Exploring the Beliefs African American Parents and their Preschool Children

Ascribe to Physical Activity

DISSERTATION

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By

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Abstract

It is well-established that daily physical activity is associated with an increased life expectancy, improved quality of life, and decreased risk of cardiovascular diseases (American Heart Association, 2011) in addition to being beneficial in combating overweight, obesity, and other chronic health conditions like hypertension, diabetes, depression, and osteoporosis among US citizens (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2011). However, African American populations tend to be physically inactive and face many health challenges. The goal within this study was to interpret and make sense (interpret) of what is happening in the lives of the African American parents and their preschool children as it relates to physical activity. Specifically, the purpose of this study was to explore and describe the beliefs African American parents and their preschool children ascribe to physical activity.

The participants were African American parents and their preschool children comprising six family units. All of the preschool children attended an urban Headstart center in Central Ohio. This ethnographic study was situated in an ecocultural theoretical framework (Weisner, 1984, 1997). Ecocultural theory details a family’s daily journey
[routines] and the activities that make up the most important influences in a child and family’s life (Weisner, Matheson, Coots, & Bernheimer, 2005).

The primary data sources were interviews and non-participant observations, which were augmented with document analysis, community mapping, and researcher’s journal. The qualitative data were analyzed using ethnographic analysis procedures as data were then analyzed thematically to create codes. The data were then recorded by thematic categories on cards, using different colored cards to represent each data source, which finally became recurring themes and their associate subthemes.

The findings reveal that these African American believe physical activity is important. Further the inquiry confirms that African American families have knowledge about benefits of physical activity. The most salient message throughout this study was the importance of the family unit among African American parents and their preschool children. Connected to that parents and children alike have cultural norms and beliefs that influence their participation in physical activity.

This study’s findings provides professionals with empirically-based information that consideration of the family as a whole is a key to promoting physical activity. Brustad (2010) asserts that “Family-based physical activity promotion efforts have tremendous potential for facilitating physically active lifestyles among Americans and to strengthen feelings of enjoyment and intrinsic motivation toward physical activity” (p. 6).
In other words, a focus on the family should be a priority in designing and developing physical activity programs among African American parents and their preschool children.
Dedicated to those who have gone before me
and those who are here with me especially my wife and family.
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Lastly, I thank God for the many blessings he has bestowed upon my family and I. “It’s all good!”…Romans 8:28.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Daily physical activity has been associated with an increased life expectancy and decreased risk of cardiovascular disease (American Heart Association, 2011) in addition to being beneficial in combating overweight, obesity, and various acute and chronic health conditions as hypertension, diabetes, depression, and osteoporosis among United States citizens (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 2011). In order to maintain adequate levels of health among adults and children/youth there is a need to engage in physical activity to counteract these health-related issues. Unfortunately, sedentary behaviors as computer use, television viewing, and playing video games consume children’s leisure time and adversely impact physical activity levels to the point of inactivity (USDHHS, 2011).

Recent trends have seen increases in overweight and obesity among adults and children which may contribute to inactivity. The prevalence of obesity has become a major concern over the last 20 years among children and adolescence (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention [CDC], 2009a; Pate et al., 2006). This is of great concern considering children who are overweight and obese during childhood are likely to be overweight and obese during adolescence and into adulthood (CDC, 2009a). According to the State of America’s Children report, 21.2% of children between two and five years
of age are overweight or obese (Children’s Defense Fund, 2010). The obesity epidemic is particularly prevalent and disproportionately higher among African American and Hispanic American ethnic populations (Efrat, 2011; Ogden & Carroll, 2010). In a survey of children from various ethnic populations regarding body mass index (BMI), results showed 26% of African American children 2 through 5 years of age were characterized as “overweight” and 11.4% were characterized as “obese” (CDC, 2009b). The terms overweight and obese refers to weights that are greater than what is considered healthy for a specific height for a child of a particular age and are determined by BMI. This index is a numeric value calculated from an individual’s weight and height and considered a reliable indicator of body adiposity (CDC, 2009b). Overweight is determined when a child’s BMI is at or above the 85th percentile, but below the 95th percentile, while a child is considered obese when his or her BMI is above the 95th percentile (CDC, 2009b).

Additionally, forty percent of African American adults (18 years of age and older) report being physically inactive (USDHHS, 2011), while one third of African American children and youth ages 10-17 years participate in physical activity (vigorous activity for 20 minutes or more that causes sweating and heavy breathing) on three or more days per week (USDHHS, 2005). However, the scientific literature is underdeveloped in regards to the physical activity levels of preschool children, particularly African American children (Pate, Pfeiffer, Trost, Ziegler, & Dowda, 2004). Surely the rates of inactivity and higher prevalence of overweight and obesity among African American children (CDC, 2009b) are cause for concern and need to be addressed. Physical activity is one modifiable factor linked to obesity (Strong et al., 2005) and plays a key role in maintaining energy balance.
as it helps eliminate calories consumed in excess (USDHHS, 2005). Physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that result in energy expenditure (USDHHS, 2008, n.d.) and includes various levels of intensity—light, moderate, and vigorous (CDC, 2011).

Research findings suggest that children who engage in physical activity during childhood and adolescence are likely to be physically active adults (Schneider & Lounsbury, 2008; Stodden et al., 2008). Thus, engaging preschool children in health enhancing physical activity during early childhood helps to socialize children as to the importance of health behaviors throughout life and plays a role in developmental milestones such as cognitive functioning, socialization, and emotional well-being (Burdette & Whitaker, 2005; Ginsburg, 2007). Guidelines developed by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) provide recognized physical activity recommendations for children from birth to five years (NASPE, 2009). These guidelines advocate for increasing opportunities for preschoolers (age 3-5 years) to engage a minimum of 120 minutes of daily physical activity with this activity coming in the form of 60 minutes of unstructured physical activity (Beets, Bornstein, Dowda, & Pate, 2011). Recent updates suggest that within 120 minutes of activity, parents and caregivers, should plan for preschool children to engage in moderate to vigorous physical activities (MVPA) where they are breathing hard and sweating (Beets et al., 2011).

There is an emphasis toward establishing lifelong habits of physical activity among the general population. As stated previously, these attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs related to physical activity if started during early childhood and adolescence can
be maintained throughout their adult life. An example cited by Brustad (2010) states, “Family is the most important reference point from which to understand individuals’ physical activity behavior and attitudes” (p. 3). While examining fathers role in physical activity, Bopp et al. (2007) stated there were very few studies that specifically examine the perceptions (beliefs) and experiences of African American men, regarding social, psychological, or environmental influences on physical activity. These studies provide examples of the importance of family in relation to physical activity. More specifically, the dynamic of identifying the beliefs African American parents and preschool children ascribe to physical activity is an important part of understanding what these families know and do in their own lives related to physical activity. In previous studies, researchers used objective measures to track physical activity behaviors of 4-7 years old children and their parents. They found that children with two active parents were 5.8 times more likely to be active than were children of two inactive parents (Moore et al., 1991). Consequently, when one parent was active and the other parent inactive children in these families were 3.5 times more likely to be active (Moore et al., 1991). This supports the notion that parents are role models and gatekeepers to their children’s physical activity (Welk, Wood, & Moross, 2003) as they enable or constrain opportunities for their children’s physical activity involvement or engagement (Brustad, 2010).

The nature of physical activity during early childhood is not fully understood, research indicates that the physical activity behaviors of young children differ in quality and quantity from children and adults (Oliver, Schofield, & Kolt, 2007; Pelligrini &
Smith, 1998). In order to reduce and eliminate overweight and obesity, a sustained and effective public health response is necessary across the United States by incorporating strategies that emphasize and promote physical activity and a healthy diet (CDC, 2009a) especially among preschool children in African American populations. In that regard, research that explores the meaning African American parents and their preschool children ascribe to physical activity is needed.

As a result, there is a growing consensus that using broad socio-ecological approaches are needed to effectively promote positive lifestyle behaviors such as physical activity (Welk et. al., 2003). A recent trend has been to measure and assess how cultural, social, and physical environmental factors influence physical activity in using socio-ecological models (Sallis, 2009). The focus in these models identifies key socio-cultural factors that influence a child’s development in the following areas: (a) socio-economic status, (b) religious beliefs and practices, (c) cultural beliefs and practices, (d) family values and routines, (e) educational experiences, and (f) peer interactions (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Using a socio-ecological approach, ecocultural theory, will frame the focus of this study by determining the parents and children’s routines, beliefs, and cultural norms related to physical activity. More importantly, using this approach will permit in-depth descriptions to be made of the beliefs African American parents and preschool children ascribe to physical activity.
Theoretical Framework: Ecocultural Theory

Ecocultural theory is derived from a psycho-cultural model developed by John and Beatrice Whiting (Whiting, 1975; Whiting, 1976; 1980; Whiting & Edwards, 1988) and their student associates (LeVine, 1977; Munroe, Munroe, & Whiting, 1981; Super & Harkness, 1980, 1986; Weisner, 1984; Weisner & Gallimore, 1985). Ecocultural theory takes families, goals, beliefs, values, and needs into account within the comprehensive view of the family. The family’s constructed “meaning” of their circumstances and their proactive response to those circumstances and meanings; inclusion of daily routines as a critical unit of analysis; and targets a families’ cultural and environmental niche profiles by using 10 hierarchical ecocultural niche features (Bernheimer, Gallimore, & Weisner, 1990). Ecocultural theory contends that all families organize their life routines to meet the needs of the individual family members (Bernheimer & Keogh, 1995; Gallimore, Weisner, Kaufman, & Bernheimer, 1989; Gallimore, Weisner, Bernheimer, Gutherie, & Nihira, 1993). The focus within this framework details a family’s daily journey and the activities that make up the most important influences in a child and family’s life (Weisner, Matheson, Coots, & Bernheimer, 2005). As such, the journey and activities are visible in the everyday routines of the family as they use the resources they have to adapt, exploit, counterbalance, and react to changes known as accommodations (Gallimore et al., 1989). As families interact and make adjustments in their daily activities, they develop a niche. This ‘developmental niche’ (Super & Harkness, 1980, 1986) or “ecocultural niche” (Bernheimer et al., 1990) has three components, which are: (a) physical and social settings, (b) child-care strategies of a culture, and (c) the beliefs and
values of caretakers (Super & Harkness, 1980, 1986), but also includes other aspects of a family’s cultural norms, common ways families interact among each other. The ten domains situated within the hierarchy of ecocultural niches include: (a) subsistence and work cycles of the family; (b) marital roles (childcare and household tasks shared); (c) father’s role (amount father involved with child); (d) home and neighborhood safety; (e) domestic workload; (f) childcare tasks and work; (g) children’s play groups; (h) roles of women and girls in the community; (i) social supports and varied sources of cultural influence for children (i.e., church or friends); and (j) information available to parents (Bernheimer & Weisner, 2007). These family niche profiles captures both the material and socially constructed qualities of family niches that includes how families construct organize, understand, and give meaning to their everyday lives in order to make it work for them (Bernheimer et al., 1990). Understanding the various levels at which African American parents and their preschool children order and structure their lives gives opportunities toward investigating how their daily routines shape attention to physical activity and well-being. This theory provides a way to engage parents in identifying important niche profiles and daily routines through “conversational” interviews (Siedman, 1998). Weisner (2002) stated, “One way to enter children’s and families cultural pathways is to ask parents directly about their daily routines and activities, and observe them” (p. 277).

Research that examines the beliefs among African American parents and their preschool children is undeveloped. In the midst of today's crisis of inactivity among African American parents and preschool children, inquiry into the beliefs of African
American parents and their preschool children about physical activity is important. Findings from this line of inquiry will help to identify and provide more culturally relevant opportunities for such children to be active. Parents’ behaviors (Raudsepp & Viira, 2000) and beliefs about physical activity influence children’s decisions whether to become and remain physically active (Kimiecik & Horn, 1998).

It is also clear that children and youth learn from observing the behaviors of their parents and family members (Fogelholm, Kukkonen-Harjula, & Oja, 1999; Trost, Sirard, Dowda, Pfeiffer, & Pate, 2003), leading to the likelihood of increased (or lack of) participation in physical activity. Based on these claims, parents have a vital role in the promotion of physical activity among their children. There is little empirical evidence; however, that provides understanding of parents’ beliefs about physical activity.

This current study used qualitative methods to explore the meaning ascribed to physical activity by parents and their preschool children and the contexts in which it does or does not occur. Specifically, the purpose of this study was to explore and describe the beliefs African American parents and their preschool children ascribe to physical activity.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study.

1. What beliefs do African American parents ascribe to physical activity in regards to their preschool children?

2. What knowledge do African American parents have about physical activity for their preschool children in regards to feasibility, access, opportunities, and more?

3. What is the nature of the daily routines and interactions of African American
families and to what extent are these consistent (daily, weekly, or periodic) or variable (daily, weekly, or periodic)?

4. What are the cultural norms, contexts (ecocultural niche), and belief systems of physical activity and how do these influence or adversely affect opportunities for and/or engagement in physical activity among African American parents and their preschool children?

**Limitations of the Inquiry**

Limitations within this study are factors that may affect the results of this study.

1. Interviews conducted within this study maybe considered invasive and may limit participants’ willingness to answer questions with candor and openness.

2. As an African American male who is familiar with African American culture and the population of the school, there is the potential for researcher’s bias when completing various aspects of the study.

**Delimitations of the Inquiry**

Delimitations indicate the parameters of the study and how the research was conducted.

1. The participation of African American parents and their preschool children enrolled in urban Headstart preschools in Central Ohio, limit this study to these participants within these settings, and are not generalizeable to a larger population.

2. This study was delimited to African American adults 18 years of age and older and their preschool children ages 4-5 years olds.
3. For each family unit, one African American parent who was the biological parent was included as a participant within this study.

**Significance of the Inquiry**

Previous studies have examined parental influences in physical activity (Brustad, 2010) and physical activity interventions (Wilson, 2009). Yet there is no known research focused on the beliefs of African American parents and their preschool children about physical activity, as such this study will inform new direction. The knowledge gained from this study will lead to a better awareness of participation or non-participation levels in physical activity among African American parents and their preschool children. This study will help physical education and physical activity professionals become more knowledgeable about daily routines of African American families and how each family’s ecocultural niche profiles may affect their ability and willingness to be involved in physical activity. The descriptive data generated from this study will support future opportunities for research that may include replication of the current research study in other cities, measurement of physical activity, and intervention studies among African American families.
Definitions of the Terms

The following terms were operationally defined for this study.

*Accommodations* – Intentional adjustments by families to sustain a routine (Bernheimer & Weisner, 2007).

*African American* – The term African American is a socially constructed term used to identify participants in this study who self-identified their ethnicity as such or as Black and who were native to the U.S. with African ancestry (Hodge, Harrison, Burden, & Dixson, 2008).

*Beliefs* – Beliefs for this study are operationalized in alignment with tenets of the Theory of Planned Behavior, therefore, beliefs (salient) are undergridding determinants of a person’s intentions and actions to participate in a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Specifically they are distinguishable in three different areas: (1) behavioral beliefs, means an individual forms beliefs about participation or non-participation in an activity based on positive or negative outcomes associated with the activity (attitude toward the behavior); (2) normative beliefs support the notion that individual or group members may approve or disapprove of participation in an activity (subjective norm); (3) control beliefs means the intention and action to participate in the activity based on past experiences, others experiences, resources, and opportunities to participate in the activity allow them to have more control over their intention to participate in the activity [perceived behavioral control] (Ajzen, 1991).

