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Recent research has examined the early care and education (ECE) enrollment rates for immigrant and refugee children, as well as the benefits these children may gain from attending quality ECE programs. Children from immigrant families, especially if they are low income, are less likely to be enrolled in formal child care arrangements (Delgado, 2009; Matthews & Jang, 2007; Brandon, 2004). Yet, it is well established that high quality ECE programs can help children gain the skills they need to be ready for school (Bardige, 2005; Karoly, et al, 2005; Smart Start Evaluation Team, 2003). Research demonstrates that preschool attendance significantly raises English-language proficiency. It also increases reading and math scores for these children as much as it does for other, comparable children (Magnuson, et al, 2006). High quality ECE programs provide a way to track children's development and emotional well being and connect them, if needed, with early intervention services. This may be of particular benefit to children of refugee families who may have experienced violence or trauma in their native country (Fantino and Colak, 2001). Finally, ECE programs can link immigrant and refugee parents to employment, health, and other social services, as well as help with parenting, English acquisition, and literacy skills (Capps, et al, 2005).

Although research has demonstrated the positive impact early care and education has on immigrant and refugee populations, little research exists to examine the child care decision making processes of the parents in these same populations. *Are the lower enrollment rates of English Language Learners (ELL) in ECE programs a reflection of child care preferences or the result of other constraints to accessing child care?* A recent study of *Latino* parents' child care usage suggests that, at least for the Latino population, low enrollment patterns may not reflect choice so much as external characteristics, such as multiple children in the family, the lack of quality child care programs in low income neighborhoods, the need for coverage when children are sick, and the availability of extended family. These factors relate to lower rates of enrollment for any population, but are simply more predominant among Latino families: "...Latinos do not have an innate aversion to child care or early education for their children, but rather limited access to affordable care" (Delgado, 2009). Indeed, among those parents who do not have care, Delgado found that Latinos express a significantly greater desire for such care, provided it is accessible and affordable, than do non-Latino whites. Delgado notes that a limitation of her research is that it does not address whether Latino parents' decisions about use of relative care also may be related to a desire for more culturally competent care.

Using a participatory, mixed-methods approach by incorporating a community-embedded advisory group to guide the interviews, focus groups, and surveys, this study attempts to understand refugee and immigrant families' beliefs about and experiences with child care, and how these factors impact their decision-making processes.