that learning is greatest in adults when it maximizes all available resources. In order for adult learning to be effective, the environment must be respectful, collaborative, mutual, and informed (as cited in Boulmetis, 1999). Within these characteristics, it is obvious that adults have a basic need for control, desire a need for relevance, and a need for involvement in the learning experience. These techniques all have the potential to enhance learning in any culturally diverse situation (Boulmetis, 1999).

Inquiring into the wisdom of a Somali cultural guide was of great benefit to gaining an increased understanding of the values and beliefs of the Somali culture in relation to adult learning. The cultural guide spoke of the idea that it is easier to educate one when they have the want and desire to learn in comparison to someone that does not have the desire to learn. When you tell someone that they have to do something it is a totally different approach. By incorporating Hartrick-Doane and Varcoe's (2005) concept of *walking with* it was determined that the topic of outdoor physical activity is of interest to Somali immigrants, and they do have a desire to learn about how they can incorporate this topic into their lifestyle. This emphasizes the point of providing education that one see's as a benefit rather than as a hindrance or inconvenience. "For this reason it is our role to encourage them to come with a frame of mind that allows them to have that desire to learn" (Hodan, personal communication, June 8, 2008).

### *Parent Education*

Within the Somali culture, education comes with high value. If parents themselves are fortunate to have an education, it is easier for parents to know how to support their child's education, and for the child to respond to the parent's cues. It is when the parent's do not have a formal education that makes it more difficult for a parent to assist their child in the learning process. Those that are uneducated tend to have a more difficult time and may need to find others

that will assist them in the assuming this role in order to help them educate their child (Hodan, personal communication, June 8, 2008).

In today's society, it has become a more common practice for teachers to recognize the importance of parents as partners in the educational role of children (Marjoribanks, 2005). Marion Wright Edelman believes "We need to empower parents. There is no substitute for home and for parents. We need to help parents succeed so their children can succeed. In order to be successful, knowledge of adult development and the adult learner is critical" (retrieved from <http://www.adaspeaks.com/schools.htm>, June 19, 2008). Many parents in the Somali culture believe that teachers are responsible for a child's education. For this reason, it is important that we continue to work with parents and empower them on the importance of their involvement in the education of their children.

It is both a parents' attitude as well as the involvement that they have in their child's education that enhance the chance that the child has at academic success (Schaller, Rocha, & Barshinger, 2007). When instruction is provided about child-mother interactions, playtime activities that are developmentally beneficial and appropriate, and the role that the mother plays as their child's first teacher, it is able to demonstrated to parents that there is a need for guidance; a guidance that has the ability to direct this positive attitude so that it will most effectively allow their children to advance in terms of healthy development, and a healthy sense of well-being (Schaller, Rocha, & Barshinger, 2007).

As early childhood educators,

we can take advantage of the positive attitude amongst immigrant parents: if we partner with them while their children are still young, we can help them make their educational vision a reality. When these children grow up, having achieved academic success, they

will transfer their belief in education to the next generation. (Schaller, Rocha, & Barshinger, 2007, p. 355)

What a parent perceives the role that they play in parenting will impact how they choose to participate in the education of their child. The role that they assume will ultimately guide the behavior and role that they may choose to take in regards to the education of their child (Ingram, Wolfe, & Leiberman, 2002; Hoover–Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). It is the choice of parents to become involved, and it is the job of educators as professionals to encourage and support these parents to become involved.

Petrie and Holloway (2008) state that parents of immigrant children are willing and motivated to engage in learning activities with their children in the home environment. Educators should make the effort to encourage this involvement by providing age and context appropriate ideas for mothers. The early years of childhood are the best time to form a good working partnership with parents and school, because as children grow older their interaction time with their parents decreases. Taking the time to learn more about the areas in which mothers feel confident and those areas in which the mothers lack confidence are important and key to understanding and involving the efforts that parents make to become involved (Petrie & Holloway, 2008).

How do we encourage parents with very little education to become involved? These parents are very enthusiastic about their children receiving an education and becoming successful. They have the belief that an education will open doors of opportunity that they never had (Schaller, Rocha, & Barshinger, 2007). It is important that as educators we are provide guidance, tools, and the support that is needed to allow parents to play that role of educator in their child's education. This allows the mother to bridge any type of educational gap that may be



present between mother and child (Schaller, Rocha, & Barshinger, 2007). Although parents of immigrant children maybe very enthusiastic, it is not enough to provide a proper support and education to their children. It is the combination of this positive attitude as well as the support and education that is provided that determine the success for both the mother and child (Schaller, Rocha, & Barshinger, 2007).

A professional's role is to support parents and let them know that they do not need to passively accept the media and advertising messages that our society has to offer. This can be done by offering the suggestion that there are more valuable ways and ideas available to promote health, happiness, and success in the life of their child. It is indeed the trusted and traditional activities of play and family togetherness that really do promote both health and success in a child's healthy development (Ginsburg, 2007).

#### *Developmentally appropriate practice*

Another important factor that plays into this program is the topic of developmentally appropriate activities and expectations. Taking this into consideration, it is important to remember that physical, social, emotional, as well as cognitive domains are all closely related within the realm of child development. Development in one domain is influenced by and influences the development in other domains. As Newman (2008) describes, it is important to consider one as a whole rather than of the sum of its parts. Another thing to consider is that development occurs in a sequence. One must acquire and develop abilities at a younger age, in order to be successful at acquiring the skills they need later on in life (Newman, 2008). Most importantly it is best to remember that a child is an active learner. Children draw off of physical and social experiences along with the knowledge that is transmitted culturally to build their individual and unique understanding of the world. A child's learning and their development are a

result of their maturation and the interaction that takes place within the environment that they are exposed to (Widerstrom, 2005). Play is an important vehicle in the healthy all around development of a child. It is also stated that a child is best able to develop in the context of a community where they are valued and feel safe, their needs are met physically, and they are allowed to feel psychologically secure (Widerstrom, 2005).

Quintero (1999) states that developmentally appropriate guidelines fail to take into account the child-rearing differences in members of society that are from different cultures, practices that may be different from that of the dominant society. The guidelines also fail to take into consideration the tension from disparities that maybe present between home and school. When developing a program that is appropriate for the population of interest, it is important to take into consideration that the expectations that parents have at different age levels may have a significant variation from one culture to the next (Obiakor & Afolayan, 2007). It is also important to remember that children develop at varying rates and that learning and development occur in and are influenced by the many social cultural aspects of a child's life (Widerstrom, 2005).

The concept of family is unique to every culture. Understanding a child in the context of their family and the environment they live in is key (Watt & Norton, 2004). In the African context, adults shape the settings that provide their children with opportunities to learn and develop (Olgac, 2001). The older children in the family and community are considered co-participants in the teaching process of the young children. They act as the filter of knowledge between adults and the children, which is considered the mainstay of the socialization pattern of the Somali culture (Olgac, 2001). In Somalia, children learn their language through peers and others that are around them, they learned by listening as they participate in ongoing activities.

This is different that the dominant culture where children learn their language by participating in conversation (Olgac, 2001).

### *Health Promotion*

Health promotion is about the promotion of meaningful lives, and it is important that the people who live these lives are the main point of the health-promoting process (Hartrick-Doane & Varcoe, 2005). In doing this, it is critical that you engage relationally with families. The center of health promotion is really what families do and experience and the collaboration that is present with the nurse that affects their own life. It is more than following a method of predetermined assessment; it involves walking with families in a collaborative relation and taking the time to thoughtfully inquire into their living experience (Hartrick-Doane & Varcoe, 2005).

McLoughlin and Kubick suggest the need to view health promotion as a lifelong endeavor, recognize the importance of prevention as a central role when developing interventions, and at the same time switch the focus of our attention on to the child's strength attributes, rather than just on their pathologies (2004). They also speak of the importance of wellness promotion across the society, with specific emphasis on our youth. Because of this, there is an increase in the emphasis on developing health-enhancing behavior earlier on in life. Promotion "would seem best to serve target populations by de-emphasizing disease model conceptualizations and embracing the enhancements of existing positive traits" (McLoughlin & Kubick, 2004, p. 132).

Bremberg (1998) speaks of the importance of health promotion in school aged children, and acknowledges the importance of health promotion within the school environment. From a global perspective, the correlation between health and the school have been present at both the

individual and national levels for many years. In schools, a child may receive attitudes, skills and knowledge that are essential for the maintenance of their health, and for this reason it is important that the school is a major focus in today's strategies to achieve health and wellness in all children (Bremberg, 1998).