*Congruence* – Determining what works within families according to their needs which assumes priority status and guides the parents’ behavior based on these needs.
There is agreement in determining what is most important among the family for the sake of the family. Example, parent has to work late to accumulate overtime, therefore, may not have time to be home to play with the child in the evening due to his or her work schedule.

*Cultural context* – The language, tradition, ritual, rules, and customs of an individual or group and their ability to interact within those traditions within a specific environment (i.e., home, church, school etc…).

*Cultural norms* – The language, tradition, ritual, rules, and customs that are known to members of the culture and expressed in everyday living situations among those within the culture. Example, In most African American cultures for example, it is a cultural norm to ‘speak’ (greet others) when entering a room particularly when other African Americans are present.

*Culture* – Culture is the totality of beliefs, behaviors, linguistic semantics, practices, and traditions; that is, general ways of life, (Hodge et al., 2012). They assert that it cuts across race and ethnicity and is highly associated with socioeconomic status, social positioning, and family histories (Hodge et al., 2012). For this study, culture represents beliefs, behaviors, linguistics, practices, and traditions in the ways of life among African American families.

identifies families, goals, beliefs, values, and needs within the comprehensive view of the family by explicitly including the family’s-constructed “meaning” of their circumstances (what are the family’s goals and beliefs) and their proactive response to those circumstances and meanings; inclusion of daily routines as a critical unit of analysis which are created and sustained by ecocultural forces; and is distinguished by its applicability to families in all cultures as the theory has 10 hierarchical ecocultural niche profiles targeting each respective families cultural and environmental niche profile (Bernheimer et al., 1990).

Ecocultural Niche – Involve a person or family’s cultural and material place (Bernheimer et al., 1990), which means how families process, organize, and make meaning of their day-to-day lives in their own culture and environment.

Ecocultural Family Interview - Ecocultural Family Interview (EFI) protocol (Weisner, Bernheimer, & Coots, 1997) is an interview technique based on the tenets of ecocultural theory. EFI directs conversations regarding family routines, meals, work, school, and physical activity time together it is a chance for the participant to ‘tell the family’s story’ regarding caring, providing resources, and supporting their children within the family (Weisner, 2002).

Family Resources – All the necessary goods families have to subsist includes food, clothing, shelter, finances, communication, transportation, family members, agencies, and community members.

Family Unit - A biological parent (a mother or father), at least one child and any other member of the household (father, partner, friend, grandparent, aunt etc…).
**Meaningful** – Relates to “what matters and what is real within families and how they construct their own knowledge of reality” (Seligman & Darling, 1989, p. 228).

**Preschool** - Refers to the early childhood (two and half years to four years of age) and middle childhood (five years of age) where children are prepared in readiness skills for elementary school (National Association for Education of Young Children, 2010).

**Physical Activity** – Physical Activity is any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that result in energy expenditure (USDHHS, 2008, “Glossary of Terms”, physical activity). It also includes light (activities which includes where you can talk comfortable while completing it), moderate (activities which makes you feel slightly out of breath) vigorous (activities which cause one to breath rapidly and break a sweat) physical activity (CDC, 2011).

**Routines** – Are structured or unstructured activities that occur within the lives of a family unit on a day-to-day basis that occur continuously throughout the life of the family. More specifically routines consist of linked sequences of activities and the contexts that organize those activities (Bernheimer & Weisner, 2007). Examples include, family meals, church activities on the weekend, television viewing, and bedtime activities (e.g., pajamas, brush teeth, read story).
Chapter 2: Literature Review

The need to increase physical activity among children in the U.S. has gained urgency over the past decade as rates of childhood obesity have increased (CDC, 1997). For 6 through 11 year old children, the prevalence of obesity increased from 6.5% in 1980 to 19.6% by 2006, while the prevalence of obesity for children ages 12 through 17 years old increased from 5% to 18.1% during that same time span (CDC, 2008). In addition, the proportion of children who were overweight increased in the preschool age (2-5 years old) population from 5% in the 1980s to 12.6% as of 2006 (CDC, 2008). The term overweight as defined by the CDC (2008), is a body mass index (BMI) at or above the 85th percentile and lower than the 95th percentile. Obesity is defined as a BMI at or above the 95th percentile for children of the same age and sex. Data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) (2008), which used height and weight measures, show an estimated 17% of children and adolescents ages 2 through 19 years are obese. This alarming data among our nation’s children and adolescents has implications for societal health care costs in the future.

Some populations, particularly African American/Black, Hispanic, and children from low-income families, have even high prevalence rates for childhood weight difficulties (Sherry, Mei, Scanlon, Mokdad, & Grummer-Strawn, 2004). National data
trends from the CDC indicate that African Americans had 51% higher prevalence of obesity, and Hispanics had 21% higher obesity prevalence as compared with White populations in the U.S. (CDC, 2010). The common lack of physical activity and poor nutrition among ethnic minority (i.e., African American and Hispanic) populations contributes to overweight children and adults as well as the development of chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer, and cardiovascular diseases (Hill, Sallis, & Peters, 2004).

Physical Activity is any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that result in energy expenditure (USDHHS, 2008, “Glossary of Terms”, physical activity). Personal, social, economic, and environmental factors all play role in the physical activity levels among young children and adults (USDHHS, 2008). As a result, many families and children are inactive at home and are likely to engage in sedentary behaviors like playing video games, TV watching, and computer activities. The findings from several studies have illustrated this such as Ariza, Chen, Binns, and Kaufer Christoffel's (2004) study of five and six-year-old Hispanic (mostly Mexican American) children in Chicago, revealed a link between TV viewing and overweight status. Likewise, Durant, Baranowski, Johnson, and Thompson (1994) observed three and four year old children in their homes and found that children who watched TV more hours a day and for longer periods at one sitting were less likely to engage in physical activity. What is also troubling is that African American, Hispanic and low-income parents are more likely to live in communities with fewer parks, sports facilities, bike paths, and other places for children to be active and safe (Powell, Martin, & Chowdury, 2003). For families in low-income
areas that do not have safe places to play outdoors the TV becomes a de facto substitute babysitter (Lindsay, Sussner, Kim, & Gortmaker, 2006). Experts recommend to prevent the continued onset of overweight and obesity among preschool children, a focus on increasing physical activity is necessary (CDC, 2008). The promotion of physical activity should begin as early as possible to stop the current trend of physical inactivity of children in the U.S., particularly ethnic minority children (Hessler, 2009).

Physically active children are also more likely to remain physically active throughout their adolescent years and possibly into adulthood (Malina, 1996). As such, preschool is the ideal age for development of basic motor movements through physically active play (Burdette & Whitaker, 2005). Play is associated with physical activity in that by its very nature is inclusive, which promotes bonding and connectedness between participants (Definition of Play for Children, 2007). When children play, they gain insights into their world and it (play) provides a means for creative self-expression (Muhammed, 2009). Play is the work of children (Stokes-Guinan, London, Mallonee, Westrich, & McLauglin, 2010) and essential for their development as it promotes regular parent-child interactions in the parenting process while enhancing healthy family relationships (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Play among children involves using fine and gross motor skills and interpersonal communication, which intersects and produces essential cognitive development of young children (Englebright, 2008). Encouraging young children to play allows for a child to develop and grow. It is through the development of fundamental motor skills and children’s enjoyment of activity (McCune, 1998), play, that maintains their interest and involvement in physical activity. Parents have a key role in
the process of encouraging their children to be physically active. This is important as they are likely to participate and stay active through childhood into adolescence if they are encouraged to play and participate in physical activity (Definition of Play for Children, 2007).

The National Association of Sport and Physical Education (NASPE, 2011) provides physical activity guidelines for all children from birth to age 5 years old. They suggest children should engage daily in physical activity that promotes movement skillfulness and foundations of health related fitness. The five guidelines for preschool physical activity are:

1. Children should have 60-minutes of structured physical activity daily.
2. Children should have 60-minutes or more of unstructured physical activity, while not being sedentary for more than one hour.
3. Children should develop competence in fundamental movement skills.
4. Children should have access to indoor and outdoor play spaces for performing large muscle activities.
5. Caregivers and parents who are responsible for the health and well being of children should provide opportunities for physical activity, movement skills, structured, and unstructured physical activity.

These recommendations are for parents and those who provide care for children in a variety of settings (e.g., daycare, community centers, and schools). Adherence to these recommended health-related behaviors for preschool children are predominantly under
the control of their parents (Irwin et al., 2005). However, many of these recommendations are likely not being achieved among preschool children.

The prevalence of preschool children who are overweight has lead to a rise in research attention for the past two decades in understanding and promoting children’s physical activity specifically as it relates to the role of the family, especially parents (Alderman et al., 2010). There have been various approaches to understanding physical activity in children and preschool populations. The following section reviews data based studies, which were focused on obesity prevention as a mechanism to encourage physical activity among preschool children and their families.

Various Approaches to Physical Activity in Children

While previous research on environmental influences, such as parents and childcare providers, is somewhat narrow (Nicklas et al., 2000) much of the literature about preschool physical activity focuses primarily on identifying determinants of physical activity behaviors (Sallis, Prochaska, & Taylor, 2000); health related obesity-prevention (Dietz & Gortmaker, 1985); and physical activity interventions (Wilson, 2009), which target childhood overweight and obesity. While attention to causal determinants, prevention, and intervention strategies are important, parents' attitudes, values, and beliefs (Kimieck & Horn, 1998; Raudsepp & Viira, 2000; Welk et. al., 2003) are key to developing a home environment that fosters physical activity among their children.

Brustad (1996) studied parental influence on children’s physical activity in an urban setting among lower socioeconomic Latina/o and White American families in an
attempt to clarify the type of physical activity environment and encouragement they provide for their children. The parents self-reported enjoyment of physical activity, perceived fitness levels, beliefs about the importance of physical activity, and the amount of encouragement they offered their children as it related to the child’s competence in and attraction to physical activity. Brustad found that parent’s encouragement to participate in physical activity and the children’s level of perceived competence was predictive of their attraction to physical activity. This supports the notion that parents play a pivotal role toward encouraging and providing opportunities for children to be physically active.

Lindsay, Sussner, Kim, and Gortmaker (2006) reviewed evidence on the importance of parents helping their children to develop and maintain healthful eating and physical activity habits throughout various stages of development – infancy, preschool, and school age. Several interventions outlined in the review focused on parental involvement in the implementation of healthful eating behaviors and physical activity within each stage of development. Lindsay and colleagues concluded that parents play a critical role at home and are essential in preventing childhood overweight and obesity. As such, parents should focus on understanding their role in their child’s dietary habits, physical activity, and sedentary behaviors.

In a review of health disparities and obesity prevention in youth, Wilson (2009) stated that, primary approaches to obesity prevention and treatment focused on randomized control trials (Riethmuller, Jones, & Okely, 2009) and family based interventions (Sussner et al., 2006). However, most of these studies did not include ethnic minorities or lower socioeconomic populations. Wilson (2009) targeted the importance of
identifying cultural values that may serve to inform intervention development and “to increase the understanding of barriers that are specific to [ethnic] minority populations” (p. 232). Using Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological systems theory (bioecological model) there is a suggestion that health promotion efforts be multifaceted and address systems that affect a child’s (positively or negatively) ability to engage in a healthy diet, physical activity, and weight control behaviors (Wilson, 2009). One strategy for enhancing the cultural appropriateness for health promotion programs involves using socio-cultural strategies to integrate health issues into the broader context of social and cultural values. Thus, two approaches for examining studies in this area are the [a] “culturally targeted approach, which is the idea that channeled material is sensitive to group level cultural values; and [b] culturally tailored approach, which is the integration of information based on the unique cultural values of the individual or group” (Kreuter, Lukwago, Bucholtz, Clark, & Sanderson-Thomson, 2003, p. 232). In this review, the authors targeted obesity-related interventions approaches and adiposity outcomes in ethnic minority children and adolescents that have been conducted with a focus on identifying culturally targeted or tailored approaches to interventions where appropriate (Wilson, 2009). One study identified in this review examined mother-daughter dyads as a part of a program to improve diet and physical activity of inner city, low-income African American preadolescent girls. Mother-daughter dyads were randomized to receive a culturally tailored program for improving healthy eating and physical activity based on African American traditions (dance, jump rope). Results showed decreases in caloric intake, increases in parental support, and role modeling for healthy eating. The authors asserted
that more research is needed to assess the effectiveness of culturally targeted and tailored interventions in other populations besides African Americans. While some investigators suggest interventions that address barriers and needs of a target population (Glasgow, Klesges, Dzewaltowski, Bull, & Estabrooks, 2004) racial differences and socioeconomic status have also been shown to contribute to the cause of health disparities among ethnic minorities (Wong, Shapiro, Boscardin, & Ettner, 2002). Thus, a need for qualitative research is important in understanding what theoretical approaches are best suited for children from diverse ethnic populations (Wilson, 2009).

*Qualitative Studies in Preschool Physical Activity*

In recent years, many researchers have focused their efforts on examining determinants of sport and physical activity participation. This has occurred typically through the use of quantitative methods focused on knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs variables in sport and physical activity settings, according to Allender, Cowburn, and Foster (2006). For example, Kagamimori et al. (1999) surveyed 8,834 parents of preschoolers (mean age 3 years old) to determine the physical activity of their children. These researchers assessed parents’ perceptions of their child’s activity in seeking to understand deeper questions relative to parents' responses on the survey. In survey studies with large samples (e.g., Kagamimori et al., 1999), it is difficult to assess the direction and strength of trends in physical activity participation. Explaining how children and adults adopt, maintain, or cease to participate in sport and physical activity throughout their lives typically go unanswered (Allender et al., 2006). Thus, an alternative method for assessing contexts that may influence participation in physical activity is necessary.
According to Thomas, Nelson, and Silverman (2005), qualitative methods can offer in-depth insight into individuals’ experiences and perceptions of the motives and barriers to participation in sport and physical activity. Over the years, qualitative methods have become more important in developing support for public health research and necessary for going deeper when seeking meaning and understanding for participation or lack of participation in physical activity. Of note, Allender et al. (2006) reviewed the literature in the United Kingdom (UK) to synthesize qualitative studies related to barriers and motivation to participation in sport and physical activity among children and adults. Their review targeted young children (less than 15 years old), teenagers and young women (14 through 24 years old), adults (30 through 65 years old), and older adults (50 years old and older). The following research papers identified the following demographic variables: three described socio-economic status, two-referenced ethnicity, while two targeted young children. The findings indicated that in order to motivate young children to participate in sport and physical activity it is necessary for parents to support their children's opportunities to participate, provide opportunities for them to try a variety of sports [experimentation], provide a safe environment, and encourage other family members to be active (Allender et al., 2006). No studies identified barriers to participation in sport and physical activity facing young children, although other demographic groups (teenagers, adults, and older adults) were targeted in terms of high costs, poor access to facilities, and unsafe environments as potential barriers to non-participation.
Thompson et al. (2009) investigated how much a family values physical activity as a family based activity in the UK. They examined the influence of peers and partners on physical activity participation in 10 and 11 year old children. Thirty participants (26 female and 4 male) volunteered to participate in telephone interviews to assess parents' perceptions about the importance of family participation in physical activity. Many of the parents were from lower socioeconomic communities with few from higher socioeconomic communities. The results suggest that parents find physical activity important and produce benefits (e.g., increased communication, spending time together, enjoyment, weight control, enhanced mental health, and physical fitness); but many spent little or no time together participating in physical activity. Barriers to participation in physical activity were busy lifestyles, diverse ages and interests of children and adults, bad weather, lack of access, transportation issues, and lack of fiscal resources to support the activities. Thompson et al.’s (2009) study demonstrated the importance of seeking deeper meanings of physical activity, while adding to the literature regarding parents' perceptions of the importance, frequency, and nature of family physical activity. The authors concluded that family-based interventions may be more effective if they are designed to accommodate the demands and needs of families and provide affordable, diverse activities appealing to a wide range of interests (Thompson et al., 2009).

Similarly, Hesketh, Waters, Green, Salmon, and Williams (2005) reviewed the literature regarding parents' and children perceptions of healthy eating, physical activity, and obesity prevention of in Australia. The aim of the study was to elicit views of primary school aged children and parents from two perspectives: (a) perceptions, beliefs,
and attitudes toward social and physical environmental barriers to childhood obesity prevention programs; and (b) acceptable foci and modes of delivery of obesity prevention programs for children (Hesketh et al., 2009). Semi-structured focus group discussions for the 119 children (age groups 7-8 years old and 10-11 years old) and 17 parents were conducted. Children’s focus group discussions consisted of photos that illustrated elements of physically active and inactive people, as well as, healthy and unhealthy foods followed by a discussion facilitated by the researchers on children’s perceptions of the pictures. Parents alternatively participated in focus group discussions and were guided through a series of questions designed to promote discussion about physical activity. The parents identified barriers to healthy lifestyle being car fumes (pollution), lack of playground equipment, and neighbors complaining about children making too much noise outside. While parents of lower socioeconomic status noted money as a barrier, all parents stated that the home (television and computer), small yard or no yard, and reduced physical activity time at school contributed to a lack of activity (Hesketh et al., 2005). Although the intended target population was families of lower socioeconomic status, they were not included as much in the study due to inaccessibility.

In previous studies, researchers have reviewed motivations: (a) interventions (e.g., family-based, obesity-related); and (b) barriers to pre-adolescent and adolescent parents’ and children’s perceptions regarding physical activity. Researchers have attempted to target various demographic groups including different age groups; however, the research base is undeveloped in presenting qualitative research about preschool families and physical activity. Research that targets preschool parents' and children physical activity
behaviors from a qualitative perspective is limited and identified below. In the studies reviewed in the next section, the researchers focused on parents and preschool children with particular attention given to physical activity barriers, beliefs, perceptions, and behaviors among the samples.

**Qualitative Studies, Parents and Preschool Children**

In a qualitative study, Irwin, He, Sangster Bouck, and Pollet (2005) assessed parents’ perspectives of their preschoolers’ physical activity, screen-viewing behaviors, and programming suggestions to encourage appropriate levels of both activities. The participants were Canadian preschool children and their parents. The researchers used semi-structured interviews to gather information from 71 parents (68 women and 3 men). The sample was homogenous (95% White Canadians) with a mix of income levels. The results indicated that parents were passionate about their preschoolers’ health especially their physical activity behaviors while also noting parents largely influence the physical activity behaviors of preschoolers (Irwin et al., 2005). The components that facilitated or hindered participation in physical activity were time, resources, and safety issues, daycare providers, and weather as reported by the parents (Irwin et al., 2005). Irwin et al. asserted that finding out what facilitates or hinders parents’ inability to provide their preschoolers with appropriate physical activity is essential for understanding how to address such barriers and facilitators (Irwin et al., 2005). Two mechanisms for addressing barriers are education and intervention as they could be essential for establishing physically activity lifestyles during early childhood according to Irwin et al. (2005). Those mechanisms
could be the impetus for establishing a physically active lifestyle from early childhood into adult life.

Dwyer, Needham, Randall-Simpson, and Shaver Heeney (2008) examined Canadian parents’ perceptions about barriers to young children eating healthy and being physically active. The study was positioned in the lens of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental barriers. The purpose of the study was to complete a needs assessment to determine if parents at preschool centers in Canada had problems or challenges in supporting both healthy eating and physical activity among their preschool children in order to develop an intervention in these two areas (Dwyer et al., 2005). The participants (e.g., 34 women, 5 men) were middle income English speaking and predominantly White Canadians who had children in the preschool center. Focus group discussions were established to identify an intervention to promote healthy eating and physical activity among preschoolers. Themes developed from the focus group discussions and the social ecological framework was used to present themes as this fit within the intrapersonal (individual), interpersonal (interactions), and physical environment factors, which have been used in previous studies to present determinants of behavior (Sallis & Owen, 1999). The results of the intrapersonal theme indicated children preferred sedentary activities. That is to say, watching television; interpersonal themes indicated social support were an enabler for children to eat healthy and be active; while environmental factors that affected physical activity were more space to play and bad weather as examples (Dwyer et al., 2008). The findings of this study expand and confirm prior qualitative research on parents’ perceptions of healthy eating and physical activity among preschoolers, thus
underscoring the need to develop and implement effective programs for preschoolers and caregivers (Dwyer et al., 2008).

As articulated above, qualitative research is important to providing valuable insights into health determinants (Ginsburg, Alexander, Hunt, Sullivan, & Cnaan, 2002), while providing a rich description of the context within which diet and activity choices are made (Bentley, Gavin, Black, & Teti, 1999). Gordon-Larsen et al. (2004) in a qualitative study provided detail and insight into barriers to physical activity related to African American caregiver-daughter dyad perceptions. The researchers examined perceptions of caregiver-daughter dyads’ sedentary behaviors, barriers to and facilitators of physical activity, and directions for intervention factors among adolescent African American girls. Participants were 11 primary caregivers/parents (8 mothers and 3 grandmothers) and 12 African American girls (6 through 9 year olds) who were a part of a church-based pilot program called–Girls rule! Information for the study was gathered using face-to-face semi-structured in-depth interviews with three themes emerging which were: (a) sedentary behaviors (TV watching, inactivity); (b) barriers to physical activity (perceived lack of recreation-related neighborhood); and (c) lack of role modeling an active lifestyle (Gordon-Larsen et al., 2004). These household and environmental factors predispose the girls to inactivity, primarily participation and enjoyment in sedentary behaviors, perceived barriers like lack of facilities and traffic, as well as motivational barriers (not liking to go outside). The frequency of television viewing is high among U.S. children (Gordon-Larsen, McMurray, & Popkin, 1999), particularly among African American youth who are inactive due to television viewing. Ethnic minority adolescent
girls are likely to have higher levels of inactivity and lower levels of moderate to vigorous physical activity (Gordon-Larsen, 1998). The data generated from this inquiry suggest that caregivers play an important role in modeling appropriate physical activity behavior. It also appears that mothers and grandmothers have control and influence over the household environment on the patterns and activities among African American girls (Gordon-Larsen et al., 2004). This is one of the first studies to target African American participants, barriers, and facilitators to physical activity.

Goodway and Smith (2005) investigated environmental factors influencing the physical activity of African American preschool children in urban communities. This study was phase two of a large scale study where researchers were interested in evaluating motor skill interventions and qualitative examination of preschool children and their families who were at risk of developmental delay or school failure (or both) (Branta & Goodway, 1996; Goodway & Rudasill, 1996, 1997; Goodway & Branta, 2003). In addition to focusing on African American preschool children in urban communities and their physical activity, at risk factors, other contextual variables like health and motor development were included in the study. The context of the community included a high percentage of low-income families, a predominant African American community, high unemployment rate, and school culture that were high-risk status for school failure (Goodway & Smith, 2005). Data were collected with informal audio taped interviews, participant's observation field notes, videotape of preschool physical activity sessions, documents, and the Home Observation Measure of the Environment (HOME) inventory (Bradley & Caldwell, 1981). Four themes emerged from the data and the
themes from the findings were: (a) there were many contextual barriers to physical activity for preschool children (gangs, lack of accessible parks); (b) children were required to stay in the house and without the opportunity for physical activity (often participate in sedentary activities, television viewing, and playing video games); (c) they had limited role models for positive physical activity; and (d) due to limited opportunity for physical activity, these children were likely to develop deficient fundamental motor skills, according to Goodway and Smith. This study is one of a few to identify contextual barriers to physical activity among low income, African American preschool children and their families. The findings corroborate similar findings in previous studies in regards to barriers that hinder participation in physical activity among these respective communities.

There is a gap in the literature that supports understanding African American parents’ perspectives – specifically to what beliefs they ascribed to physical activity. There may be contextual barriers that make it difficult for providing opportunities for their preschool children to be active (Goodway & Smith, 2005). The lack of activity in spite of children’s willingness and desire to be active is a major hindrance toward gaining the necessary fundamental movement skills needed in preadolescents and creates inadequacies in these basic activity skills as they grow and develop into adolescents. Limitations early in life could persist and lead to a decrease in physical activity leading to inactivity and other sedentary behaviors along with possible chronic health conditions (e.g., diabetes, overweight, obesity, and cardiovascular disease).
In a qualitative study by Hessler (2009), physical activity behaviors of rural preschoolers were investigated. Parents of children ages 2-5 years old in a small rural community participated in focus group and individual interviews over a 10 week period. Other forms of data collected were participant observation field notes and photographs. Participants in the study were “12 women and 13 community members” (Hessler, 2009, p. 251). The theoretical framework used to shape the study was a bioecological framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which focuses the child at the center of the environment and explores how the system (micro-, meso-, exo-, macro-, and chronosystems) surrounding them influences their development. In order to gain deep insight into the aspects of physical activity among the preschool population, Hessler et al. (2009) implemented a “micro-ethnography to collect and analyze the data” (p. 247). This form of ethnography describes “a close up view, as if under a microscope, of investigations of a small social unit or group” (Fetterman, 1998, p. 28). In this study, rural settings provided both promotion and barriers to development of physically active families. Hessler (2009) reported lack of funding for sidewalks and gutters, poor economy, and lack of organized activity options due to extreme rural areas for children and their families as barriers to physical activity. Consequently, she noted due to the rural nature of the area there seemed to be a sense of community among the residence (i.e., they looked out for each other’s children and participated in community events).

Findings in the Dwyer et al. (2008) study illustrate the importance of social support for parents in the community. Specifically, single parents especially need support as the ethic of work supersedes other systems in the families’ world. When they arrive
home from work, most of them do not have time (Dwyer et al., 2008; Irwin et al., 2005) or energy to participate with their children or engage in physical activity. Thus as Ariza et al. (2004) suggested, watching television and playing video games become the de facto babysitter for the children. Moreover many neighborhoods are not safe (Dwyer et al., 2008; Goodway & Smith, 2005; Irwin et al., 2005) or do not have access to appropriate places for children to play (Dwyer et al. 2008; Goodway & Smith, 2005), as well fiscal resources and opportunities for participation (Hessler, 2009) are limited.

Researchers in the previous studies have identified barriers that provide information as to why parents of preschool children may not participate in physical activity. In these studies the participants were largely homogenous, primarily White and female. Further most of the studies did not identify socioeconomic status of the participants. Due to the limited scope of previous studies, the current study adds to the body of knowledge regarding what beliefs African American parents and preschool children ascribe to physical activity. Exploration of the participants’ beliefs provides evidence that supports the physical activity needs in the African American community, identifies inhibitors and encouragers of physical activity and generates data to inform others as to what is happening in the community of African American parents and their preschool age children.
Chapter 3: Methods

This purpose of this study was to explore the beliefs African American parents and their preschool children ascribe to physical activity. In general, this study examined African American families’ daily routines, how they were established, as well as described how these routines were a part of their cultural norms and daily interactions and how this may or may not affect their ability or willingness to participate in physical activity.

This chapter is comprised of seven sections that outline the direction of the study. The researcher described his epistemology in the first section. Next, he provided a review of ecocultural theory as the theoretical framework that shaped the focus of this study and from which the research questions were drawn. The third section outlines the research design while the fourth section details specific research methods including setting, site, entrée into the site, and participants and their recruitment. The fifth section outlines the methods of data collection. In the sixth section, the researcher discusses his personal and professional background, which situates him as the researcher within the context of the study. The last section discourse on data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.
**Epistemology**

The goal was to explore the beliefs African American parents and their preschool children ascribe to physical activity. The knowledge sought was understood within the interpretivist perspective of the qualitative paradigm. “Constructing descriptive analyses that emphasize deep, interpretive understandings of social phenomena” (Pope, 2006, p. 22) occurred through interviews, observations, and interactions with the families and children within a particular African American community. Furthermore, the researcher sought to gain access to the meanings behind individual’s actions, make interpretations of the meanings and work to understand the society and culture of those within the study (Erickson, 1986). This occurred through an exploration of the way African American parents and their preschool children viewed the world and constructed meanings of their worlds (Pope, 2006).

In seeking to explore and define the beliefs of African American families, gain knowledge related to physical activity, and make interpretations based on their beliefs and understandings, this study was framed in social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978). This philosophical perspective leads the researcher in search of the deep meanings, in this case, of the lived experiences of African American parents and their preschool children, where knowledge is constructed, routines carried out, from the day-to-day concepts and meanings (Pope, 2006). There is an assertion that an individual actively engages learning and that meaningful learning occurs when individuals are engaged in social activities (McMahon, 1997). In this sense, the focus is on determining who’s reality is being defined, the meaning of their reality (assessed by their beliefs) when engaged with others.
(it is subjective), and the contexts, cultural norms, routines, and niche’s in which persons learn (Guba & Lincoln 1994).

In summary, the way of knowing, epistemology, and the reality, ontology, within the social constructivist’s perspective guided the researcher’s decision to use ethnographic research method. Again, the researcher’s goal was to explore and describe parents and preschool children’s cultural perspectives (beliefs) in their worlds, why they hold those beliefs, and experiences they have in their world (Pope, 2006).

*Theoretical Framework*

There has been an increased use of ecological models to measure and assess how social and physical environmental factors influence physical activity (Sallis, 2009). This current study used such a model as a framework in ecocultural theory, which was derived from the psycho-cultural model developed by John and Beatrice Whiting (Whiting, 1975; 1976; 1980; Whiting & Edwards, 1988) and their student associates (LeVine, 1977; Munroe, Munroe, & Whiting, 1981; Super & Harkness, 1980, 1986; Weisner, 1984; Weisner & Gallimore, 1985). It combines ecological and cultural theories to produce ecocultural theory that takes into account the families’ goals, beliefs, values, and needs while also providing a comprehensive view of the family in their environment (Bernheimer et al., 1990). Ecocultural theory contends that all families organize their life routines to meet the needs of the individual family members (Bernhiemer & Keogh, 1995; Gallimore, Weisner, Kaufman, & Bernheimer, 1989; Gallimore, Weisner, Bernheimer, Gutherie, & Nihira, 1993).
Ecocultural theory used in this study has three core concepts that drive the research questions and data collection within this current study. Outlined below are the theoretical tenets of ecocultural theory displayed in relationship to the research goals and methods of data collection and are presented in Table 3.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ecocultural Theory Core Concept</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Data Collection Method</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Families construct meaning of their circumstances (what are the goals and beliefs of the family) and their responses to those circumstances and meanings.</td>
<td>1. What beliefs do African American parents ascribe to physical activity in regards to their preschool children?</td>
<td>Interviews, Observation, Field Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. What knowledge do African American parents have about physical activity for their preschool children in regards to feasibility, access, opportunities, and more?</td>
<td>Interviews, Observation, Written Documents &amp; Artifacts, Field Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Daily routines are a critical unit of analysis which are created and sustained by ecocultural forces.</td>
<td>3. What is the nature of the daily routines and interactions of African American families and to what extent are these consistent (daily, weekly or periodically) or variable (daily, weekly or periodically)?</td>
<td>Interviews, Observation, Written Documents and Artifacts, Field Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ecocultural theory is applicable to families in all cultures using 7 of 10 hierarchical ecocultural niche profiles to target families’ cultural and environmental niche profile.</td>
<td>4. What are the cultural norms and contexts (ecocultural niche) and belief systems of physical activity and how do these influence or adversely affect opportunities for and/or engagement in physical activity among African American parents and preschool children?</td>
<td>Interviews, Observations, Community Mapping, Written Documents and Artifacts</td>
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Table 3.1. Conceptions of Ecocultural Theory, Research Questions, and Methods

Ecocultural theory supports the view that researchers must accept family statements as meaningful, what matters is what is real to the families (Seligman & Darling, 1989). In other words, families construct their own knowledge of reality.
(Bernheimer et al., 1990). Connected within this notion is the idea that “ecocultural niche profiles of each family are a product of social construction where human beings (families) organize, understand, and give meaning to their everyday lives. People act on and respond to their ecology to make it work better for them” (Bernheimer et al., 1990, p. 223).