### *Barriers to outdoor physical activity*

Studies done throughout the nation show children from racial and ethnic minority groups are less likely to take part in outdoor physical activity than children of Caucasian descent (Floyd, Spengler, Muddock, Gobster, & Suau, 2008). One of the major issues leading to the lack of activity in culturally diverse children may be a result of the neighborhoods that they reside in, which are often physically unsafe (Zhou, 2003). Neighborhoods of the poor, where the houses are so close together they seem like one continuous building, yards that contain no grass, and 3 bedroom homes, that at any given time could house up to eleven people (Lareau, 2003). Parents' fears may include exposure to negative societal influences such as homelessness, substance abuse, unemployment, and those with guns (Greves et al., 2007; Rivnik, 1995; Williams & Drummond, 2000). It is these influences that often make parks unsafe. Other fears that parents have may include fear of abduction, which are generally increased due to the stories that are mentioned by the media, and simply because parents may not know or trust the neighbors they live near because of language barriers (Greves et al., 2007). Another barrier to physical activity in immigrant children, is that parents may be unaware of the low-cost and free activities that are available for their children (Williams & Drummond, 2000). These are all legitimate concerns, and must be considered when one develops an educational program for these parents on the importance of physical and outdoor activity.

Burnett (2006) states that children from lower socioeconomic groups on average tend to spend more time indoors after school. Many of these families do not live near parks, or in areas where their parents feel are safe enough for unsupervised play outside of their homes. In fact, according to Clements (2000) “parents admit to having a very limited knowledge of play content because they have relied on twentieth century electronic entertainment and the commercialized play industry to fulfill this responsibility” (p. 8).

Mothers of Somali children often express their view of crime in the west. Children are seen as victims in comparison to Somalia where children were able to walk about freely and safely on their own. Koshen (2007) states that children are exposed to negative social influences, substance abuse for example, at the same time they are without their safety net that is usually provided by their extended family.

It is not uncommon to see recreation areas with signs that say “keep off grass.’ In today’s society, children are simply not able to enjoy the environment as were once able. These reasons would lead one to believe that the number of adequate play spaces is different than for children in previous generations. “They spent far more time playing outside than their children do now, it is clear that the opportunities for today’s children to interact in a naturalized setting are greatly diminishing, and this change has implications for the child’s normal healthy development” (Clements, 2004, p. 75).

In the Somali culture many families are large, and it makes it difficult to supervise children in the outdoors. Other obstacles may include the weather and fear of the cold. It is important to encourage parents that it is okay to go outside in the winter time and get fresh air. Even though the climate is different, it is still okay, healthy, and important to spend time outdoors.

While all parents believe that they should provide good care for their children it is the definition that is used to define good care that differs among societies. Working class parents define care in terms of natural growth; if they are able to provide shelter, food, clothing, and adult supervision, they are meeting their child's needs, and see that as an accomplishment (Lareau, 2003). Research shows that the amount of physical and outdoor activity that is present in the life of a child is often predicative of the lifestyle habits that they will experience as an adult (Ferreira et al., 2006). The early childhood experiences and development of a child play a significant role in determining long-term health status (Williams & Drummond, 2000). The familial environment that a child is exposed to may also have a positive or negative influence on the life-long health status of children.

Children may be kept inside for a variety of other reasons; including a lack of parental education on the importance of outdoors and physical activity in healthy development, certain values and beliefs that are instilled before and after immigration, lack of resources, time, and fear of safety. By working with the parents to identify these barriers to physical and outdoor activity, and together exploring ways to eliminate or work around them, we are not only providing parents with the tools necessary to promote healthy development in their child, but providing the children the opportunity to experience a healthy sense of well-being. What can we do to assist parents of immigrant children in providing a more active lifestyle for their children? What role do parents have in the education of their children?

#### *Childhood sedentary lifestyle*

In a study done in Canada, children spend on average, less than 10 hours a week engaged in outdoor activity, compared to the 20-30 hours a week that are spent engaged in indoor, non-vigorous activity (Deitze & Crossley, 2000). A decrease in access to public play areas in public

areas has played a role in the location change for a child's playtime. The street that was once a common area for child's play slowly relocated to the park, and has since relocated to the indoors, whether it is the home, or a community center. The change in space has also led to a change in the supervision that takes place. At one point it was the neighbors, then switched to park employees, and has since become the responsibility of computers, television, and Bugs Bunny (Wridt, 2004).

Lareau's (2003) research demonstrates that social class has an influence on a child's environmental experience. Where middle class parents are able to fill free time with organized and sometimes expensive activities, parents living in poverty are forced to rely on community centers and afterschool programs. These community programs rely on funding, and when the funding is not available, parents are forced to keep their children indoors (Quindlen, 1990). In today's society, it has become apparent that as our environment and society continue to change, fewer and fewer children are playing in backyards and community parks (Clements, 2004).

#### *Overcoming obstacles/fears*

In order to overcome the present barriers to outdoor physical activity, one must take the barriers that they are faced with and turn them into opportunities. Even though one is faced with many obstacles, they are able to overcome these obstacles and become successful. This process requires perseverance, hard work, dedication, self-esteem, education, family values, self-responsibility, and faith (Obiakor & Afolayan, 2007).

In the education of immigrant families, collaboration between parents and teachers is necessary to develop ideas and opportunities that may broaden perspectives for both parents and educators. It is important to involve parents in this discussion. What did you do when you were

young? How can we apply that to the society that we live in today? For instance, the majority of parents walked to school when they lived in Somalia. How does this differ from today?

In Somalia, adults and children walked everywhere. It was second nature, and it proved to be something that was very beneficial. This is something that is uncommon in the US, emphasizing the importance of looking towards other activities that achieve the same benefit. The act of walking has many physical and mental benefits. Being outside in the nature allows one to breathe fresh air and at the same time see more of the natural world. Another way to overcome these obstacles is to provide outdoor safety education to both parents and children. This will decrease the level of fear and insecurity that the parent may face of the outdoors.

By providing opportunities and developing alternatives to what is currently available, we are again working towards the elimination of barriers. One of the most essential challenges in the effort to increase the level of outdoor physical activity in children is to make these activities attractive, and as exciting and enjoyable as video games, television, and the internet. The challenge is to develop safe environments in which these activities can take place and where the promotion of physical activity can exist. It is also important to promote physical activity both at home and within the community (Health and Health Care in Schools, 2006).

#### *Importance of play/outdoor activity in development*

According to Clements (2004), play has been given great importance as it is considered the most beneficial way in which school-age children learn. Literature shows a variety of ways in which outdoor play impacts the growth and development of children, physically, mentally, socially, and cognitively (Clements, 2004). According to a survey done by Clements (2004), mothers in today's society are aware of the impact that outdoor and physical activity has on the healthy development of a child. It is important that educators too realize that play is both a



natural and essential part of healthy development and academic success. It is the job of both parents and professionals to recognize this and collaboratively work to eliminate present barriers, and provide opportunities for children to experience the outdoors and an increased activity level. A disconnect exists between the understanding of the important benefits of outdoor and physical activity and overcoming the obstacles that are present in our society today that prevent children from engaging in outdoor activity (Clements, 2004).

According to Larson and Verma (1999), play is a universal activity among children. Elkind (1981) states, “children need the opportunity to play their own games, make up their own rules, and follow their own schedule apart from adult structuring” (p. 719). Piaget (1962) views play as an opportunity for children to accommodate their developing mental schema to realities that are taking place in the external world. They are given the opportunity to explore new types of behaviors, experiment with different roles and also have the opportunity to develop new strategies of adaptation (as cited in Larson & Verma, 1999, p. 721). Play can also be considered an opportunity to experiment and learn new tools and the language of a culture. Examples of this would be when a child plays house, computer games, or is able to engage in storytelling (Larson & Verma, 1999).

Pergams and Zaradic (2007) pointed out that outdoor play and the experience of being in nature have been proven to benefit children in a variety of ways. Outdoor play has been proven to benefit cognitive functioning, increases in self-discipline, as well as emotional well-being at all levels of development. However, through a study that was done in Virginia, evidence was confirmed that more American families are spending more time in front of the television, and less time in the outdoors. In this same study, they found that “videophililia,” can actually have disturbing implications for a child’s physical and mental health, well-being, educational

achievement, as well as priorities and personal values later in life. On average children are spending about 30 minutes a week in the outdoors (Pergams & Zaradic, 2007). “Not only does nature supply us with material needs, but also “aesthetic, intellectual, cognitive, and even spiritual meaning and satisfaction” (Rivnik, 1995, p.6).

### *Working with Immigrant Families*

According to Bruns and Corso (2001), the United States is one of the most ethnically, racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse countries in the world. In the 1990s, early childhood researchers became more aware of the need to examine efforts that would allow them to provide programs and services more responsive to the preferences and needs of young children and families from diverse cultural and linguistic groups (Lynch & Hanson, 1998; Quintero, 1999; Tabors, 1998). Because one strategy or approach may not be successful with all children, one must examine a variety of strategies that have the ability to enhance relationships that may develop with culturally and linguistically diverse families. Many families are from backgrounds different than that of the educator, for this reason it is important for professionals to develop a foundation of practical strategies and knowledge that has the ability to address the needs of the families that they serve (Bruns & Corso, 2001).