An additional set of outcomes within this theory posits whether family accommodations are meaningful in terms of their beliefs and values, whether accommodations are congruent with a child’s attributes and whether accommodations are sustainable for long periods, given the constraints and opportunities of families (Gallimore et al., 1989; Weisner & Gallimore, 1989). The interpretation here is that African American families have specific beliefs about what constitutes the most important needs within the family at a particular time. Those needs are likely to assume priority status and guide that person’s behavior in a certain direction (Dunst et al., 1988). A statement of example from a family member might be: “I work to support the family and may not have time to play with my children when I get home because of how late it is or how tired I am”. Social constructivist perspective informed by ecocultural theory guided the current study in answering the research questions and the ethnographic design.

**Ethnographic Research Design**

Ethnography “generates or builds theories of cultures and explanations of how people think, believe, and behave” (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010, p. 12). It is traditionally associated with and directed toward learning about the culture and interactions among those within the culture and understanding patterns of socially shared
behavior from the perspective of one who is not a part of the culture or group understudy (Wolcott, 2008). Ethnography, as described by Geertz (1973), “is an interpretive act of thick description…our data are really our own constructions of other people’s constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to” (p. 9). Moreover, Wolcott (2008) asserts that “ethnographic research is describing what people in some particular place or status do, and the meanings they ascribe to do the doing, under ordinary or particular circumstances, presenting that description in a manner that draws attention to regularities that implicate cultural process” (p. 73). Ethnography is an active process and means going into a particular setting, being among participants within a particular culture, and recording their beliefs and views. In the design of this study, the researcher is doing ethnography (Wolcott, 2008) as he seeks to interpret and make sense (interpret) of what is happening in the lives of the African American parents and their preschool children as it relates to physical activity.

Research Site

The site for the study was Raintree Headstart Preschool (pseudonym) located within a large metropolitan community in the Midwest. Raintree Preschool was a part of a larger organization Large County Child Development (LCCD, pseudonym) that supports and partners with many preschools across the county in the Northern portion of the metropolitan area of the city. The mission of the Headstart program was to implement a creative curriculum within an early learning program. The goal was to create learning experiences that were organized around four major developmental areas — social/emotional, fine/gross motor, cognitive development, and language and literacy
(CDCFC, 2011). Within these programs, participants were those who participate in the center-based program, which offer full and half-day programs instructed by lead and assistant teachers (CDCFC, 2011).

**Setting**

The Headstart program, Raintree Preschool, is located in the heart of a large metropolis at the intersection of a major thoroughfare through (road) and highway. The facility was considered a homebase, a place where other teachers came for resources, professional development, and served as a training center for all of the LCCD Headstart community (Interview with Coordinator of Special Projects, June, 2012). Raintree Headstart Preschool was formerly an elementary school converted into a Child Development facility. The center has been recognized for its outstanding teachers, center director, and services provided. The facility has two floors that comprise the preschool program. On the first floor, there are administrative offices, a large staging area (previously the gymnasium space) where food service employees use to prepare lunches for other HeadStart facilities in the area. Down the hall, there were two early HeadStart programs, that had children 6 months to 1 year of age, and the other classroom had children 1.5 years to 2.5 years of age. The second floor housed four preschool aged classrooms. The first class at the top of the stairs was a half-day preschool developmental program where the children, a few who had behavior or developmental disabilities, attend for a half day and then go home with another group of children attending in the afternoon. The remaining classrooms that align the hall in order were Classroom 2, Classroom 4, and Classroom 5 and each had approximately 16-18 children, two lead
teachers, one floater (i.e., teacher who moves to a classroom needing assistance based on teachers absences), and usually one volunteer grandmother. Classroom 3 is the indoor motor development room and it had padded floors and two play structures and was located between Classroom 2 and Classroom 4. The participants in this study consisted of African American parents and preschool children from these three classrooms. The preschool children were enrolled in the preschool at the start of the academic year and assented to participate in the study, along with their parents consent.

The demographic population of Raintree Headstart Preschool during the school year, consisted of 92% African American, 4% White American, 2% of the population identified as Hispanic American, and 1% American Indian children during the academic school year (Interview with Coordinator of Special Projects June, 2012). However, during the summer months 100% of the school’s population totaled 60 African American children. This study began at the end of May 2012, continued to the beginning of August 2012, and thus falls within the summer months. The researcher selected Raintree Headstart Preschool, referred to as simply Raintree from this point forward, as the research site because of the his previous four-year experience working in the school as a research assistant and guest instructor/leader in the motor development program conducted at the school. Below is a detailed description of the researcher’s previous involvement at Raintree.

Entrée

The researcher established close connections and became a regular figure at Raintree due to his role as research leader for a previous project called Motor Movement
Program (MMP, pseudonym). During that study, which occurred during the academic year and portions of summer months 2010 through 2011, the researcher would regularly spend one or more hours per day at the school working on the MMP and interacting with the director, teacher, children, and staff. The interactions at the school allowed him to establish relationships within the school setting allowing him to be “known” among all members of the school community.

When considering ethnography, researchers have described four distinctive phases of data collection getting in, becoming acquainted with participants, developing trust, and withdrawal from the research setting (Morse, 2010). For this study, the researcher was able to accomplish all four phases based on previous experience in the setting. The following are the detailed descriptions that provide documentation of his entrée into Raintree school based on the four phases of ethnography. The first phase, getting in (Morse, 2010) occurred through participation in the motor development lab at the school, informal interactions in the hallways and between classes, interactions with parents at monthly parent meetings, teacher’s and director during guest teaching experiences, and thereby becoming a regular part of the community. When formally proposing this study, the researcher had already accrued the equity for the community, therefore, “getting in”.

The second phase of data collection requires the researcher to get acquainted (Morse, 2010). The researcher’s involvement with preschool director, teacher’s, preschool children, and parents while attending and presenting at the monthly parent meetings helped him to get acquainted with the prospective participants. Specifically,
when the researcher visited the school and entered the classrooms the children and teachers commonly identified him by name, and he had formal and informal discussions with teachers, students, and the center director. Consequently, the MMP study allowed the researcher to maintain consistency by being at the school every other day of the week (MWF) for five continuous months working with teachers and children. During the study, the researcher arrived at the school at various times in the morning (7:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m.) and prior to children going home (4:00 p.m.) to collect information or data from the parents, children, or teachers. The researcher was also a guest lecturer at least two times during the fall and two times during the spring. This level of activity at the school allowed him to get acquainted with the children and parents of whom he would seek as study participants.

The third phase of data collection was trust which happened throughout the course of the study as time spent within the school setting allowed the researcher to make significant connections with school personnel, the center’s director, children, and many parents. Involvement in the school before, during, and after school as well as during the monthly events, allowed parents to view the researcher as a regular participant in the life of the school and they became better acquainted with his presence and were more willingly and likely to participate in the study. While teachers were not active participants in the recruitment process, parents often asked the teachers about his involvement and engagement in the school and the teachers would verify his role and responsibility in the programs within the school. Additionally, many parents who attended the monthly meetings would see him around and know from previous projects and trusted him.
Upon completion of MMP study’s data collection, the researcher was able to ease out of the research role by limiting his visits and talking with the staff and center director about his exit from the facility. Overall, the researcher’s previous role and involvement in the school community was a key factor in the selection of this facility for the study. He had established relationships with the students, parents, teachers, and center’s director and there was a high population of African American children and parents at the facility.

The four phases of data collection criteria in ethnography as described by Morse (2010) getting in, getting better acquainted, developing trust, and withdrawal during completion were accomplished within the MMP study. Engagement in this program allowed him to establish some credibility resulting in a familiarity and trust among the African American families at this center and thus many consented to be participants in the study (Fetterman, 2010).

Recruitment

Six family units were needed for inclusion in this study. A family unit was defined as one or two biological parents with one or more preschool children enrolled in Raintree Preschool. The researcher began recruiting families through participation in the monthly parent meetings by presenting study guidelines, posting fliers (Appendix A) throughout the facility, copying invitation letters and consent/assent forms (Appendix B) for all parents and placing in take home folders in Classrooms 2-5. He was also available at the facility to “catch” parents coming in to the facility or leaving the facility. However, before meeting with parents, posting fliers, or submitting letters, he completed the requirements as stated by the university’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocols and procedures. Included in the
IRB application was a letter of support seeking approval from the LCCD organization. The LCCD director reviewed the research protocol and asked for clarity and corrections in the document. Once made, the Center Director at Raintree signed the letter to designate approval granted by LCCD. See letter of support provided in Appendix C. Upon LCCD approval, the researcher submitted a research application to the University’s IRB. There were changes needed in the first draft, therefore, submission of corrections and changes to the research proposal application were made and submitted. Upon approval by the IRB participant recruitment began.

The Coordinator of Special Projects and the Center’s Director gave approval for the researcher to present his research parameters and recruit participants. This occurred during the Spring Family Fun Day Open House (See Appendix G). The goal of this session was to present the growth and progress of the children and to hear reports from school partners (i.e., Food Matters, Motor Development Program from the University) who had provided programming for the school and children from August 2011 to May 2012.

At the meeting, the researcher provided an overview of the motor development program that large university conduct throughout the year along with a summary of the goals of the program and progress of the children. Additionally, the researcher presented the letter of introduction at the parent meeting summarizing study goals and objectives at the meeting. The specific appeal was to attract six families to volunteer as participants in the study. While the teachers were not active participants in the recruiting process they indirectly helped by directing parents to seek out the researcher to answer questions and
directed them to look at materials in their take home folders or would inform the researcher when parents would inquire of the fliers regarding the study.

Participants

There were seven adult participants and six children that consented to participate in the study. Pseudonyms are used for all participants for confidentiality and integrity in the study. The following is a brief summary of how each family became a participant in the study. After presenting materials at the Spring Family Fun day, two families asked about the study, what was involved, and how they could participate. These became the first participants in the study, Candace, and her daughter Nikki. Mark and Tina, married parents of preschool child Tasha, inquired about the focus of the study and returned all the paperwork (i.e. informed consent, demographic questionnaire, and registration) and scheduling the first adult interview. She informed the researcher that she would also have her husband attend the interview as well.

The researcher recruited additional participants by setting up my materials at the top of the stairs at the school to be present and visible when parents brought their children into the preschool hallway or took them home from preschool. He would stay at the school from 7:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. sitting at the end of the hall with a poster and information related to the study for parents to make inquiries. Later, he would return and stay from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. which was when most all the children went home from preschool. There were many inquiries during the before and after school times, many parents took recruitment materials but many did not return them. However, the researcher added the four remaining participants needed for the study through the before and after
school “catch” time. Joe, a married American of African descent (Nigeria) with preschool child Charli was very interested in participating after he stopped one afternoon and engaged in a lengthy conversation about the study. Jenae, a single mother of preschool child Jordan signed up after she talked with the classroom teacher about the paperwork. The teacher directed her to the location the researcher was sitting at the end of the hall. She completed the paperwork and was included in the study. Alesia, a single mother of preschool child India, completed the paperwork and consented to participate after learning about the purpose of the study during a “catch” time when she was leaving the building. Angel, a married mother of preschool child Ronnie overheard a conversation the researcher had with the teacher of Classroom 5 after school. She asked for the study information and inquired of the purpose. After a week and follow up telephone calls, she returned the completed the paperwork (i.e., three weeks into the study). The delayed nature of recruitment of this participant caused the interview schedule for this family and others to be delayed. As a result of the delay, the researcher had to play catch up with the families regarding the interview schedule of the adults and children. Prior to Angel’s participation, one parent, Jackie (pseudonym), inquired about the study during a “catch” time, but did not follow through with the paperwork. Table 3.2 below identifies demographic information of the participants in the study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Parent(s)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Child Name, Age</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Completed Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Candace</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Nikki, 4</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Charli, 5</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenae</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Jordan, 4</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alesia</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>India, 5</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark and Tina</td>
<td>37, 43</td>
<td>Tasha, 5</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Stopped after the second adult interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angel</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Ronnie, 5</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2. Demographic Information about Study Participants.

The guidelines for participants in this study included six family units, each with at least one biological parent and a preschool child whose child attends Raintree Preschool Academy.

**Sampling**

Purposeful sampling was used as a means of selecting the family units with the specific purpose of describing in detail the attributes of the group (Patton, 1990). More specifically, criterion sampling (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002) was used to identify specific participant attributes based on the following criteria:

1. Family unit is comprised of at least one biological parent (a mother and/or father), one child who attends the Raintree, and any other family member in the same household.

2. Parent(s) must self-identify as African American and be at least 18 years of age.
3. Family unit must consent to participation in all of the designated data collection procedures identified in the study.

All the families met the criteria of the study; however, two of the participant families had circumstances that caused their children to stop attending Raintree preschool. Candace was 8 months pregnant during her enrollment in the study had her baby a few weeks premature, lost her job, and as a result was not allowed to have her child return to the preschool due to a change in her work/school status. In another case, Alesia because her daughter India, would be attending Kindergarten in the fall, decided to limit her enrollment in preschool for the summer as her daughter would start at the year round Kindergarten in late July. Therefore, Alesia felt, India needed a break before starting formal school and did not have India attend the preschool for the remaining three weeks of the study. Nonetheless, in both cases the families completed all the adult and child interviews, observations, and other particulars of the study.

**Data Collection**

The researcher used six types of data collection techniques in this study and they were: (a) interviews of parents and children; (b) observations [school visits, community centers, and other events]; (c) researcher’s field notes; (d) documents and artifacts; (e) community mapping, knowledge of local resources; and (f) researcher's journal entries. Creswell (1998) explained that data collection techniques used to support ethnographic qualitative research typically includes interviews, participant (direct) observations, artifacts, audio tapes, videotapes, field notes, and photographs. Use of multiple data
collection techniques, as mentioned here, contributed to establishing the trustworthiness (authenticity) of the data and strengthens the rigor of the study (Glesne, 2006).

To ensure clarity about the data collection and analysis procedures, Table 3.3 outlines the process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What beliefs do African American parents ascribe to physical activity in regards to their preschool children?</td>
<td>Interviews (Adults &amp; Children), Observation (Motor Development, Recess, and Classroom), Field Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What knowledge do African American parents have about physical activity for their preschool children in regards to feasibility, access, opportunities and more?</td>
<td>Interviews (Adults &amp; Children), Observation (Motor Development, Recess, and Classroom), Field Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What is the nature of the daily routines and interactions of African American families and to what extent are these consistent (weekly) or variable (weekend)?</td>
<td>Interviews (Adults &amp; Children), Observation (Motor Development, Recess, and Classroom), Center Handbook, &amp; Other Artifacts, Field Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What are the cultural norms and contexts (ecocultural niche) and belief systems of physical activity and how do these influence or adversely affect opportunities for and/or engagement in physical activity among African American parents and preschool children?</td>
<td>Interviews (Adults &amp; Children), Observation (Motor Development, Recess, and Classroom), Community Mapping (City-Data), Center Handbook, &amp; Other Artifacts, Field Notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3. Research Questions and Data Collection Methods

In order to seek individual beliefs about what physical activity means to African American families as manifested in the culture of these families, the researcher used a variety of methods (i.e. interviews, observations, written documents) as a means to collect data in describing the context of these families. To do this, the researcher had previously spent extended periods (prolonged engagement) at the school, interacting and engaging many of the children (getting in) in the study. He served as a research associate
working with preschool children and their parents for consistently for 3 months at Raintree (immersed). The researcher was also a guest lecturer in the motor development program and spoke at the preschool monthly parent meetings throughout the year (getting acquainted). It was after parents consented to participate in the study that he began to develop relationships with the parents (getting acquainted) and specific preschool children enrolled in the study. The end sought in the current study was to analyze the beliefs African American parents and their children ascribe to physical activity by investigating their routines, cultural context, and normative ways of living associated with physical activity. To gain a better understanding of the families and what they do and to gain in-depth descriptions of the culture of these families, the researcher collected data using interviews, written documents, community mapping, observations in the school, and collection of demographic information of family units (Appendix D).

*Interviews*

Interviews are ways in which researchers collect qualitative data to gain specific information in the form of direct quotes about informants’ feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values, experiences, and knowledge of situations (Richards & Morse, 2007). Data from interviews may yield detailed information from an individual’s or group’s perspective (Byra & GocKarp, 2000). To gain rich and in-depth understanding’s of the families in the current study, the adults (parents) were interviewed three times, while the children were interviewed on two separate occasions within the 10 weeks of the study.
Interviews with parents

The researcher interviewed each adult parent participant on three separate occasions using with a semi-structured face-to-face interview protocol. All the interviews took place at Raintree Preschool with a few exceptions, see below for extended explanation regarding the interviews. The interviews averaged around 22 minutes in length with a few going longer and others going shorter. The researcher recorded the interviews using a digital voice recorder which was placed on the table with permission sought from the participants prior to each interview. Review of the audio files took place upon completion of the interview and with each interview placed in a computer file with the participant’s number, pseudonym, and interview number recorded in the file. Transcriptions of audio files took place after the first interview. Complete transcriptions were provided before the next interview for each and all participants. The researcher kept field notes of the interview sessions by describing and jotting ideas or notes from the interview as another form of data throughout all interviews. A summary of the adult interviews follows.

The first interview conducted weeks two and three of the study were comprised of questions that sought information from families regarding demographic background and finding out the families’ daily routines and cultural norms. The overriding theme in this interview was to gain a comprehensive view of the big picture or the “Grand Tour” (Weisner, 1984) of families. The researcher asked the question “Describe a typical day in your family?” (Appendix E interview guide for Adult interviews). Research Questions 1, 2, and 3 framed the focus of this interview for gaining clarity and understanding of the
daily lives, routines, and how culture influenced beliefs about physical activity of the adults and that of their children.

The second interview conducted weeks five and six during the study was an opportunity to discuss the experiences related to physical activity in the lives of the parents and their preschool children. The Research Questions targeted in this interview were questions 1, 2, and 4. As with all interviews an emphasis on making sure to review the previous interview was adult participants reviewed interview transcripts as a form of member check to establish accuracy and authenticity of their statements from the interview. This allowed the researcher to edit and correct transcripts while making clarification of what the participant claimed.

During weeks, eight, nine, and ten the researcher conducted the final adult interviews to examine knowledge while seeking to understand the influence and effect of physical activity in the lives of preschool children. Specifically Research Questions 2, 3, and 4 guided this interview. During this interview, the researcher wanted to know what knowledge parents and children had of physical activity in the school. What supports or resources were available for physical activity? While asking them in what ways physical activity could be implemented within their family and what limits or encourages their families to participate in physical activity?

As the adult interview process began, adult participants reviewed the interview transcripts as a form of member checks (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researcher completed all the adult transcripts and left a copy in a sealed envelope in the child’s take home folder or sent a copy via email to each parent. However, many parents did not take
the time to review the transcripts nor did they take the material home and review it. Therefore, prior to interviews two and three, when parents confirmed they had not reviewed the transcripts, the researcher asked the parents in the study to take time to review the transcripts and provide feedback as to the accuracy and clarity of the discussion. This provided parents an opportunity to make clarifications and to confirm the accuracy of the content and context of the transcripts. Upon approval by participants, corrections were made on the spot and transcripts were updated with the appropriate changes in the transcript data files.

Throughout the adult interviews, the researcher spent time following up on any questions reported by participants that were not clear or needed further exploration from previous interviews. Throughout all the interviews, there seemed to be a lack of clarity among the participants about their definition of physical activity. During each successive interview after the first one, the researcher took the opportunity to re-ask the question to determine if there was consistency in their understanding or answer regarding physical activity.

Most adult interviews were conducted on site, however, several were conducted off school property due to parent’s requests. The third interview with Candace was conducted off site at a restaurant due to having a baby a few weeks prior and it was close to her home. The third interview with Joe was held at a fast food restaurant due to his work schedule. Similarly, the first and second interviews with Alesia were conducted at her place of employment, while the third interview was conducted at her home. Alesia is a preschool teacher and due to her limited availability of time before and after school, she
asked to meet the researcher at her school for the interviews. For the final interview with Alesia, she did not realize the date scheduled was a day she had arranged to be off, so she asked if the researcher would come to her house and complete the interview. The researcher complied with Alesia’s request and went to her home to complete the interview while taking an observer with him to the interview. Mark and Tina asked to have the interviews completed off site at a restaurant (fast food) and during the evening hours due to competing work schedules. For reasons unknown, Mark, Tina, and family stopped all interaction and engagement in the research study upon completion of the second interview. The researcher attempted to contact Mark and Tina several times prior to the last interview date, specifically on four occasions, by calling their home telephone twice, a short note at school in the take home folder, and lastly via email message. Regardless of the method, the parents did not respond to any of the attempts to contact them.

Each family unit was given a card of appreciation for their involvement in the study as well as a $10.00 gift card to a local department store as stated in the study parameters. However, one family, Mark and Tina, discontinued participation in the study and, therefore they did not receive the gift card.

*Interviews with the preschool children*

The term ethnography as defined by James (2001) means “writing about people…therefore, children have become recognized as people and studied within ethnography” (p. 246). Children are seen as competent informants and interpreters of their own lives and the lives of others while the child’s own accounts are a part of the
analysis through their social interactions and engagement with peers and adult caretakers (James, 2001). A way to include children in the ethnography process is to interview them using “task centered activities,” which are participatory techniques that are effective at getting a child’s perspective and may involve the use of media [e.g. drawings, maps, pictures, or fill in charts] (James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998).

This current study incorporated two interviews using task-centered activities with the six preschool children who had assented to participate in the study. Interviews with each child took place once during the first three weeks of the study and once during the final two weeks of the study. The time scheduled for the interviews was no more than 15 minutes in length. The intent was to have specific weeks for child interviews, however, with some of the children not being accessible (i.e., not coming to school) it was difficult to maintain a consistent and definitive interview schedule with them due to absences or classroom schedules.

Task centered activities, such as drawings and picture identification were used in capturing the children’s interpretations (Punch, 2002). For this study, the researcher used this method with the preschool children interviews to seek information regarding their beliefs and knowledge about physical activity. An interview guide was used to help begin the interview process with the preschool children (Appendix F). In using the first technique of drawings, the children were prompted with the following question: What types of things you get to do when you come home from school everyday? What do you get to play? (Interview #1). What types of things do you do on the weekend, Saturday and Sunday? (Interview #2). Using this technique allowed the children to draw a picture
of what they did and then respond by describing or explaining their picture. The researcher then transitioned to the picture identification method when the children had completed providing verbal details about the picture they drew. The second half of the interview was the picture identification method. The children were asked to look at a variety of 20 clipart pictures that were mostly descriptors of physical activity. The researcher placed them face up on a table and then asked the children to describe the following: What the picture was and if they get to do the activity when at home (week or weekend)? Using this technique allowed the children to look at the picture, identify the picture, recall the level of involvement in the activity and when or how often it occurred for the children.

During each interview, the researcher followed up with the children after completion of their drawing or selection of a picture by engaging in an open-ended dialogue about what they drew or what they selected and why (Punch, 2002). The researcher used open-ended questions to allow the children to provide their meaning and interpretation of the drawing rather than for the researcher to speak to the drawing by interpreting what the children drew (Fetterman, 2010).

The preschool children interviews were videotaped and transcribed verbatim from a Canon A800 sure shot camera. The researcher used the video program setting, mounted on a tripod with fixed settings to record the interviews. The researcher’s observations and thoughts regarding the interviews were recorded in a field notebook and reviewed immediately after each interview and the specific comments made regarding the
interview, scribed his thoughts, and feelings about the interview upon completion. These notations were included in the data analysis.

The interviews for the six children in the study occurred at Raintree with the exception of India’s final interview and both of Nikki’s interviews. India was not attending the preschool at the time of the scheduled interview in early July and thus the interview with her took place off site. Similarly, the researcher went to Nikki’s home to complete her interviews due to her mom having a newborn baby earlier in the summer, the family moving, and Nikki not having the opportunity to come to school.

**Observations**

Patton (2002) describes participant observation “as a description of the setting that was observed, activities that took place in that setting, people who participated in those activities, and the meanings of what was observed from the perspectives of those observed” (p. 262). For this study, the researcher observed the children in three different settings, classroom, recess, and motor development lab, with the purpose of observing specific types of physical activity among children in those settings. Those observations served as means to: (a) see what was happening in the setting, (b) describe the context of the preschool child in those settings, and (c) create a descriptive picture of the activities the child participated in school.

The school had a particular schedule where children participated in specific activities at specific times during the day. Each HeadStart preschool had a specific schedule based on the half day or full day program (LCCD handbook, 2012). The classrooms in this study were full day classrooms and throughout the day there were
specific times when the researcher completed the observations. The recess observations usually occurred during *Story Time, 10:25 a.m.; after Lunch during Outdoor Large Muscle Activity, 12:15 p.m.; *Group Activity, 3:50 p.m.; or Outdoor Large Muscle Activity, 4:15 p.m. (LCCD handbook, 2012). Classroom observations occurred during Large Group/Talk Time, 8:30 a.m.; Choice time and small groups, 8:50 a.m., Story Time, 10:25 a.m.; *Group Activity, 3:50 p.m.; Choice time/small group activities, 4:45 p.m.

Finally, the researcher planned to observe the children in their motor development lab, which was a weekly themed movement and physical activity program for preschool children facilitated by the faculty and students from large university. The children receive two days of programming a week at 30 minutes a day; however, the program was in its remaining days of programming when approval was given to start the study. Four children and their families, Nikki, Charli, India, and Jordan had consented to participate in the study prior to the program ending.

Additionally, the original intent was to videotape the motor development lab sessions, however, school personnel prohibited videotaping of the students, so the researcher documented the child’s participation by observing the classes and taking detailed notes of each setting. The four children participated in the MMP, but only one observation occurred for the four children during this program. The researcher recorded field notes of the activities conducted, mapped the space, and provided a detailed description of the specific observation. Other observations did not take place due to the program ending and children not being in school during the MMP sessions.
While the goal was to observe two days of recess and classroom activities it is important to note that the researcher did not accomplish this goal in the study. There were mitigating factors, which included: absentism by the children, the motor development program ending for the season, schedule changes and changes in the timing of observation days and/or times that contributed to the lack of completing two observations per area per student.

Specific to the observations, the researcher’s role in the setting was that of observer/participant (Glesne, 2006). In each class, he would enter the room greet the teacher and try to find a chair that was inconspicuous in the classroom attempting not to draw attention to himself or what he was doing in the room. There were occasions where his role shifted, especially later in the study when the children became more aware of my presence in the classroom. As much as possible, the researcher limited interactions with the children and tried to maintain a role Classroom Observer.

Field Notes

During observations of children in the recess, classroom, physical activity program, and other community events the researcher maintained a logbook documenting and noting what took place throughout the study. He noted various ideas, thoughts, my perspective of “what is going on” in the respective settings and used a digital recorder at times to record thoughts and ideas when leaving the site. Taking opportunities for jotting words or notes, as well as codes in the field notes gave him a general idea of what happened during a particular interview or observation. This was very useful to document
the behaviors and descriptions of individual’s and the physical state of the environment (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999).

Transcripts documenting what took place during the observation, location, time of day, and activities completed document what took place during the observations. General ideas of interpretation of what was going on and how the children participated or interacted during the experience were described as well during the observations. The purpose of the notes was to guide the researcher in determining what took place and provide an in-depth description of how the activities were a part of the children’s cultural norms and influences affecting their ability (or willingness) to participate in physical activity. These notes were recorded during the data collection process or as soon as the specific data collection procedure was completed.

Documents and Artifacts

Written documents are any written or recorded material that is not specifically prepared in response to a request from an inquirer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). “One’s understanding of the phenomenon in question grows as you make use of the documents and artifacts that are a part of people’s lives” (Glesne, 2006, p. 68). The researcher secured several artifacts and documents from the facility and area resources that provide some background into the physical activity options available to parents. The artifacts provided by the Headstart facility such as parent handbook had extensive documentation and guidelines for parents who enrolled their children within the Headstart centers. This resource was provided to all families when they enrolled in the program and was reviewed with the families during an enrollment interview (Interview with Special
Projects Coordinator June 2012). The first six pages detail the overarching goal of HeadStart, LCCD, and Raintree Preschool. There are several sections, General Information, Policies and Procedures, Family Engagement, Program Areas, State of Ohio law regarding preschool facilities, Preschool programs within LCCD, and the yearly schedule, definition of the program, hours of operation, ratio of teachers to students, and daily academic schedule were outlined in the document. Again this information gives parents specific parameters of the school guidelines and parent expectations.

Included in the documents was a flier that provided the details of the parent meeting for the end of the year parent event. Listed on the document was the itinerary with the speakers for the program. Appendix G presents a record of the researcher’s participation in the agenda as well as other partners and agencies that provide services for Raintree. Being included in the agenda was intended to target participants for recruitment in the study.

Also included in the documents were the original pictures drawn during the interviews with the children. Evaluation and analysis of the artifacts were documented in the researcher’s field notes with evaluations made regarding the artifacts collected. The documents included give insight into prospective offerings of physical activity at Raintree Preschool Academy. These data gave support or disconfirmed theories related to parents and preschool children’s beliefs about physical activity and assisted in enhancing the credibility of the study through triangulation with other sources of data (e.g., interviews, observations) thereby strengthening the study.
Community Mapping

This section describes the community where the preschool was located and give details of the environment where the families lived, worked, and played. Community mapping permitted identification and description of community resources which included parks, recreation, and other facilities. Moreover, in an interview conducted with the Special Events Coordinator and City recreation personnel, specific information about the community and access to physical activity resources was outlined. This section also identifies and describes Raintree’s staff, facilities, and general operations as well as the school’s parent handbook, which describes the school’s mission and motto, as well demographics about the school, number of children it served and their ethnic backgrounds were examined in detail to provide an in-depth description of the school environment.

Hanby-Row (pseudonym) was the name of the community surrounding Raintree. The researcher used http://citydata.html to examine the community and identify specific details of the Hanby-Row neighborhood. The community of Hanby-Row had a radius of 1.6 miles and contains an estimated 1,613 people per square mile (www.http://citydata.html, 2012). The community was bound by a major highway two blocks West of the school and a railroad line 1 ½ blocks North of the school. The neighborhood extended three blocks East to an abandoned Industrial Park/Business Tract, while extending seven blocks south to a major East/West highway that encloses Hanby-Row neighborhood. The median income in Hanby-Row includes individuals with salaries
that range from 10,000 to 32,000 a year, 27.4% of the population in this community lives below the poverty level (www.http://citydata.html, 2012).