By developing a better understanding of the values, beliefs, and family preferences, early childhood professionals can gain a broad perspective and offer programming that is effective for most all of the families that they serve (Quintero, 1999). “Just as young children develop and grow, early education professionals must continually work to heighten their awareness of cultural and linguistic diversity, improve their professional skills, and work to develop a shared vision of early education with all families” (Burns & Corso, 2001, p. 2).

Villegas and Lucas (2007) state that successful teaching of students that are from diverse immigrant backgrounds involves more than just specialized teaching techniques, but demands a new way looking at things. Teaching must be grounded with an understanding of the role of culture and language in the learning. They discuss the following six qualities as a framework for professional development. The first quality includes understanding how the learner is able to construct knowledge. A learner that is able to incorporate prior knowledge and beliefs to make sense of new experiences and ideas that they may encounter school and in the community tend to be more successful in their accomplishments. Professionals must assist them in bridging what they already know about a topic with what they need to learn (Villegas & Lucas, 2007). It is also important to tap into the experiences of both the family and the student as the attempt is made to involve immigrant children in the classroom. The involvement of students and parents in the classroom strengthens the connections that are present between school and home life (Villegas & Lucas, 2007).

Communication differences that are present across cultures may affect the way and how one is able to develop a relationship among family and professional. Hartrick-Doane & Varcoe (2005) speak of the importance of walking with a family in this process. The role of both must be viewed in an equal manner, rather than the professional assuming the dominant role and allowing only for the family to assume the submissive role. This aspect may also include the involvement of translators that are able to explain and clarify information.

Another important aspect to working with immigrant families is the inclusion of staff that view diversity as an asset. Bilingual staff enhances the organizations' ability to increase the level of trust that is present between families and professionals. Staff that are willing to embrace

diversity are an asset to any organization. Demonstrating a willingness to take the necessary time that is needed to learn about traditions and experiences that are different than their own, and inquiring and encouraging the participation of community leaders as cultural guides one is able to facilitate communication between the home and classroom. It is cultural guides that are able to provide a professional with insights into the beliefs, communication style, as well as the values of the community, bringing families and professionals closer together and allowing them to better reach their desired outcomes (Dennis & Giangreco, 1996; Joe & Malach, 1998). Time spent working with a Somali cultural guide in the school readiness program and in the community was beneficial to learning about different Somali beliefs and values that are different than those of the dominant society, and along with that the communication styles that they prefer.

Burnett (2006) states that in order to encourage more activity in today's youth, we have to support parents and caregivers. Hartrick - Doane & Varcoe (2005) believe that the following essential steps should be taken in order to enter into a relationship with the mothers and children that will be taught as a part of this program. The intent throughout the process should be that one is fully present, which means that one should be mindful of what is most meaningful for the family. Hartrick-Doane & Varcoe also intend for this to be a time for parents to speak about the time in their life that was/is most meaningful. For the purposes of this project, the parents will be invited to share stories about the different activities that they took part in and enjoyed doing when they were young. These activities are ones they participated in while in Somalia; activities that can be, and will hopefully be adapted to the lifestyles of their children in the United States. The story telling component of this relationship is only guided by the educator, and proceeds in a

nondirective manner. The educator assumes the role of the active listener by providing clarification and relevancy when needed. While the purpose is to unfold the pattern in the lives of the mothers, providing personal stories may also be important. By taking the time to be fully present, one is able to be sensitive and intuitive in responses that are made (Newman, 2008).

The need for collecting data is often felt during the interview experience. However, Newman states that the need should be to interact authentically. The objective of this interaction is to grasp the meaning of the information rather than to gather information. Regardless of its potential insignificance, it truly is important to stay with what is said by the parent or child. An example of this was observed while spending time in the classroom at EPFC. Working with children whose primary language is not English can be challenging at times. Often children are not able to express themselves in English, but clearly show an interest in expressing their thoughts. Allowing a child to respond in their language, despite the fact that the educator whom they are speaking to is unable to comprehend what they are saying is not only an essential component to their development, but it also provides meaning in the development of relationship.

### *Bilingual professional*

One of the important aspects of effective early childhood education for immigrant children is the involvement of a bilingual paraprofessional. The inclusion of bilingual paraprofessionals is one of the many attributes of the school readiness program at the Eden Prairie Family Center. The paraprofessional plays a role of a translator for both the students and the educator, and is able to clarify and explain for students and educators. Blackledge (1993) also speaks of the importance of bilingualism in the classroom. Children should be allowed to switch

confidently between languages and at appropriate times when encouraged. If they are denied of this natural facility, there is a chance that their learning will also be inhibited.

A bilingual paraprofessional is able to provide parents with a sense of security. They play a vital role for the children, parents, as well as the staff, and are given the role of bridge building between the home and the school. Paraprofessionals are also there to support the family, and to help both parents and children negotiate their new identities (Olgac, 2001). It is important that this contact is present between the school and the families. When a bilingual educator is present, the children are able to feel secure and proud.

The role of the bilingual paraprofessional was observed at the Eden Prairie Family Center. In the very beginning, children did not understand what was going on, but had that sense of security knowing that someone was present they were able to speak with. They were assured knowing that someone was there who understood (Hodan, personal communication, June 7, 2008). Without the presence of a bilingual paraprofessional, they are unable to communicate their needs. Most of these children come from homes where Somali is the primary language that is spoken, and often the only language that is spoken. In a conversation with Hodan, the bilingual paraprofessional, she mentioned that each of the children call her “auntie.” In the Somali culture everyone is related, which also plays a role in the learning process. Having the ability to be able to trust someone has an impact (Hodan, personal communication, June 7, 2008). The children are more comfortable speaking with her when they have a concern, and communication is also more effective at times. One is able to gain more respect if they are able to communicate, are less afraid, and at the same time more willing to learn (Hodan, personal communication, June 7, 2008).

### *Parental Involvement*

Research states that the involvement of parents has an impact on the academic achievement in children. Marjoribanks (2005) found that parents of different cultural contexts approach school with diverse expectations and interpretations of what it means to be educationally helpful. Members of the working-class poor families tend to view their relations with schools as that of separation (Lareau, 1989).

Ingram, Wolfe, and Leiberman (2007) found that by strengthening a parent's ability and providing encouragement to involve activities that assist in a child's learning at home, parents are able to increase the academic success of students. "Clearly a link exists between parent involvement in children's education and the educational outcomes of their children" (Ingram, Wolfe, & Leiberman, 2007, p.494). In a study done by Ingram, Wolfe, and Leiberman (2007), parents felt that they would benefit from information about how they can help their children with their schoolwork. They also felt that the encouragement provided by teachers that emphasizes their involvement outside of school was of great importance. These were things that parents at the Eden Prairie Family Center mentioned as well, and felt were beneficial in the attempt that they made to assist their child to be academically successful. Parents are looking for information and education that they can use at home to increase the success that child achieves. For this reason, it is important that schools provide not only opportunities, but time for parents and teachers to work with each other, begin to understand one another, and with that effectively communicate which will ultimately lead to a greater achievement for their children (Ingram, Wolfe, & Leiberman, 2007). Schools can make a difference and influence parental involvement in a child's education. Parent education courses can play a role in maximizing the impact parents

have on their child's achievements. The collaboration of school, family, as well as the community allows for the greatest success (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Research does show that parental involvement has a positive correlation with academic success for most students. The more that parents are involved in their child's education, including home and school, the more successful the child will be academically (Aronson, 1996; Baker & Soden, 1998; Christenson, Rounds & Gorney, 1992; Columbo, 1995; Tracy, 1995; Marjoribanks, 2005; Ingram, Wolfe, & Lieberman, 2007). Research continues to suggest that children who are supported by their parents tend to have better attitudes and higher achievement in school. Other benefits of parental involvement include increased motivation, improved self-esteem, and fewer instances of violent behavior.

However, a barrier to achieving these benefits is the parents' lack of knowledge of how to support learning at home and help with school work, poverty, lack of time and money, non-English literacy, cultural gaps, single parenthood, and teachers' inaccurate assumptions about parents (Ingram, Wolfe, & Lieberman, 2002). It is these barriers that emphasize the role that we play in the education that we provide to encourage parents and empower them to increase their level of support and involvement in the education of their children. At a policy level and within educational research, support for parental involvement in education is widespread. Legislation has been enacted to encourage greater parent participation in schooling. It is not the parent's lack of desire to be involved that is the problem, it is the schools that are unsure of how to involve parents (Ingram, Wolfe, & Lieberman, 2002).

Evidence shows that education shaped by a child's home and community culture is critical in supporting a healthy self-esteem, identity development, as well as a sense of belonging. The above characteristics are all essential to the overall academic achievement of a



child and essentially a healthy development (Banks, 2002; Osterman, 2000; Nieto, 2002).

Integrating culture and practices of a child's home and community into classroom education has the ability to enhance a child's learning experience and essentially the academic success of children that are from a non-dominant culture (Christian & Bloome, 2004; Osterman, 2000; Nieto, 2002).

### *Parents as partners*

It is important that educators begin to recognize parents as partners in a child's education. Respectful partnerships are essential when developing a literacy program for culturally diverse families, and must build off of the strengths of both the parents and the rest of the family. Entering into the world of both students and the families through meaningful conversation, while taking into consideration the type of literacy that is used in the home and the community, is another way in which this partnership is strengthened (Ordonez-Jasis & Ortiz, 2006). In order to understand the world of our students and families it is important to understand "how our lives are shaped by complex and multifaceted sociocultural factors: our cultural identity, family history, employment, education, community, and long-term (individual and collective) goals and dreams." (Ordonez-Jasis & Ortiz, 2006, p. 42). It is the understanding of these different factors that determine how we interpret and interact with a variety of different things that are needed to learn. Zhou (1997) states that the parent's ability to support and control their children, or the social capital of the family is a critical component in the academic achievement of children that come from an immigrant background. Williamson & Drummond (2000) say that children tend to engage in health behaviors in which they see other family members engaged in. Parents and family are role models in the lives of their children, whether it conscious or not. It is important to keep in mind that "students live in two worlds: home and school. If these two worlds do not

recognize, understand, and respect each other, students are put in a difficult predicament, and very little learning can take place” (Ada, 2003, p. 11).

### *Importance of Parental role*

Educating parents in their role in the academic achievement of their children is of great importance. Many Somali parents have the belief that it is the job of the educators to play that active role in the education of their children. In the Somali culture, the educator’s role is distinct and separate from that of the parenting role. If we do not take the time to educate, encourage, and support them in this endeavor, they may view their involvement as both intrusive and undesirable. However, the research states that the role that parents play in the education is an important one. When attempting to develop a program that involves parents it is important to incorporate a model that is realistic (Obiakor & Afolayan, 2007). Obiakor and Afolayan (2007) also state that when the parent is involved in their child’s life, it nearly always reinforces cultural continuity.

As educators it is important to view parents not only as recipients of information, but providers of information as well. Parents are full of wisdom and knowledge, and it is up to us to acknowledge and make light of it. As an educator starts to welcome both the words and worlds of parents, they increase their ability to expand the family’s role in a child’s learning. This may also assist in the development of relationships between home and schools that are based on both truth and respect (Ordonez-Jasis & Ortiz, 2006).

### *Family and culture*

In her definition, Newman (2008) does not speak of families directly, however her conceptualization of both the human being and people in terms of energy and patterns allows her to “transcend the distinction of family as an entity (p.104).” She speaks of ‘persons’ in a way that

has meaning for any group of people which may include families, individuals, and communities (Hartrick – Doane & Varcoe, 2005). Hartrick-Doane & Varcoe (2005) state that the family is the primary social structure in society, and speak of the significant role that families play in a person's health. This reminds us that one's health is shaped by the society that we live in, and reiterates the importance of considering this relational web in any health promoting activity.

Within the Somali culture, great importance is placed on grandparents, uncles and aunts, and cousins, on both sides of the family. A grandparent's role is of particular importance for the wisdom and guidance they provide and the traditional values they pass on to the young (Koshen, 2007). For those who have resettled in America, there is a struggle to adjust to their new environment without surrendering their culture, religion, and tradition (Koshen, 2007). While recognizing that the nurturing of these family relationships is important, it is also important to recognize that an effort must be present to support these relationships in an environment where those who are participating do not feel threatened or marginalized, an environment where all individuals feel as though they are worthy members of the society (Koshen, 2007).

#### *Early childhood programs*

The diversity of the United States population continues to expand. The US today is far more multiracial, multiethnic, multicultural, and multireligious in an early childhood population than it has ever been. A greater proportion of early childhood programs now include large numbers of immigrant children and children born to immigrant parents, children living in poverty, and children whose primary language is not English (Brennan, Caplan, Ama, & Warfield, 2001).

### *Discussion of relevant health inequities*

Research states that there is a need for an increased activity level for children living in immigrant homes. In a survey by Bornstein and Cote (2004), done to determine parenting knowledge, immigrant mothers on averaged scored 70%, significantly lower than that of multigenerational U.S. mothers. The knowledge of importance included the understanding of how children develop, how to care for children, as well as the diverse roles that parents play in the lives of their children. The questions that many of the immigrant mothers were unable to answer were related to normal child development. This information is meaningful for many reasons. One being that without an understanding of normal child development, one is unable to properly promote a healthy life-style, and sense of well-being for their child. The knowledge that a parent has on these topics, essentially affects the decisions that a parent makes on a daily basis, and the factors that in turn affect child development (Bornstein & Cote, 2004). Bornstein and Cote (2004) state that the knowledge that a parent has of parenting is often different across cultural groups. Because of the unfamiliarity of most immigrant parents to the parenting issues that are common within the U.S., it is our role to educate members of the Somali culture on these issues that are of importance. It is also important to recognize the differences in child-rearing across the board, and incorporate these practices into their lifestyle as able.

### *Specific population of interest to the project*

The Somali population was chosen as the main focus in the development of this educational program on the importance of outdoor physical activity. The state of Minnesota is home to the largest Somali population in the United States (Robertson et al., 2006). In the 2000 Census, 1 in 5 children living in the United States lives with at least one immigrant parent, meaning a parent that was born outside the US. The literature states that there is a great need for

schools to work with students and families of the Somali culture, including the community they live in. Kahin (1998) wants us to realize that Somali parents have the desire to contribute to the education of their children, and it is important that we work to embrace this.

Koshen (2007) defines Diaspora as the Somali population living outside of the country of Somalia and have emigrated to either North America or Europe in search of asylum. The option of resettling in North America is sought after for a variety of reasons including: stability, security, social welfare, health services, education, higher standard of living, and employment. These families find their own set of challenges that are associated with the new environment and society that they live in. They are faced to live in a culture where there is a family structure that is different than the family structure of their own. The transition is often one that leaves mothers feeling frustrated, usually because of the unfamiliarity with the language, and an inability to communicate concerns (Koshen, 2007). They continue to feel a sense of isolation from the mainstream community through a combination of cultural/linguistic barriers, social deprivation, and racial prejudice (Kahin, 1998). As a result of this transition, they are forced to live in a culture that is different than their own, and because of this women often struggle to raise their children. They are not only in an alien environment, but are without moral support. For this reason, many Somali families tend to live in clusters, where there are other Somali families around them for support (Koshen, 2007).

The following was spoken by a Somali teacher who, according to Olgac (2001), was teaching in Sweden at the time:

‘Imagine a mother who has come to Sweden. She grew up like this. Her childhood was like this. She had four, five siblings, neighbours, relatives, and her mother. This little girl grew up. When she was one year her mother said to her: -Go outside. Come on, you

can crawl outside. And she crawls out of the house. Outside the house there are all relatives sitting. Everyone is there. The girl crawls, walks her first steps outside, not inside, outdoors. She becomes one year, two years. All the time she is outside. The weather is hot. She plays with other children, children and neighbours. Everyone who comes, everyone who comes takes care of her. The children of the neighbours, the neighbours take care of the child. Relatives, everyone' (Olgac, 2001, p.71).

This quote is a well written example of the activity level that those of the Somali culture are used to. It provides a background, something to keep in mind when walking with them in their journey to increase the level of outdoor physical activity as an attempt to achieve that sense of a healthy well-being. In Somalia, the level of activity was never an issue because it was present in the everyday life of everyone. Being active was truly a part of their everyday life.

*Eden Prairie Family Center – supporting organization*

The Eden Prairie Family Center, a part of the Eden Prairie school district is the supporting organization for this project. They provide classes, programs, and services for families with young children from birth to adolescence, and no one is turned away because of their ability to pay. The purpose of the family center is to support and educate families that are living in Eden Prairie both through parent education as well as parent/child interactions.

### Chapter 3: Development of Project

An important question to ask when developing a program is: What do I want the participants to learn? One of the most important factors in education of children regardless of age is a curriculum that builds upon and responds to their culture, along with the language that is spoken in their home. It is shown that children will benefit more when they are involved and engaged in the content (Raspa, McWilliam, & Ridley, 2001). It is a program's unique design that provides assistance in understanding a child's development and provides education on developmental milestones that a child will encounter during their school years (Ingram, Wolfe, & Leiberan, 2007).

For the purpose of this project, an educational curriculum was developed that is intended to work with mothers and children of the Somali culture on the importance of outdoor physical activity. (See appendix A). It was developed in two parts with the intent that working with the mothers would support not only their level of education but provide them with an increased sense of well-being and empowerment, along with the ability to provide their children with education and guidance. The first portion of the program addresses the needs of the parents. This will be done in an informal setting where parents are viewed as equal participants and partners in the relationship as the attempt is made to work with and educate the children.

In order for a program to be successful and sustainable it is important that it is culturally enriched, linguistically sensitive, and incorporates a family's ways of knowing, their life experiences, along with their needs and goals for education (Ordonez-Jasis, & Ortiz, 2006). By spending time with members of the Somali culture and with those that have considerable amount of experience working with, the attempt was made to develop a program that incorporates the many factors that work to benefit the needs of those of the Somali culture.