There were six families included in the study and all participating family units had at least one child in the study were enrolled in Raintree. Requirements for enrollment were based on criteria established by federal guidelines related to a number of variables. It is important to note that most of the families lived outside of Hanby-Row and commuted by car to the facility. Table 3.4 outlines where these families lived in relation to Raintree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Name</th>
<th>Child Name</th>
<th>Resident of Hanby Row</th>
<th>Distance from Home to Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Candace</td>
<td>Nikki</td>
<td>*Yes/No. Moved ½ way through study.</td>
<td>4 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>Charli</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>15 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenae</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1 mile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alesia</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>8 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angel</td>
<td>Ronnie</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>4 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark and Tina</td>
<td>Tasha</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>7 miles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4. Distance from Raintree Preschool.

Resources in the community include: nine churches located within the Hanby Row community, four of which were two blocks from the school and one located across
the parking lot from the school. There were few recreation opportunities in Hanby-Row as there is one playground and green space on the premises of Raintree designed in two areas, early childhood, with padded equipment and smaller area; preschool area, concrete riding track (tricycles), play structure with an awning, two standalone play structures, and a mulch box with swings. This facility was open only when school was open. Only children enrolled in Raintree preschool are allowed to use the facility, as there was a fence that enclosed the facility and was locked when the center was closed. There was a local neighborhood park, two blocks away that had ½ a basketball court, shelter house with picnic tables, and large brown space (area that had gravel, dirt, and rock). Five blocks south of this park, there was a City recreation center (named Hanby-Row same as the community) which had two outdoor basketball courts, a playground area for children, and an indoor facility with two gymnasiums, activity areas, and a large green space across the street. Unfortunately, Hanby-Row recreation center was closed in June 2012 (at the beginning) due to renovations and thus there was no programming for families or children in this neighborhood throughout the summer months.

There were four fast food restaurants on the main east/west thorough fair located two blocks south west of the school, two gas stations within three blocks of the school, a convenient store three blocks away, and a grocery store six blocks northeast of the school.

Timeline
Data collection spanned a 10-week period beginning in late May through August 2012. Table 3.5 provides a description of the research design’s, data collection methods, target participants, settings, and timeline for data collection.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method Used</th>
<th>Target Participants and Setting</th>
<th>Type of information obtained</th>
<th>Collection Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult interviews</td>
<td>Parents (n~6) @ location Raintree Candace (3) Joe (3) Jenae (3) Alesia (3) Mark and Tina (2) Angel (3)</td>
<td>Identification of parent ideas of physical activity and involvement with children at home, in the community, and at other times.</td>
<td>Started Weeks 1-4, Weeks 4, 5, &amp; 6; Weeks 8, 9, &amp;10. All transcripts completed prior for member checks in off weeks. Start Weeks 3 and 4; and Weeks 8, 9, and 10. Transcripts completed on all interviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child interviews</td>
<td>Preschool child @ school (n ~6)* Nikki (2) Charli (2) Jordan (2) India (2) Tasha (2) Ronnie (2)</td>
<td>1. Individual drawings &amp; question prompts (week) &amp; Picture identification prompts. 2. Individual drawings and question prompts (weekend) &amp; Picture identification prompts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct observations Motor Development Program</td>
<td>Preschool child @ school</td>
<td>Observations of students in activity setting.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct observations Recess time</td>
<td>Preschool child @ school</td>
<td>Observation of students at recess or play time. Observation of students in classroom setting.</td>
<td>Week #1, Week #2, and Week #10 Morning times during 10 weeks of data collection. Various times and days throughout the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct observations Classroom time</td>
<td>Preschool child @ school</td>
<td></td>
<td>Various times and days throughout the study..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Documents &amp; Artifacts</td>
<td>As provided in class and available. Parents and Students</td>
<td>Document families’ activities at home, school, and within the community.</td>
<td>Week 3, handbook. Other documents throughout the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Mapping</td>
<td>Parents and Preschool Child @ School, Classroom, Home, and Community Activities.</td>
<td>Provide a window into the community, school, and homes of the families.</td>
<td>Started week one and continued throughout the study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5. Timeline for Data Collection, Target Participants, and Setting.
Research Journal

As the researcher engaged in the study as a professional in the field of physical education, he commenced this study with the perspective that physical activity is an important part of the lives of everyone, specific to this study—African American parents and their preschool children. While this may bias what he intended to do in this study and shape how he viewed and collected data, as well as determine how he might have interpreted his experiences. The researcher had a journal to maintain a sense of objectivity by documenting observations and interpretations during the research process hoping to relieve any potential biases’ he might have developed (Creswell, 2003). In this document, the researcher attempted to clarify any biases by expressing reflections, thoughts, and feelings in a written narrative and notes. These were based on observations, interviews with participants, and content analysis of documents and artifacts. The researcher worked to describe his thoughts, opinions, and beliefs about these experiences and tried to continue to ask questions of himself and research process as to what he saw, heard, thought, and felt. It was through documenting and honestly reflecting on the research process the researcher tried to maintain a focus on the participants’ meaning making and keeping my biases from influencing data analysis.

Researcher’s Bias

The purpose of this research was to explore the beliefs African American parents and their preschool children ascribe to physical activity. Researchers often have difficulty separating their cultural and ethnic identities from the research process as these are inextricably linked (Yeh & Inman, 2007). In seeking to gain access to this information, it
is necessary to explain the position of the researcher for a balanced and fair approach. Therefore, clearly distinguishing the researcher’s background, experiences, beliefs about physical activity, and his biases may shape, create, and construct interpretations about the data are necessary. This allows the researcher to situate himself and his position in the research endeavor (LeCompte & Preissle, 2003). In the next section, the researcher will identify his position within the research process for clarity and transparency.

**Biography of researcher**

The researcher was an African American, English speaking, male, with advanced degrees in education; the researcher’s ethnic classification and cultural sensitivity affords him the opportunity access to participants, as they may be more willing to share information as a result. The researcher grew up with two biological parents in a home for most of his life, while the teen years were experienced in a working single parent (mother) home with two other teen siblings. Resources were limited in the home and support for activities outside the home was scarce. The families socio-economic status fluctuated from being stable early in life to needing support and help, and then culminating in the teen years as being financially stable enough to make it from paycheck to paycheck. The researcher’s early life circumstances as a youth may be similar to the research participants in this study and as such offer insights in interacting with a family that respects the cultural norms and contexts of the family. Experiencing these dynamics within his own life provides insight into what families in this study may experience. Nonetheless, the researcher’s role in this study was to separate his experiences from the experiences of the participants by documenting any thoughts or ideas that are similar to
my experiences growing up in the journal to identify sources that may confound the data analysis and as such threaten subjectivity.

While the researcher’s ethnicity was useful and provided connections along with his cultural background, it was clear that his position was much different from the participants in the study. His life experiences in culturally diverse settings, interactions with individuals from variety of diverse backgrounds, and learning social norms in these settings which position him culturally different from participants in the study.

Education was an important component of his family and throughout childhood. His parents (mostly my mother) strongly believed that Catholic school was the best option for getting a ‘quality education’ because of the discipline and religious training which was in line with the families’ culture and norms. Furthermore, the researcher’s knowledge of public school education and the culture or dynamics for students were based on educational experiences (e.g., certified teacher) teaching special education and physical education to students of various ethnicities and demographics in a secondary 9-12 school setting. The researcher’s secondary teaching experience in a moderate to low income school allowed him to take home visits, where he would make observations and discussed the children’s education progress with the parents and children in their home settings. These interactions gave the researcher a glimpse of the context of families’ lives in a moderate to low income school public school. These experiences will help him to better understand of the culture of families in a Headstart setting.
Beliefs about physical activity

The researcher’s focus in becoming certified to teach physical education has been to educate children in K-12 in how to become and maintain physically active lives over the course of their lifespan. The research has extended this focus to include preschool populations and their families due to an increase in inactivity and sedentary behaviors of these populations (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2010). The researcher’s philosophy on the importance of being physically active and maintaining a healthy lifestyle has influenced the way in which he sought to collect data, ask interview questions, write field notes, and interact with the participants. This study and its focus on examining the beliefs African American parents and preschool children ascribe to physical activity are important and valuable to the researcher as a professional in the field of physical education. The researcher values training people about the importance of physical activity and its impact upon the physical, mental, emotional, and social health of individuals. The researcher documented his thoughts, feelings, and perceptions in his research journal to help identify any bias he held toward the promotion of physical activity among all people.

The researcher’s educational experiences, level and lived experiences have given him the opportunity to move beyond early family living situation of not having much to being more middle income in socio-economic status and broad cultural experiences. Therefore, he must wade carefully in the process of data collection and analysis to be objective in how he views participants in the study as his cultural background and socioeconomic status may not allow him to see the full context of what these families
experience day-to-day. For example when participants gave responses through interviews, he should take the time to review the interview and examine multiple and alternative perspectives (Yeh & Inman, 2007). At the same time, cultural understandings (i.e., language, gestures, or terminology) that are subtle must be explained (Yeh & Inman, 2007). This means having some, cultural competence in the social or contextual interactions within this cultural community may give the researcher access to understand and interpret what happened. The researcher cannot assume because he was familiar with and knows the culture that he can interpret all things related to the culture within the study.

Biases refer to personal matters that make it difficult for the researcher to be objective when reacting to the data (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997). Therefore, regardless of the researcher’s ethnic identification, cultural background, and the relationship to the participants in the study, the goal was to connect with the participants’ culture and to learn the important elements of their specific cultural context thus becoming culturally competent within this community (Yeh & Inman, 2007). The researcher’s attention and focus in this area will accomplish the goal of openly exploring and gaining access to deeper meanings and experiences of the beliefs African American parents and preschool children ascribe to physical activity at Raintree. To combat the potential influence to be biased in how the researcher viewed these families he regularly document thoughts, feelings, ideas, and other things that came to mind before, during, and after the research experience in order to maintain a fresh perspective of the research
focus. This was noted in the journal and analyzed along with other documents throughout the study.

**Data Analysis**

The challenge in qualitative data analysis is making sense of massive amounts of data (Patton, 2002). For this study, the analysis occurred in three ways (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) in the field while he was collecting data, at the completion of the study, and at the conclusion of all data collection. The goal during the process of analysis of these data was to figure out what is going on and to prove it by documents and facts from the data (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The focus in doing this was to systematically take time to process the data he secured by sorting through and processing various methods of data collected analytically. However, the process of data analysis began during the fieldwork by thinking, recording his thoughts, feelings, and perceptions in the field, documenting these thoughts in his field notes, and making analytic memos when transcribing interviews. “Coding is the process of sorting and defining and defining and sorting those collected scraps of data (i.e., interview transcripts, observations, documents, and field notes) that are applicable to the research purpose” (Glesne, 2006, p. 152). In this study, copies of transcripts were sorted, copied, reviewed, as well as writing analytic memos on the transcripts noting instances where a thought occurred during the transcription process relevant to what transpired. After initial review of the transcribed texts, the researcher began to review and re-review the transcript data then writing ideas (codes) in the right hand columns of the transcripts. These thoughts were converted to 4 x 6 note cards with red ink with the idea of how these ideas linked to the research questions.
and theoretical framework. As this process, continued and he continued examining and thinking through the big ideas, smaller ideas were also written on 4 x 6 cards in blue ink to distinguishing the large ideas (themes). The red cards indicated ideas and thoughts that were linked with the research questions and were posted on a large poster board to indicate large conceptual categories (coding) framing the day-to-day interactions of parents and preschool children. The next step required him to begin piecing together specific details of the data and sorting coded items into specific piles or categories. These categories (i.e., thematic areas) were refined and modified into specific patterns or structures producing themes (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

Coding of the data was guided by the research questions, the researcher’s interpretations and positioning as a researcher, and by the study’s theoretical framework. Throughout this process, analyzing field notes, hunches, and reflections add to the sources of data generated for the study and generated additional categories or themes (Yeh & Inman, 2007). This gives added layers of analysis that help interpret the broader meaning of categories while reviewing the research questions and the researcher’s positioning and how these sources of data interact (Creswell, 2007). Within the analysis process, triangulating various forms of data; that is, interview transcripts, observer’s field notes, documents, children’s task-centered activities, and community mapping serve to help validate the findings and became integral to understanding the families’ beliefs about physical activity grounded in their lived experiences. Ideas and themes generated from the data collected were analyzed using the theoretical framework selected for this study, ecocultural theory.
Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative data is seeking authenticity of the results of the data explaining that the interpretations made are true and accurate (Schwandt, 1997). Use of the following four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, established trustworthiness of this current study. This is to persuade the reader that the findings of this research inquiry are worth paying attention to (authentic) and are worthy of taking account of (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility in this study was established through prolonged engagement in the field and triangulation of the methods (i.e., observations, interviews, and written documents) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher identified and developed the research design, methods, and data collection, and spent an extensive period of time (prolonged engagement, before, and during the study) at the site of the study (i.e., Raintree). As noted previously, his extended experience with another program provided opportunity to become “known” to the community within Raintree, thus making it easier to engage parents and children at the school. Furthermore, the researcher has outlined his positioning as a researcher; cultural background, ethnic background, and rationale for completing the study provide evidence of establishing credibility. The triangulation of various types of data (e.g., transcripts, field notes, pictorial drawings, and more) and verifying the data sources has occurred while also continuous reflecting on the research process through memo writing ideas and opinions throughout the study therefore maintain credibility.
During the interview process, the researcher sought confirmation of transcribed interviews from all respondents (i.e., member checks) prior to beginning the next interview (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Participants in the study were provided with informed consent, including all participants in the study, and provided rich thick descriptions of interpretations of the parents and preschool children’s views regarding physical activity provide credibility and serve to strength this study (Shenton, 2004). Participants also had opportunities to verify the content of the transcripts by reviewing them to determine if what the content was what they actually said (i.e., member checks).

Transferability in this study occurred through descriptions of the methods used as well as the data collected from the participants. Transferability means determining if findings in one study are can be transferred to another similar context or situation, while maintaining the particularized meanings, interpretations, and inferences from the completed study (Leininger, 1990). The researcher provided rich thick descriptions of these families and the methods used throughout this study. Through interviews, observations, community mapping, and collection of other artifacts, the researcher provided evidence of these families’ lives. As a result, the methods through which this occurred have been specifically identified and are the responsibility of the reader to make their own interpretations and transfer of the research practices here to future studies.

Dependability in this study was derived from methods and findings that were consistent and written such that they could be replicated later (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The data collection techniques were interviewing, observing, written documents,
community mapping, and field notes. These techniques could be replicated and reproduced in a different community as described by the researcher and may provide a clear outcome (i.e., although different) of what took place among families with similar backgrounds in another study. As a part of the research process, the researcher’s view of what is took place (research journal) is accounted for within the research setting through documentation (i.e., member check, journal, memo, and jottings).

Confirmability refers to the “repeated direct participatory or documented evidence observed or obtained from primary informant sources” (Leininger, 1990, p. 106). The general idea of here is to confirm what the researcher heard, said, or experienced during the research process of the study. Lincoln & Guba (1985) list three types of confirmability techniques: triangulation, reflexive journals, and audit trails. In this study, the transcript data from adults and preschool children, researcher journal, artifacts of the children’s drawings all provide an account of the adults and children’s perspectives in this study. The researcher documented what he heard, individuals said, or experienced during the research process. In this chapter, the researcher systematically outlined and shaped the current study through the interviews and observations (Shenton, 2004).