Newman's theory of Health as Expanding Consciousness provides a framework for creating a curriculum that acknowledges the linkages between nursing theory, research, and practice (Picard & Jones, 2005). Literature everywhere speaks of the importance of being in partnership/relationship with families and communities in order to achieve success in a child's education. For this reason, it is fitting to use Newman's theory of HEC as she speaks of working with families to identify patterns and needs in order to achieve that higher level of consciousness.

An important part of any curriculum is the clear and well-articulated goals that developmentally, educationally, and culturally appropriate. These goals state the essential outcomes of the project, and are viewed as guidelines to action. "It is important to develop challenging but achievable behavioral, affective, and adaptive goals for all students, provide information about ways in which students can achieve goals, and monitor student progress towards these goals" (Mcloughlin & Kubick, 2004, p.135). By establishing clear communication competency and exploration goals for a child in their early years, the opportunity is present for these both to be embedded into the child's daily routine and experiences as they grow older. A goal-oriented curriculum that incorporates research based skills and concepts will foster a child's development and learning (Commission on NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation, 2003). The development of a curriculum must also take into consideration the goals of the early childhood program that it is developed for. This program will be implemented at the Eden Prairie Family Center in Eden Prairie, and for this reason, the goals of the EPFC were incorporated into the goals that were developed.

Another important aspect when working with immigrant children is ensuring that the program is both challenging and engaging. A challenging curriculum that matches children's interests is one way to support the enthusiasm that children have for exploring. Making the



realization that children are able to use their whole bodies and all of their senses as they learn to manipulate toys and other objects, and engage in play. Often when these children come to school for the first time, this is also the first time that they are exposed to a wide variety of toys, which was seen at the EPFC. For some, it was difficult, and they had no idea what to do. Playing with other children is a new thing for many and it is important that we support this as well.

### *Elements in the process*

When working with Newman's model, an element of importance is to establish the mutuality of the process, which is done by maintaining focus on events and relationships that are meaningful in one's life. During this time, the nurse takes the time to view the story as a pattern that unfolds, making sure to share the perception that is viewed with the client. The relationship that develops throughout this process is one that can be characterized by reciprocity, receptivity, and most importantly a feeling of oneness between all who are involved. An important step in this process is the insight that is gained through the recognition of patterns, as well as the activation of possible actions that may take place (Newman, 2008, p. 9).

The following principles as identified by the NAEYC- NAECS/SDE were used as a guide in the development of the curriculum for this project: one must provide support for children and their parents both as individuals and as members of cultures, families, and communities. The curriculum that is developed must incorporate the diverse needs of the child; including not only their age, temperaments, and learning styles, but also their ethnic identity, culture, languages, and the values of their family and community. In the early childhood education setting, the abilities and differences of every child should be respected. Even though many aspects of the child's life are outside the influence of the early childhood program, it remains important that those involved with early childhood education hold themselves



accountable for providing every child with the opportunity to reach essential educational and developmental goals (Position Statement, 2003).

#### *Activity selection and curriculum.*

A curriculum is more than just a collection of activities, rather a complex idea that contains many components, including goals, the content, pedagogy, as well as instructional practices. There are many factors that play into the influence of the content. These may include a society's values, research findings, content standards, community expectations, language and culture, as well as the individual characteristics of the children and their parents.

Good activities are able to support multiple goals, and over time will likely help a child develop. It is for this reason that it is important to include activities that you hope to increase participation in, ones that are exemplary of the activities that may have positive benefits and outcomes for children and families. Parents in the Somali culture are looking for this type of information. Ideas and knowledge about what they can do to assist in the development and education of their children. It is important to involve them, value their knowledge, and incorporate that knowledge into the knowledge that is passed on to their children, as well as the knowledge that is supported and embraced in their education.

#### *Implementation of the project*

An early childhood curriculum that is well-implemented is able to provide developmentally appropriate support and cognitive challenges, which will likely lead to positive outcomes. A curriculum implementation that provides linguistic and cultural continuity is an important asset for both the child and family (Frede, 1998).

The planning and implementation of a culturally sensitive program emphasize the need to understand and develop a respect for the home culture, making efforts to incorporate home

values and practices including religious beliefs and traditions into its development. It is also important to engage in conversation with families about the expectations that they may have of the program, if the attempt is going to be made to walk with them as a means of promoting healthy development. Learning about what they want to get out of the program, and what they want their child to get out of it is important to understand, and essentially strengthens the legitimacy of the program.

*Future plans for implementation*

The developed curriculum will not be implemented as a part of this project, but the plan is to implement it in the future. It will be implemented in cooperation with the Eden Prairie Family Center in Eden Prairie, as part of the 2008 school year. It is hoped that the curriculum is challenging, thoughtfully planned, developmentally appropriate, comprehensive, culturally and linguistically responsive, engaging, and promote positive healthy outcomes for all parents and young children that are involved.



#### Chapter 4: Evaluation of project

In all forms of education it is important to evaluate the process as well as the outcomes of the program. The primary purpose of evaluation of any type of program is to improve its quality. Ongoing evaluation is essential in effective early childhood programs that serve diverse families, and can be done in a variety of ways; asking families to complete surveys, through face to face conversation, or through phone conversations. In collaboration with cultural guides and bilingual staff, one is able to collect information that matches the preferences of the families (Frenn & Malin, 2003; National Research Council, 2001).

Newman (2008) states that if you are looking for outcomes that are based on theory, they will be found in the client's understanding of their life patterns as well as in their actions. It is this that reveals the transformation to a more meaningful relationship for both nurse and client. In order for one to truly understand if the program was effective for its participants, it is important to understand what they have gotten out of it. Was it something that was changing for them? Were they able to understand what they achieved and determine its relevance to their lifestyles?

One would hope that the curriculum or program that is developed would promote positive outcomes. An effective program promotes experiences that can be used as documented evidence that the child is learning about themselves and others, they are communicating needs that they may have with an adult, and they are able to gain an understanding of basic concepts, as well as development of the development of motor and coordination skills that are considered appropriate for their age. An effective program may also provide evidence that the child is learning to develop a sense of trust, security, as well as increasing independence (Frenn & Malin, 2003).



As noted by the bilingual paraprofessional at EPFC, these children made great strides towards a healthy sense of development during this last year. In the beginning of the year, the children did not even know how to wash their hands, and were unable to speak even the smallest bit of English. It truly was amazing to see how these children have developed throughout the year. Many were able to write their names, identify colors, follow directions when asked, and were able to ride tricycles. The readiness program provided many opportunities for these children to work towards a healthy development (Hodan, personal communication, June 8, 2008). Through personal observation and interaction, it was noted that these children felt much more trusting, had a sense of security, and were able to experience an increased sense of independence. A little boy will be used as an example. Nearly every day in class, he spoke vibrantly with much excitement about his mother and baby at home. Once a month for parent day, his mother would come to class, as would the other mothers. During this time he would sit quietly, ignore his mother and refuse to acknowledge her presence. He truly had developed a sense of independence. School is somewhere that he went to play with his friends, his mother was supposed to be in his home.

### *Program Evaluation*

Evaluation of the curriculum will take place in a variety of ways. In order to insure that the curriculum was helpful and effective, the goals of the program will be reviewed and assessed to determine if they were met. Parents will be asked for input on how they feel the information and methods were effective, and children will be asked to give their input on the effectiveness of the education.

An effective curriculum includes the following indicators. One would hope that the children are both active and engaged in the education. It is apparent that children need to be



cognitively, socially, physically, and artistically active. In ways that are their own, children are able become interested and engaged, develop positive attitudes towards learning, and at the same time have their own feelings of security, links to family and community support, and emotional competence (Frenn & Malin, 2003).



## Chapter 5: Discussion

### *Implication of Findings for Advanced Nursing Practice*

Newman's theory educates us as nurses that we must move beyond identifying one's deficits. Rather than viewing these situations as problems that need to be fixed, Newman emphasizes these as opportunities to promote health, opportunities to expand consciousness and evolve new patterns. Disease and illness give the opportunity to expand consciousness, or gain information about their life patterns. These experiences may lead one to "transcend a situation that seems impossible, to find a new way of relating to things, and to discover the freedom that comes with transcending the old limitations" (Newman, 1994, p.99). As nurses, if we take the time to identify patterns, and view them in a way that allows change and transformation to occur, we are not only promoting healthy development, but also providing for one the opportunity to expand consciousness.

By integrating Newman's theory of HEC into the curriculum one is able to view the transforming effects and integrate them into the nursing practice. This can be done by transforming the insights that are gained through the experience into nursing practice. If one is able to truly understand the meaning behind a relationship, one is better able to understand the knowledge that is gained from the experience.

Newman (2008) speaks of our goal as nurses. We are not given the job to make a person well, or to even prevent them from becoming ill, but we are called to provide assistance. It is this assistance that allows them to use their inner powers as they evolve or transform and work towards a higher level of consciousness. In a population where there is a need for education and increased awareness in regards to outdoor physical activity, it is essential to keep this goal in mind.



*Implications for decreasing health inequities*

Through the recognition of the importance of collaboration, an attempt is being made to decrease the presence of health inequities. The presence of collaboration between all members of a society, provides the opportunity to work together, and allows all participants to view themselves as an equal part, each playing an equal role. It is important that we consider this importance of this role in order to truly achieve the goal that has been set to increase the level of outdoor physical activity in our children. It requires the help of everyone, including parents and children, and it is up to us to recognize this importance and emphasize the role that this collaboration does play in order to decrease these inequities.

As discussed earlier, the development of relationships that takes place will also have an impact, and works toward decreasing these health inequities. By walking with the members of the Somali culture, and working towards the development of healthy relationships, together we can work towards eliminating these inequities. It is through the development of these relationships, that we are able to recognize the importance that all participants play as the attempt is made to increase the level of outdoor physical activity and promote healthy development in children.

By increasing awareness of the importance of outdoor physical activity and its impact on a child's healthy development, one can play a role in decreasing the level of health inequities within the Somali culture. It is difficult to change things that you are unaware of. By providing members of the Somali culture with this insight, we are also providing them with the opportunity to work toward a more healthy development as they continue to live their life in the United States. Things are different here in comparison to the life they lived in Somalia, and it is up to us to make them share these differences with them, so that they too can be successful. Working with



mothers of the Somali culture, and providing insight on the importance of outdoor physical activity and together working with these children to increase this level of activity, an attempt is being made to decrease the level of health inequities within the Somali culture.

Simply through empowerment, one is able to work towards decreasing the presence of health inequities. Providing encouragement and support, allows one to feel as though they truly are adequate, and they truly make a difference in their children's life. Allowing them to feel that even though they have come from a society that is different from the dominant society, they truly are capable, and they play just as an important role in the society as anyone else. These parents are hands down the ones that are going to make the biggest difference in a child's life, and it is up to us to support them in their endeavor as they do just that.





## Chapter 6: Conclusions, Recommendations, Reflections

### *Next step in implementation*

The following steps will be taken in the implementation of this project. Time will be spent with the staff at Eden Prairie Family Center to determine if this program truly is something that fits with the needs and goals of their organization. In collaboration with the Eden Prairie Family Center, one will determine a date or dates that work best for the implementation of the program. At the same time identify a date and time that will meet the needs of the parents. One will also need to take into consideration the many other factors that may play a role in the successful implementation of this program. One being the availability of parents, do they have other kids at home? Do they need child care so that they are able to participate? Do they have transportation to school? If not, how can we get them here? In order to continue to gain an increased understanding of the values, beliefs, and practices of the Somali culture, time will continue to be spent with members of the Somali community.

### *Things to consider*

The members of the Somali culture view educators as the expert. As professionals, and as nurses intending to enter into relation by *walking with* these parents, it is necessary to empower parents and educate them on the importance of working as partners. We want them to see the positive impact of working as a partner, and at the same time allow them to realize that there is a great need for collaboration in order for their children to achieve that healthy sense of well-being. This is something that is very different from what they are used to and for this reason it is our role to walk with them in this journey (Newman, 2008)

When working with a family in the Somali culture it is important to establish a relationship with them before attempting to begin care. Respect is essential, and working to earn



this will affect the relationship that is established. By listening to cues, and walking with the Somali families the sense of trust begins to develop and respect is earned. It is important to be receptive of their suggestions. In order to gain that sense of trust and respect time was spent in the readiness classroom with many children of Somali descent. By the end of year, it was evident that there was a developed sense of trust between the professional and families.

Because of limited literacy in the Somali culture, whether it is in the home language or in English, it is important to provide education and information in a verbal manner. Many are unable to read even in their home language. However it remains important to emphasize the importance of oral literacy and communication in the child's literacy development.

Another important implication is to remember that even though they are all of the Somali culture, there is great variability among people that belong to the same group or culture. It is extremely important to view each individual as a unique person, but also continue to view them within a cultural framework.

#### *Implications for future projects or future research*

It is my intent to be able to apply the program that was developed to other topics of health promotion that may be identified as areas of need. The knowledge and research that was obtained to develop this program can be applied to the immigrant population in general and could be easily tailored to meet the needs of other groups as well.

An important aspect to the success of program such as this is the inclusion of bilingual paraprofessional. Along these lines is the importance of providing these personal with the proper and appropriate education so that they are able to assist in an effective manner. Even so much as recognizing how important these people are to the success and well-being of children, parents, and teachers in the early childhood setting that involves immigrant children and families.



Schweinhart and Weikart (1997) state “high-quality early education produces long-lasting benefits” (p. 1). A quote that speaks volumes to the quality of education that is hoped to be provided through this program.



## References

- Alitolppa-Niitamo, A. (2002). The generation in-between: Somali youth and schooling in metropolitan Helsinki. *Intercultural Education, 13*(3), 275-290.
- American Academy of Pediatrics: Ginsburg, K.R., and the Committee on Communication and Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health. (2006, October). *Clinical report: The importance of play in promoting healthy child development and maintaining strong parent-child bonds*. Retrieved from [www.aap.org/pressroom/playFINAL.pdf](http://www.aap.org/pressroom/playFINAL.pdf).
- Bailey, F. & Pransky, K. (2005). Are “other people’s children” constructivist learners too? *Theory into Practice, 44* (1), 19-26.
- Bales, D., Walling, C.& Coleman, M. (2006). Health and safety in the early childhood classroom: Guidelines for curriculum development. *Childhood Education, 82*(3),132-134.
- Banks, J.A. (2002). *Teaching strategies for ethnic students* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Bentov, I. (1977). *Stalking the wild pendulum*. New York:Dutton.
- Beykont, Z.E. (2002). *The power of culture: Teaching across language difference*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Publishing Group.
- Blackledge, A. (1993). We can’t tell our stories in English: Language, story, and culture in primary school. *Language, Culture, and Curriculum, 1*(1), 140.
- Bodrova, E.& Leong, D. (2003). Chopsticks and counting chips: Do play and foundational skills need to compete for the teacher’s attention in an early childhood classroom? *Young Children, 58*(3), 10-17.
- Bornstein, M.H.& Cote, L.R. (2004). Who is sitting across from me? Immigrant mothers’ knowledge of parenting and children’s development. *Pediatrics, 114*(5), e557-e564.





- Boulmetis, J. (1999). Characteristics of adults as learners are not culturally defined. *Adult Learning, 11*(1), 2.
- Bremberg, S. (1998). Health promotion in school age children. *Scand J Soc Med, 26*(2), 81-84.
- Brennan, E., Caplan, E., Ama, S., & Warfield, O., 2001. *Child care: Inclusion as enrichment*. Focal Point. Portland, OR: Regional Research Institute for Human Services, Portland State University.
- Bruns, D.A., & Corso, R.M., (2001). Working with culturally & linguistically diverse families. *ERIC Digest*. University of Illinois.
- Burnett, J. (2006). Promoting the well-being of children. *Childhood Education, 82*(5), 292A-293A.
- Childrens Defense Fund. (2002). *The state of Amercia's children*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Clark, A. (2007). A hundred ways of listening: Gathering children's perspectives on their early childhood environment. *YC Young Children, 62*(3), 76-81.
- Clements, R. (2000). Playworkers: Creating opportunities for children's play. *Dimensions of Early Childhood, 28*(4), 9-13.
- Clements, R. (2004). An investigation of the status of outdoor play. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 5*(1), 68-80.
- Deitze, B. & Crossley, B. (2000). *Young Children and Outdoor Play*. Belleville: Loyalist College.
- Dennis, R.E., & Giangreco, M.F. (1996). Creating conversation: Reflections on cultural sensitivity in family interviewing. *Exceptional Children, 63*(1), 103-116.
- Espinosa, L. (2002). High quality preschool: Why we need it and what it looks like. *NIEER Policy Briefs*. 1. Online: <http://nieer.org/resources/policybriefs/1.pdf>.



- Fein, A.J., Plotnikoff, R.C., Wild, T.C., & Spence, J.C. (2004). Perceived environment and physical activity in youth. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, *11*, 135-142.
- Ferreira, I., van der Horst, K., Wendel-Vos, W., Kremers, S., van Lenthe, F.J., & Brug, J. (2006). Environmental correlates of physical activity in youth – a review and update. *The International Association for the Study of Obesity*, *8*, 129-154.
- Floyd, M.F., Spengler, J.O., Maddock, J.E., Gobster, P.H., & Suau, L.J. (2008). Park-based physical activity in diverse communities of two U.S. cities: An observational study. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, *34*, 299-305.
- Frede, E.C. (1998). Preschool program quality in programs for children in poverty. In W.S. Barnett & S.S. Boocock (Eds). *Early care and education for children in poverty: Promises, programs, and long-term outcomes*, Buffalo, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Ginsburg, K.R. (committees) (2007). The importance of play in promoting healthy child development and maintaining strong parent-child bonds. *Pediatrics*, *119e* 182-190.
- Godchaux, C.W. (1998). Continuing care beyond the hospital walls and onto the streets. *Nursing Management*, *29*(3), 32D-32F.
- Greves, H.M., Lozano, P., Liu, L., Busby, K., Cole, J., & Johnston, B. (2007). Immigrant families' perceptions on walking to school and school breakfast: A focus group study. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, *4*(64), 1-9.
- Hartrick - Doane, G., & Varcoe, C. (2005). *Family nursing as relational inquiry: Developing health-promoting practice*. Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.