Secondly, the research study’s questions were used to provide guidelines for the adult and child interviews. These questions and the responses were critical in providing the thematic areas and themes generated by parents and children from the study. Thus, the two levels of audit trails detailed above settle the issue of confirmability of this study (Shenton, 2004).
More than one method of data collection was used to establish methodological triangulation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). This strengthens the study by helping to illuminate clear thematic categories and themes as well as “adding rigor, breadth, and depth the study by using combinations of methods, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a study” (Flick, 1992, p. 194). Using these elements of trustworthiness by attending to the four criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability offer documentary evidence of the beliefs African American parents and their preschool children ascribe to physical activity in their daily lives.

**Ethical Considerations**

This study involved African American families and an investigation into their lives, ways of living, and daily interactions. The researcher was respectful of the rights, needs, and values of the participants throughout the study while appreciative of their participation in the study. In this design, ethnography, he became a part of the culture of the participants as an observer participant and may have interrupted or invaded the lives of the participants by revealing sensitive information (Spradley, 1980) about their lives. Every measure was taken to respect the privacy, rights, and confidentiality of the participants by using pseudonyms and changing the names of many things in the community of the study to protect their privacy and rights. Each participant completed the appropriate process for participation in the study and the following outlines what occurred:

- The research process was in provided in writing and described verbally so that participants clearly knew what to expect during the study.
b. Written permission was gained prior to beginning the study, while explaining the study protocol to the participants for their approval and signature via consent form, as well as child assent forms by the preschool children. They were secured and filed.

c. Approval for conducting this study from the large university's IRB was received (see Appendix H).

d. All interviews were transcribed (i.e., verbatim) and copies given to the participants for review following all interviews.

e. The participants rights and wishes were considered first in reporting of their data (i.e., one parent asked for a correction to be made to transcripts).

f. The participants had the opportunity for selection of a pseudonym and approved the name for inclusion in the study.

Finally, all families were willing participants in sharing their stories, beliefs and understanding about physical activity and its influence on their daily life (routines). The researcher worked hard to respect the time and the wishes during the study and assure them of the anonymity throughout the study and in the final report. He was prepared, on time, and reported exactly what the parents said as well as giving the parents opportunities to ask questions or decline answers when necessary. In every case, the researcher attempted to demonstrate care, professionalism, and courteous to all participants throughout the course of the study.
Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of this ethnographic study was to explore the beliefs African American parents and their preschool children ascribe to physical activity. This chapter presents findings from this study on each family unit, while also describing the demographic profile of adult participants’ backgrounds associated with their physical activity experiences. The researcher gained insight about the preschool children’s experiences through interviews and observations in a variety of settings [classroom, recess, and motor movement program]. During the data analysis procedures re-current themes and associate subthemes emerged. The first theme *Movin’ and Groovin* captures the beliefs adult participants ascribe to physical activity, while the second theme *Stayin’ Alive* exposes knowledge adults and children have regarding physical activity. The third theme, *All I do...* unpacks the findings of the weekly and weekend routines of the families, while the fourth theme *We are family* portraits the cultural norms and ecocultural niche profiles of the participant families. The last theme, *This is how we do it!* exposes the preschool child, parent, and family involvement in physical activity. Preschool observations, a summary of thematic findings, program related ideas, and parent recommendations for practice conclude this chapter.
Family Unit Information

The adult participants’ ranged in age from 25-43 years old with a mean of 32 years of age. There were seven adult participants in the study, five women and two men; two were single mothers and the other four were married. All of the participants were African American and lived in a large Midwestern city in Ohio.

There were six preschool children who participated in the study and all were the biological child of their respective parents in the study. Charli, India, Tasha, and Ronnie were 5 years old; while Jordan and Nikki were 4 years old. They appeared to be of average height, weight, and typically developing in their movement and activity. All the children assented to participate in the preschool interviews and completed all the interviews.

Family Descriptions

In the following section, yields a review of each adult’s early childhood experiences while also presenting family members or coaches’ who modeled physical activity during their early childhood. These descriptions provide evidence and background regarding how the adult participant may have developed their beliefs about physical activity. Candace was a 25 year-old married mother of one 4-year-old girl, Nikki, a one-year-old daughter, and during data collection phase of this study she gave birth to a son. She was college educated and recently worked as a medical billing agent at a local health agency. Candace expressed that her parents were not active and they did not participate in physical activity they primarily worked. Here are her statements about
her parents, drill team coach, and band coach. Candace gave a description of her early childhood,

Well, we travelled a lot ... Uhm? Ride bike. Just come home, eat do homework, maybe go outside and like, pause, then depend on the weather we play football, basketball... Oooh! In my immediately family, it was me, my mom, my dad... and... two brothers, one sister, and a cousin, a little cousin. We stayed all in one house...

Yeah, in our neighborhood we still all family... [I am the] youngest... Of 5?! Uhm. We went to the park? We of course chased each other around. We just always ran around. Uhm. We did the slide, of course the notorious tire swing... Mmm, and the monkey bars that was it… (Candace, Interview 1, May 2012).

During the interviews, Candace provided background on the level of involvement of her parents’ in physical activity. She said, “Yeah, I don't think they [her parents] ever did anything” (Candace, Interview 1, May 2012). In the researcher's journal, I noted how interesting it was the way her body language changed and intonation in her voice relative to parents' (Research Journal, May 2012). This was noted as it may have implications for her beliefs about physical activity.

When discussing models of physical activity, Candace gave some background on the person that influenced her. Her comments are below,

Uhm! Well my first coach was [pause] Oh my God I don't remember her name? Well, she was this little lady [laughed]. I hate to say that but, she was this little...Caucasian lady and she had a, she was very, very small. She was our drill team coach. She was very in shape, everything we had to do she did too! I think she was in her 40's [the band coaches’ wife]. Uhm? the band coach…He was older than her, I don't know how old he was, but...He marched. He was like [chuckle & smile] a military... type of…band coach, director…(Candace, Interview 1, May 2012).

Joe was a 41 year-old married father of one 5-year-old girl, Charli, a one-year-old daughter, and was expecting a child with his wife in two months. He was studying to become a nurse and he was working as a home health care nurse’s aide. Joe shared that
his parents were traditional in their roles as his mother was a stay at home mother and his father was a police officer. His father participated in sport within his work in pistol shooting competitions, and track and field. Joe explained that a coach and his brothers modeled physical activity during his youth. Physical activity was a big part of Joe’s early childhood experiences.

I played a lot of soccer...No there were other opportunities… We play volleyball... And ah, we play Basketball too, but basketball is something dat [that] is dat [that] big. But yeah we have it, and ah, sometime High Jump [Meaning Track]. Track, we do tracks too, yeah, we do track high jump, long jump you know stuff like dat [that]…Yeah…Oh, participated quite a bit. Oh, yes especially in soccer.

...just get out school and just go play. You know the parents are not involved...Once you come back from school, you eat your food that is if you can get something to eat. The next thing you do is run out the back door…Which sometimes my parents don’t even want us to go dere [there] and play, but they want us to stay home read a book, do homework. So that is all they are not particular about sports (Joe, Interview 1, May 2012).

When asked to speak about his parents' involvement in physical activity Joe provided the following comments,

My, my mom never worked...She just took, she just stayed home and cared for the kids...My dad played sports. Yeah, what my dad did for the police force then, was the police department they have ‘dere [there] own sports. He threw javelin and he threw this ‘ting [showed a round shape on his arm] round one Discus…My dad actually, we still have the trophy back home. My dad won, actually I ‘tink [think] two years in a row the shooting target, yeah he won that too. Yeah, I know ‘dat ‘dere are two trophies at home and it’s for ‘dat [that]. (Joe, Interview 1, May 2012).

Joe stated that while he was physically active, he had individuals within his family and outside of his family that modeled physical activity. When asked about who modeled physical activity for him, Joe responded,
He’s White. That is why I can really capture him in my mind a little bit. I can’t really capture his face, that much anymore. But I do remember him as being a White man. I know his last name, we’ll just call his name Sir Alexander…Can’t remember if it is James or Joshua…Uhh, he was into sports really well. He was into sports…He happened to be the uhh, Physical Education Master for the school…He really encouraged us then and …m! Yeah, He encouraged us really in sports…

My older brother played volleyball for Nigeria National Team and gained a scholarship to US to play volleyball (in MD) and then getting injured…my other brother played for the Nigerian National Team (volleyball) and played professionally in Italy too! (Joe, Interview 1, May 2012).

As noted from his comments, Joe’s brothers and teacher/coach, Sir Alexander were models of physical activity and influential in helping him to be involved in sport and physical activity as a youth.

As a single, college educated, 25 year-old mother of four-year-old Jordan, Jenae described her mom as coming home from work and reading a book or preparing for her second job with limited interactions in physical activity. Jenae also described the real motivation to move as being a better alternative than staying in the house watching TV or playing videos, while the person that modeled physical activity was her cheerleading coach. Jenae gave a synopsis of her early childhood physical activity by sharing,

I actually had a fun childhood, where I grew up we were very poor [laughs]. I lived in a neighborhood where everyone knew everyone [emphasis added]. ... and basically everyone in the neighborhood was poor so every little kid, they just, (used) a spoon, a bowl, a cup of water it was fine, we made something to do. I was about 7 years old, when I went back to live with my mom. I stayed outdoors roller bladin, basketball, baseball, anything that I could do, swimmin. Swimmin was like the main part of my life.

Swimming and cheerleading…All the earlier childhood years, yeah, I was also cheerleading for ...the most part of it and I didn’t pick that back up until I was about 11 and then stopped when I was 12..., that is one thing I do regret is stopping. Mmmm, I had my best friend Diamond [pseudonym]... [Diamond and Jenae] Played Barbies. Yeah, we walked a lot. We used to ride our bikes really far too … (Jenae, Interview 1, May 2012).
When describing her parents’ involvement in physical activity, she stated that her mom was not active, however, she did provide the following claims about her mom’s engagement in physical activity.

Mmmmm, me and my mom used to go to the bowling alley wit [with] her best friend, but she never bowled...My mom jumped double dutch wit [with] me. She claimed she’s too old, but she gets out there and she does it anyway [when Jenae was a child]...Yeah, she did work and when she was...when she would get off work she would stay home lay in her bed and read a book or she would go to her second job, soo. To me the house was boring. We had video games, we always had video games, to me it was just more fun to go outside. (Jenae, Interview 1, May 2012).

As far as models of physical activity in Jenae’s life, she shared that her cheerleading coaches were instrumental in her being active. Below are her responses.

I don’t remember her name, but it was when I lived with my aunt.... pause...She asked me if I wanted to cheerlead, I told her that I would try it... and...One of the coaches was a heavy set lady and one was like a thinner lady. She wasn’t really skinny, but she wasn’t really heavy set...Mmm, really at that age I did not know too much about cheerleading. I’d never seen competitions on TV before then. I think it was the fact that you or I was able to yell and not be yelled at for yellin’. And then I could jump all I wanted to, , clears throat, and also it’s a [stated with cheer] girlie sport...You get to look pretty in your uniform and I think it is because I had a fascination with pom pon’s and I figured it was the closest I would get to being a ballerina when I was younger. I really wanted to be a ballerina. My mom bought me a leotard, but I didn’t have the tutu and I used to pretend I was a ballerina. I guess that was the next best thing for me. (Jenae, Interview 1, May 2012).

Alesia was a 25-year-old single mother of a five-year-old daughter, India. Alesia was a high school graduate who is a Headstart preschool teacher. Alesia shared that her parents did not mentor her or show her any sports to participate in as a child. It was not until later, when her mother had a son, that they even took part in sport activities. Alesia was the oldest of three children and was five years older than her sister and 21 years older
than her brothers. She acknowledged that her mom modeled some activity by taking her bowling and walking. However, Alesia really got involved in sports during middle school when encouraged to run track by her language arts teacher.

When describing her early childhood physical activity experiences, Alesia commented fear was a big part of her lack of involvement in physical activity. Here are some comments when asked about her involvement in physical activity.

Yes, afraid to do stuff, afraid I’m gonna get hurt. [Laughs, and then a pause] I didn’t do too much I was more, I stayed more in the house...Uhm, pause....I am still that way [Laughs long] I just more kept to myself. I got my little friends. The only thing I did when I was little, little was -- Tag! Tag you know the regular neighborhood games. Riding my bike. I didn’t do, I didn’t get into sports until …8th grade. And it stopped at 8th grade, I think I got scared again once I entered High School. I did track in 8th grade, long jump. I think that is all I did.

Oh, don’t remember. Laughs. All I can remember is one little friend Christina, I would play with her because she was my best friend, stay the night, do all the slumber parties and stuff. And Uhh...Hide and seek and tag. Riding bikes. I know I got a Mountain Bike for Christmas one year…, what else did we do. I did not swim much because I don’t know how to swim now. I know that. (Alesia, Interview 1, June 2012).

Alesia provided a distinct account of her parents' involvement in physical activity by sharing, “Well, okay [we] went bowling and my mom showed me how to shoot pool and stuff like that…Yeah, not exactly like let’s go swimmin or…When I was younger, that wasn’t on our agenda to do as a family” (Alesia, Interview 1, June 2012). She continued to share that while they [parents] “didn’t over feed me or anything. They [parents] didn’t show the bad thingssss, but they also didn’t show me the great things about having physical activity” (Alesia, Interview 1, June 2012). When asked if her parents modeled physical activity, Alesia replied,
Oh, no [spoken in a whispered voice]. No, it was more like a coach, like when I was in track or teachers at school. Oh, [exhales, looks at lights] Mrs. Collins, she was my teacher and my track coach. The only coach I ever had [laughs]…Well, first thing she was my language arts teacher and I loved language arts, so I respected her for that first.

Then she really wanted me to be on her track team. I felt more appreciated and wanted… and what happened was I had got a bad grade in another class. It wasn’t against the team rules, but my mom didn’t approve of that, so she wouldn’t let me run in the final meet. So I think that is where I lost the motivation of doing sports anyway because of my grades. (Alesia, Interview 2, June 2012).

Mark was 37 years old and married to Tina who was 43 years old and they had a five-year-old daughter, Tasha. They willingly participated in two interview sessions and missed the last interview session for unknown reasons. Mark and Tina provided a lot of information relative to their early childhood experiences and their parents’ role and models of physical activity in their lives. Mark and Tina provide some examples of early childhood physical activity experiences in their lives. Mark said:

[The] YMCA over there on, by off the Martin Luther King Center. Over there and down on Short street, they used to have a Merry go round, we used to go around there and play. We thought that was the best. We used to go into the YMCA and run around…We went swimming over there most of the time…Yup, Yup, so yeah basically that’s my childhood…

I had a step brother and we would run around together…I would say 8, 9; about 9 years old…We did basketball and we did swimming, but most of the time we was outside of it and we would go to the library. Ride bikes, running around, just being, you know kids. We felt it was safe over there because there was a lot of MRDD over there. [The reference here is that there was a group home with people with disabilities]…There was a lot of supervision because people would watch for them…So we just ripped and runned around inside that neighborhood.(Mark, Interview 1, June 2012)

Tina on the other hand shared a different perspective about her involvement in physical activity as a young child. She shared,

I also grew up in same area as him. I went to went to the YMCA too…did all type of activities there. Swimming and…it was usually just me and my brother.
He is seven years older than me, so he kind of watched out for me. I had to do what he did so I did basketball, while he was playing, I would be running up and down the court too.