- Horowitz, F.D. (2003). Child development and the PITS: Simple questions, complex answers, and development theory. In M.E. Hertzog & E.A. Farber (Eds.) *Annual progress in child psychiatry and child development: 2000-2001* (pp. 3-19). New York: Brunner-Routledge.
- Ingram, M., Wolfe, R.B. & Leiberan, J.M. (2007). The role of parents in high-achieving schools serving low-income, at-risk populations. *Education and Urban Society*, 39, e 479-497.
- Joe, J. R., & Malach, R. S. (1998). Families with Native American roots. In E. W. Lynch & M. J. Hanson (Eds.), *Developing cross-cultural competence: A guide for working with young children and their families* (pp. 127-164). Baltimore, MD: Brookes.
- Kahin, M.H. (1998). Somali children: The need to work in partnership with parents and community. *Multicultural Teaching*, 17(1), 14-16.
- Kalyanpur, M., & Harry, B. (1999). *Culture in special education: Building reciprocal family-professional relationships*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.
- Kolbe, G.C. & Berkin, B. (2000). Health and wellness after school. *Educational Leadership*, 40-42.
- Koshen, H.I. (2007). Strengths in Somali families. *Marriage & Family Review*, 41(1/2), 71-99.  
Retrieved from <http://mfr.haworthpress.com>, the Haworth Press, Inc.
- Kuo, F.E., Bacaicoa, M. & Sullivan, W.C. (1998). Transforming inner-city landscapes: Trees, sense of safety, and preference. *Environment and Behavior*, 30, e 28-59.
- Lareau, A. (1989). *Home advantage: Social class and parental intervention in elementary education*. London: Falmer.
- Lareau, A. (2003). *Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.



- Larson, R.W. & Verma, S. (1999). How children and adolescents spend time across the world: Work, play, and development opportunities. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125(6), 701-735.
- Lather, P. (1986). Research as praxis. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56(3), 257-277.
- Lobo, Y.B. & Winsler, A. (2006). The effects of a creative dance and movement program on the social competence of head start preschoolers. *Social Development*, 15(3), 501-519.
- Lynch, E.W. & Hanson, M.J. (1998). *Developing cross-cultural competence: A guide for working with young children and their families (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes. ED 346-190.
- Marjoribanks, K. (2005). Family environments and children's outcomes. *Educational Psychology*, 25(6), 647-657.
- McLoughlin, C.S. & Kubick, R.J. (2004). Wellness promotion as a life-long endeavor: Promoting and developing life competencies from childhood. *Psychology in the Schools*, 41(1), 131-141.
- Milstein, G. & Lucic, L. (2004). Young immigrants: A psychosocial development perspective. *ENCOUNTER: Education for Meaning and Social Justice*, 17(3), 24-29.
- Newman, M.A. (1994). *Health as expanding consciousness*. New York: National League of Nursing.
- Newman, M.A. (2008). *Transforming presence: The difference that nursing makes*. Philadelphia, PA: F.A. Davis Company.
- Nieto, S. (2002). *Language, culture, and teaching: Critical perspectives for a new century*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Obiakor, F.E. & Afolayan, M.O. (2007). African immigrant families in the united states: Surviving the sociocultural trade. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 15(3), 265-270.





- Olgac, C.R. (2001). Socialisation, language and learning in a Somalia diasporic community in Rinkeby. *Africa & Asia*, 1, 69-78.
- Ordonez-Jasis, R., & Ortiz, R. (2006). Reading their worlds: Working with diverse families to enhance children's early literacy development. *YC Young Children*, 61(1), 42-48.
- Osterman, K.F. (2000). Student's need for belongingness in the school community. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(3), 323-367.
- Pergams, O., & Zaradic, P. (2007). Kids picking TV over trees. *The Children & Nature Network*. Retrieved from [www.childrenandnature.org/news/detail\\_print/310/](http://www.childrenandnature.org/news/detail_print/310/). On 4/26/08.
- Petrie, J.T. & Holloway, S.D. (2008). Mothers' representations of the role of parents and preschools in promoting children's development. Retrieved on 5/12/08 from <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v8n2/petrie.html>.
- Pristin, T. (November, 15, 2001). "Toys 'R' us thinks big in less playful time." *New York Times*.
- Quindlen, A. (July, 8, 1990). "Latchkey Summer." *New York Times*.
- Quintero, E. (1999). The new faces of head start: Learning from culturally diverse families. *Early Education & Development*, 10(4), 475-497.
- Raspa, M.J., McWilliam, R.A., & Ridley, S.M. (2001). Child care quality and children's engagement. *Early Education and Development* 12: 209-224.
- Rivkin, M. (1995). *Great Outdoors: Restoring Children's Right to play outside*. Washington, DC: National Association for Education of Young Children.
- Robertson, C.L., Halcon, L., Savik, K., Johnson, D., Spring, M., Butcher, J., Westermeyer, J. & Jaranson, J. (2006). *Somali and Oromo refugee women: Trauma and associated factors*. Blackwell publishing Ltd.



- Sallis, J.F., Patrick, K., Frank, E., Pratt, M., Wechsler, H. & Galuska, D.A. (2000). Interventions in health care settings to promote healthful eating and physical activity in children and adolescents. *Preventive Medicine, 31*, S112-S120.
- Schaller, A., Rocha, L.O. & Barshinger, D. (2007). Maternal attitudes and parent education: How immigrant mothers support their child's education despite their own low levels of education. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 34*(5), 351-356.
- Schultz, J. (Fall, 1998). Promoting an antecedent of student achievement, good health. *Middle School Journal, 53-56*.
- Schweinhart, L.J. & Weikart, D.P., (1997). The High/Scope pre-school curriculum comparison study through age 23. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 12*, 117-143.
- Tabors, P.O. (1998). What early childhood educators need to know: Developing effective programs for linguistically and culturally diverse children and families. *Young Children, 20-26*.
- Tapperman, J. (2007). Play in early years: key to school success. A policy brief.
- Tong, W.M., Huang, C.W., & McIntyre, T. (2006). Promoting a positive cross-cultural identity: Reaching immigrant students. *Reclaiming Children and Youth, 14*(4), 203-208.
- Villegas, A.M., & Lucas, T. (2007). The culturally responsive teacher. *Educational Leadership, 28-33*.
- Watt, S., & Norton, D. (2004). Culture, ethnicity, and race: What's the difference? *Paediatric Nursing, 16e* 37-42.
- Widerstorm, A.H. (2005). *Achieving learning goals through: Teaching young children with special needs*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.



- Williamson, D.L., & Drummond, J. (2000). Enhancing low-income parents' capacities to promote their children's health: Education is not enough. *Public Health Nursing, 17*(2), 121-131.
- Wridt, P.J. (2004). A historical analysis of young people's use of public space, parks and playgrounds in New York City. *Children, Youth and Environments, 14e* 86-106.
- Yamashita, M. & Tall, F.D. (1998). A commentary on Newman's theory of health as expanding consciousness. *Advances in Nursing Science, 21*(1), 65-75.
- Zhou, M. (1997). Segmented assimilation: Issues, controversies, and recent research on the second generation. *International Migration Review, XXXI*, 975-1008.
- Zhou, M. (2003). Urban education: Challenges in educating culturally diverse children. *Teachers College Record, 105*, 208-225.
- Zigler, E. & Bishop-Joseph, S. (2006). The cognitive child vs. the whole child: Lessons from 40 years of Head Start, in Singer, D.G., Golinkoff, R. & Hirsh-Paske, K. (Eds.) (2006) *Play = learning, How play motivates and enhances children's cognitive and social-emotional growth*. New York: Oxford University Press.



## Appendix A

### Goals of Program

1. Provide information on normal child development and the importance of outdoor physical activity in healthy child development.
2. In collaboration with mothers, identify barriers to outdoor physical activity that may be present and ideas to overcome the obstacles.
3. Enhance a mother's self-confidence to contribute to a child's well-being and development.
4. Empower mothers and children to connect activities and knowledge to their own social and cultural situations.

### Objectives for parent program

1. Participants will take part in a discussion of normal child development and discover ways in which this information can be applied to their life style.
2. Participants will have an increased understanding of importance of outdoor physical activity in child development.
3. Participants will discuss barriers to outdoor activity and ways in which these obstacles can be overcome.
4. Participants will acknowledge a sense of accomplishment and feeling of increased self worth in the education of their children.
5. Participants will recognize the importance of the role that they play in the healthy development of their children.

### A. Normal Child Development

- a. Eden Prairie Family Center 3yo development sheet
- b. What should a child be doing at this age?
  - i. What is your definition of health?
    1. Incorporate parents ideas with Margaret Newman's definition
    2. Emphasize important points
  - ii. What is your definition of normal development?
    1. How is this working for you?
    2. What needs to be changed?
  - iii. Average child this age in the United States
    1. Build a tower with at least 6 blocks
    2. Talk in sentences of 3 or 4 words (can't understand ½ time)
    3. Point to and tell you about the pictures in my favorite books
    4. Put an easy puzzle together.
    5. Brush my teeth without help.
    6. Throw a ball over hand.
    7. Sing songs by myself.





- 8. May not nap
- 9. Know the difference in what words mean
- 10. Know what belongs to me.
- iv. Realization that each culture may have different expectations for age levels.
  - 1. Not all children develop at same rate
  - 2. Culture may play a role
- c. How are things different here than when you were in Somalia?
  - i. Parent verses educator role
- d. What is your child doing at this age?
  - i. How does this fit with child development of an average child?
  - ii. What can we do?
- e. What are you doing to support this development?
- f. What are other options to supporting development?
  - i. What should they be doing to be successful in the dominant society?
  - ii. How can we assist you?

## B. Importance of Parental Role in Healthy Development

- a. Education takes place in home and school
  - i. We must all work together (collaboration)
  - ii. See each other as partners
  - iii. Sustainability
- b. You are your child's biggest role model
  - i. Children imitate what they see family and parents doing
  - ii. Look up to their parents and model their behavior
  - iii. Need love and support
  - iv. Self-esteem is increased when parents and teachers act as a positive audience for child's imaginative outdoor play activities (Clements, 2004; Lareau, 2003).
- c. Young life patterns are indicative of adult life
  - i. We must start young
  - ii. Children are at a stage where this has an impact.
- d. Emphasize the importance of their role
  - i. Recognize and praise the good that they are doing already.
  - ii. Together discover other things that they can build on



- iii. In collaboration, develop further ideas to support healthy development

## C. Outdoor physical activity

- a. Importance to healthy development
  - i. Mind, body, and school achievement
  - ii. Natural and critical part of healthy development (Clements, 2004).
  - iii. Opportunities to explore community
  - iv. Find or create own spaces for play
  - v. Collect objects and develop hobbies
  - vi. Increase liking for physical activity
  - vii. Initial attempts to dance, sing, and create a piece of child-art often occur outside (Clements, 2004).
  - viii. Research shows that between 3 and 12 a child's body experiences its greatest physical growth (Clements, 2004).
    - 1. Demonstrated by child's urge to run, climb, and jump in outdoor spaces
    - 2. Vigorous movements and play activities
      - a. Enhance muscle growth
      - b. Support growth of child's heart and lungs
      - c. Other organs vital for normal physical development.
      - d. Active play stimulates digestive system and helps improve appetite, ensures continuous strength and body growth
      - e. Increases growth and development of the fundamental nervous centers in the brain for clearer thought and increased learning abilities
  - ix. Enjoy sensory experiences with dirt, water, sand, and mud
  - x. Outlet for child's every day stress (Clements, 2004).
    - 1. Frequently experience anxiety, disappointment, and anger
    - 2. Outdoor activity can help relieve boredom or stress and satisfy Child's natural urge for adventure when given opportunity to wear play clothes, and not worry about being messy.
  - xi. Learn skills necessary for adult life (Clements, 2004)
    - 1. Social competence, creative thinking, problem solving, and safety skills
  - xii. Grow emotionally and academically by (Clements, 2004)
    - 1. Develop an appreciation for the environment
    - 2. Participating in imaginative play
    - 3. Developing initiative
  - xiii. Acquiring and understanding of basic concepts (investigating property of objects and how to use simple tools to accomplish a task.
- b. Recognize barriers to outdoor physical activity?



- i. What do you see as barriers to outdoor physical activity?
    1. Space
    2. Fears
    3. Opportunities
    4. Time
    5. Safety
  - ii. Recognize these barriers and emphasize their legitimacy
  - iii. How can we together overcome these barriers?
    1. Ideas
    2. Educate on safety
    3. Support
  - iv. Importance of overcoming barriers
    1. Child life indicative of adult lifestyle
    2. The entire family benefits
    3. Promoting healthy lifestyle today promotes healthy tomorrow
  - v. What types of activities are your kids involved in?
    1. How are these activities promoting healthy development.
    2. Discuss the importance of what they are doing now, and encourage more
- c. Ideas for outdoor activity
- i. What activities did you do as a child?
    1. Recall if you will, memories of places you liked to play when you were little, activities that you liked to do, and things that you liked to play with (Rivkin, 1995).
      - a. Sketch or describe this on a piece of paper.
      - b. Did you think of somewhere outdoors?
      - c. Somewhere with independence, where you could arrange things as you wished?
      - d. Could you revisit these places?
      - e. Are these places still accessible to children?
      - f. Do your places of delight still exist for children? Maybe they do not?
  - ii. How can we adapt these activities in the United States?
  - iii. What are you doing now?
  - iv. What are other ideas? (Clements, 2004)
    1. Playing in snow drifts, rain, or muddy areas
      - a. Gives sense of adventure



2. Tag (active fleeing games)
    - a. Interactive and vigorous activities
    - b. Require cooperation with friends
  3. Jump rope, hop scotch, street games
    - a. Also decreasing
    - b. Child initiated rules
  4. Child-created and make believe games (imaginative or made-up)
    - a. Amount of this is decreasing
    - b. Influence social cognition
    - c. Inventiveness
    - d. Language development
    - e. The use of symbols
    - f. Comprehension skills
    - g. Opportunities to imitate and interpret adult behavior
- v. What options are available in EP?
1. List of parks
  2. Community education programs
  3. Opportunities in neighborhood





## **Objectives for Child Program**

1. Children will demonstrate increased awareness of outdoor physical activity and the importance that it plays in their health
2. Children will be able to identify activities that they can participate in.
3. Children will verbalize the importance of outdoor safety and what they can do.
4. Emphasize the importance of adapting the activity to their society and culture.

### **A. Importance of outdoor physical activity**

- a. Helps you feel good and stay healthy
- b. It helps heart, body, how you do in school (book)

### **B. Activities that they can do**

- a. Songs –
- b. Books – library; lists
- c. Games –

### **C. Parents Activities (these are the ones that were brought up in the parent portion)**

- a. At each station a parent demonstrates an activity they played as a child
- b. Emphasize importance
- c. They can learn together/support
- d. Parent feels that sense of empower/accomplishment, child is learning

### **D. Safety Education**

- a. What can you do to be safe?
- b. What does it mean to be safe?
- c. Why do we need to be safe? (interactive stations)
  - a. Bike safety (helmet)
  - b. Strangers (only if someone you know; hard because they respect adults, everyone aunt)
  - c. Water (hot out, stay away from water unless parent with you)
  - d. Listening to parents (want you to be safe)
  - e. Always ask/tell (where you are going; what you are doing)



## **Developmentally appropriate activities for children**

1. Take things apart and put them back together.
2. Library to check out books.
3. Like to go outside. Run and throw a ball. Teach that things are better to do outside than inside the house.
4. Like to describe how things feel. Show me soft, sticky, hard, rough, and funny.
5. Write stories that I tell. Read them back
6. Play a game with me of matching colors.
  - a. Run around and find something of the color that you say. Find something green.
7. Help me learn to pick up my toys and put them where they belong.
8. Take me to a play group. Or have a child my same age over to play.
  - a. Community play dates at the park, or in the neighborhood with other families.
  - b. Live close by anybody that you know.
  - c. Picnics, go for walks, etc.

## **Teaching children**

1. Tell me and show me what I should do
  - a. When you want kids to do a certain activity, show them first how they should do it
  - b. Make sure to explain the instructions
  - c. Do not only tell them, but show them; they are visual learners at this age.
2. I need to learn that I cannot have what I want all of the time
3. Praise me when I am doing what you want.
  - a. The importance of sharing when they are doing well.
  - b. Not emphasizing the bad, but letting them know when they have done something good.
4. Hug me.
5. Discipline works better than punishment.

## **What do I like to do?**

1. Ride tricycles
2. Lightweight hand paddles
3. Targets
4. Bowling sets
5. Variety of balls
6. Push-toys resembling adult tools (lawnmowers, shopping cars, strollers, vacuum cleaners)

## **Educating Somali immigrants**

1. Establish a relationship with the family before beginning care.
  - a. It is essential to build respect
  - b. Be receptive of family's suggestions.
  - c. Familiar face on family day
  - d. Picnic day
2. Make sure that education is in a verbal manner
  - a. Many have limited English proficiency
  - b. Many are unable to read in either language
3. Always remember there is a great variability among people of any group/culture
  - a. View individuals as unique persons
  - b. View within cultural framework

Augsburg College  
Lindell Library  
Minneapolis, MN 55454