[I] Rode my bike a lot with my friends in the neighborhood. The biggest thing is when I was Tasha’s age…I was walkin’ from Milton [pseudonym] and Short [pseudonym] to Westbend [pseudonym] every day…it’s almost like two and half miles…

I had two older siblings living in my house. Cause my dad had five kids. So, when I went with my Dad on the weekends we really just rode bikes and swim and stuff like that…But uhhm, I played basketball all the way, probably started uhhhh, when I was seven and played all the way up til college. (Tina, Interview 1, June 2012)

Mark and Tina had limited comments regarding their parent’s involvement in physical activity. Mark started by saying,

Well uhhmm, mostly just my mom just to ta, ta, go outside and get around. You know I rode my bike, you know my sister took care of or started taking care of us one of my older sisters starting taking care of us cause my mom was getting up there in age.

Basically doing activities with people inside my church. I grew up inside New Hope [pseudonym] but if it wasn’t church or ridin my bike. I was told hold a job and don’t wander the streets. So there was always something proactive as holding a job or in church. [chuckles softly] One or the two kinda sheltered me. (Mark, Interview 1, June 2012)

On the other hand, Tina gave more indepth analysis of her parents’ involvement. She claimed,

Yeah she [her mother] was our provider for the family. You know my dad wasn’t, he was remarried and then he was like...not really in the home; [or] involved...she [mom] worked. She did two jobs, three jobs sometimes just to keep us afloat…(Tina, Interview 1, June 2012)

Mark did not share an individual who modeled physical activity for him, while Tina’s statements would suggest that her responses of participation in a youth basketball
program and the coach were influential to her development and involvement in physical activity.

I used to go to the Police Athletic League...on State Avenue ...and uhm, there was a coach there, that kind of pulled me in, his name was Mr. George (pseudonym). and uhm, once he started working out with me and having me play [basketball] with those girls over there and believe me, I mean inner city rough...Uhm, [it was] just like playing with guys! [laughs!] I was hooked!! Yeah, molded me into really, really likin’ the game.  Then I started kind of realizin’ “That I kinda liked it [playing basketball]!” (Tina, Interview 2, July 2012).

Angel was married, 28 years old and the mother of Ronnie a five-year-old boy. As a child, she was very ill and reported that her parents were active by showing her brothers and sisters how to do many things throughout their youth. Although she did not have the chance to be as active as her siblings, but felt her dad was a good mentor and role model of physical activity in her life. Angel had limited physical activity experiences early in her childhood due to illness and lack of interest in getting dirty.

When I was little I was really sick. I didn’t know what was wrong with me at first. So it was kind of difficult for me. Like my sister was the athlete. She did gymnastics and I couldn’t do any of that because they were worried and scared of the trauma...

So yeah, so I had a...perfect childhood. ...I just wasn’t active, I just really didn’t get a chance to go outside and do anything. I would sit in the house all the time...We lived in Chula Vista [San Diego, California], which is a suburb. We lived off the water which was fun. That is one thing we did do a lot as a family is we went fishing every week. We went to the beaches and went swimmin’ every week...Swimming and fishing...

I never got a chance to really do like other activities, as far as like, all the kids would be playing dodgeball or any of that. Or even at school I wasn’t able to get on, like, the jungle gym or anything...but we went fishin’ swimmin’ we did stuff like that , like kinda outdoor things cause my Dad was military too. Marines...That’s about it! I was a girlie girl though [laughs] Ha ha! I was really pritzy. I didn’t like to get dirty. (Angel, Interview 1, June 2012).
When describing her parents’ involvement in physical activity she stated that her parents were involved in a variety of ways.

Yeah, they [parents] were active. Like my mother and my father was there…Yeah, they were, my brothers are a coupla years younger than me, but my sister was really active. She was in gymnastics all the way up until she was about 23 years old. You know we all in some form or way was really active. But like I said, they were more active than me, but they were always outside, you know and I was the one always looking outside the window. They were always playing different games and you know jump rope and tennis ball…in the back yard….We would always be outside on our swingset when we were little… (Angel, Interview 1, June 2012).

When sharing who modeled physical activity for her, she was most influenced by her father.

Yeah, my dad. My, my Dad showed us everything you know. He was the type of Dad and still is that would… Take you out show you how to do this or show you how to do that or have us lay up underneath the car wit him, that was his biggest thing…He was a really good mentor and still to this day I call him for little things…But my Dad was really good you know…you know, he was a really good mentor, like he showed us how to do everything. You know I didn’t get a chance to enjoy it as much as they did but it taught me a lot about values where I can teach my kids where I seen teaching us, so…(Angel, Interview 2, August 2012).

The memories of early childhood experiences, parental influences about physical activity, and models of physical activity may be influential in establishing development about beliefs the adults participants have about physical activity. It is important to know the background and early experiences of the adult participants in this study in order to establish a foundation of how these beliefs influence their knowledge and promotion of physical activity in the life of their preschool child. Further exploration of these concepts is explained in Chapter 5.
Five Themes

The data from the transcripts were categorized into large thematic areas from which themes and subthemes were derived which aligned with the research questions and theoretical framework. The five themes were titled as music and entertainment headings as representations of cultural connections to movement and music. These recurrent themes were: (1) *Movin’ and Groovin’* [Beliefs about Physical Activity], (2) *Stayin’ Alive* [Knowledge about Physical Activity], (3) *All I do…* [Family routines during the week and the weekend], (4) *We are Family!* [Cultural Norms and Niche Profiles of families], (5) *This is how we do it* [Physical Activity reports of Child, Parent, and Family]. These themes are described along with quotes from adult and child interview transcripts. Preschool observations conducted during the study are described followed by a summary of the findings of each theme and subtheme. Lastly, the chapter concludes with program ideas generated from parents (i.e., Pilot Program) and recommendations for future practice as described by the parent participants in this study. Table 4.1 provides a reference and categorization of the themes and subthemes.
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Table 4.1. Recurrent Themes and Subthemes.
Theme 1: Movin’ and Groovin’ [beliefs of physical activity]

Parents in this theme provided data regarding their beliefs about physical activity and the reference of this theme, movin’ and groovin’ captures the idea of music and movement. The subthemes of staying healthy, active and moving, and staying fit in a variety of ways in order to maintain an active lifestyle were listed as important by parents. Support for this theme and subtheme is provided through, adult and child interviews.

Stayin’ Healthy. All parents described or mentioned the idea of stayin’ healthy as an important part of their beliefs about physical activity. For instance, Joe exclaimed, “Physically it is good for your body. It actually prevents some of the diseases and illnesses we have” (Joe, Interview 1, May 2012). Likewise Jenae gave a more detailed explanation,

Yes, I believe it is…just because physical activity goes along with health…when I was 18 and people were like if you don’t get up and start moving, one day you might get up and start moving and be active you may have a heart attack because our heart won’t be used to being active. “I’m like wow!” So that helps keep me being active… I believe it will create, like he wouldn’t have as many problems when he gets older. Like, oh now my heart’s bad cause I never really worked it out or used it. I never made it pump…They also just say, I mean that it helps build your immune system. So then maybe he wouldn’t catch a cold as fast as the next kid that doesn’t do as much running and jumping, playing. Just basically…it’s important for him to be physically active to just have a…overall healthy lifestyle. (Jenae, Interview 1, May 2012).

Angel added the following by expressing,

Uhmm, I think it is so important. You know, especially for your heart the growth of your body and, uhmm, you know, just different activities can, you know, add more years to your life…Just the benefits mainly, uhmm, like I said, last week, it helps you fight off illness. You know, to me that is one of the most important things. If your physically active it gets your heart pumping, you know, where you can fight off little colds and stuff like that and also it kinda puts a barrier up where
you are not as likely to get sick as often as someone who is not physically active (Angel, Interview 1, June 2012).

Each of the participants shared the importance of stayin’ healthy as an important key belief about physical activity. Participants’ statements suggest an emphasis on how physical activity may help individuals holistically through the body and mind. This leads to a longer life and the prevention of diseases and illnesses.

*Active and Movin’*. Most of the participants’ interpreted physical activity as being *active and movin’*. Specific descriptors included “busy, in motion and moving their bodies” as an important part of being physically active. Angel shared her perspective by defining physical activity in the following passage.

My definition of physical activity is, you know, keeping active being able to, uhm, stay busy. Uhm, a lot of outdoor play, you know movements just being able to stretch out, you know so your body can be able to perform at its best…You know like, just football, basketball, anything really that’s really active to get the kids outside (Angel, Interview 1, June 2012).

Joe added his definition by sharing, “Physical activity is doing physically with the body, keeping moving being active” (Joe, Interview 1, May 2012). Lastly, Jenae said simply, “Physical activity [is] being movement and motion” (Jenae, Interview 1, May 2012). These parent participants identified being active and moving as important concepts in their beliefs about physical activity. From the responses, all of them believe it is important to move, be active outside the home by participating in sports or games. Many parents’ continued to emphasize the significance of making sure their children ‘stay busy’ with some type of movement or activity.
Stayin’ fit. Most of the participants believed physical activity meant ‘stayin’ fit’ including physical activity, maintaining the proper weight, and having balance with exercise and eating right. Exemplary of this Candace said, “Cause I feel like being in shape is good. It will help you out later in life... Stayin’ fit…” (Candace, Interview 1, May 2012). Joe had a varying definition of physical activity, “Being physically fit, includes the mind, the brain, the body, so that if she wants to take to sports, reading, education wise or anything out there so she will succeed” (Joe, Interview 3, July 2012). Mark stated, “Uhmm, my definition of physical activity is your heart fit and uhmm maintaining a certain weight… taking the proper supplements…uhmm (Mark, Interview 1, June 2012). Lastly, Angel shared the following dialogue,

So that is one of the major things, you know things and then also with, you know with children and even adults, it keeps their life balanced where their weight and everything...Where their not overweight the diabetes now with the little kids...They have been stressing the issue of more physical activity, you know, that’s part of a diet, you know. If you don’t exercise then you don’t have anything, you could stop eating a lot of calories and stuff, but if you are not burning fat off physically then I mean you’re not gonna lose anything. (Angel, Interview 3, August 2012).

The parent’s shared that ‘stayin’ fit’ means maintaining an activity level that allows the children and families to maintain a healthy heart and maintain the appropriate weight. Parents also concluded that sustaining physical activity as we live is beneficial and leads to success later in life.

Alternative activities. A few participants believe physical activity is expressed in a more broad sense of alternative activities. In that regard, Alesia explained, “Physical play is more open, it doesn’t just pertain to just exercising. You can still have fun [emphasis
on this word, fun] with it! So like with swimming, we go bowling and uhmm…” (Alesia, Interview 1, June 2012). Expressing a similar sentiment, Tina exclaimed,

Uhmm, I just believe it doesn’t have to actually be, uh, where you are goin’ to the gym. It can just be, uhmm, housework or yard work or uhmm just a walk wit your kids or whatever… something physical you know…(Tina, Interview 2, July 2012).

In this subtheme, these parents believe physical activity provides alternative ways to maintain activity and defined physical activity as participation in leisure activities, household chores, or family activity and not just sports, games or play.

Theme 2. Stayin’ Alive [knowledge of physical activity].

Using the theme from the movie, Saturday Night Live, stayin’ alive illuminated the knowledge of physical activity by targeting three subthemes avoid obesity, healthy and active; and a positive, motivated, and confident outlook on life.

Avoid Obesity. Obesity or being overweight was a subtheme at the heart of all the participants’ beliefs as they conveyed their commitment to making physical activity a priority in their preschool child’s life to help avoid obesity. A concerned Jenae expressed, “I don’t think people are really realizing that preschool children are becoming really obese…” (Jenae, Interview 3, July 2012). Similarly concerned Joe stated, “Uhm, I don’t want her [Charli] to be obese, I want her to be healthy. I know that being physically fit can give her a lot of edge over even some of these illnesses” (Joe, Interview 2, June 2012). Candace had a strong statement concerning avoiding obesity as she exclaimed,

I don’t want her to just lay around and do nothing’ and…[just stops responding]...I don’t want a fat kid…with health problems. Like no, I am not being rude, like no offense to the kids, that is overweight or anything, but she already has health problems as is…So I know as they say physical activity and exercise is good and it helps sometimes counteract the problems that she has
so…I want her to stay around for a long time so…(Candace, Interview 2, June 2012).

Like Candace’s emphatic appeal for activity for her child, Angel added her perspective about avoiding obesity. She exclaimed,

I am determined to make sure that my kids are active and healthy because the other day a little girl came to my job…and she was huge. This is the age where it should start, at age three, four years old where they should be aware of the eating habits, activity and stuff like that… (Angel, Interview 2, August 2012).

The parents in this study expressed a concern about their children being overweight or obese and their responses indicated that they did not want this to be a problem for their child.

*Physical Activity Goals.* All parents in the study identified maintaining health and being active as goals they had for physical activity among their preschool children. Three parents had knowledge of physical activity from reading articles or participating in email groups, training as a preschool teacher, and participating in courses at the local university.

Angel shared valuable insight into the physical activity goals for her family by explaining,

Since I have a son with asthma, you know he is always there and I ask them [Doctors] lots of questions also because I have a history of diabetes in my family…So you know, then I read a lot. I read a lot of stuff online, I read a lot of stuff at the doctor’s office, you know….So I get email alerts from them and news alerts from them all the time…Yeah they registered me with them and sent an email letting me know about the events…(Angel, Interview 2, August 2012).

Alesia gave additional commentary based on her experiences as a preschool teacher. She said,
Working in childcare taking all these training classes and all that stuff...Reasons why, why we have to go outside every day now. Now I know why we have to go outside. We have people coming in talking about physical fit and even at her school the Red Shirts [Note: This is a program sponsored by local university where university students come to school and provide activities for students at the end of the preschool day, classroom and physical activities] or the University [Motor Development Program] students that come and stuff. That’s pretty cool they get to do all that for physical activity...

Lot of people just think kids don’t need all that cause they think kids, ‘Aw they just run all day!’ You know it’s more than that you know. So it’s really more than that, so basically being around kids....

Yeah, it has every little thing I do here [Alesia works at Preschool] I tried to implement at home. To my student here, and to her and she goes to school and gets more of it. It’s just a big circle of information that is passed around in my family. Everything I get, I try to put out in some way or the other....(Alesia, Interview 1, June 2012).

Jenae was also very clear in providing explanation of her knowledge of physical activity from courses taken at the local university. She said,

Recently, I went to Downtown University and a girl did a paper on physical activity or exercise and the benefits it has on your body. A lot people find it is easier to rest, at night if they do a workout at night before they go to bed it’s like they say it gets your circulations going. A lot of people won’t get sick as often [pause]. So [pause] I believe that that is true. (Jenae, Interview 2, June 2012).

The information presented may have contributed to these parents' responses about the goals they have for physical activity among their preschool children yet each seems to feel empowered to share their knowledge of physical activity and promote it among their family.

Positive Attitude, Motivation, and Confidence. This subtheme highlights how physical activity provided preschool children with positive attitude, motivation, and confidence as reported by the parent participants. For example Candace shared, “She’ll
be healthy, she’ll be…[pause]…always have something to do and… I guess be positive…Positive outcomes, outlooks on life….She has…potential goals in life, if she likes something she can just stick with it and ride it out” (Interview 2, June 2012). While two other participants shared how the benefits of physical activity have increased their child’s motivation. For example Alesia said, “Like I said, being healthy and active then you will be motivated to do other things. Once you be more physically active or do it with a friend…” (Alesia, Interview 2, June 2012).

Affirming the idea that motivation and confidence are generated through active physical activity, Tina said, “My 12 year old has been diagnosed with ADHD and I noticed wit’[with] him and his motivation and confidence has grown a lot…so I just really want to continue to help him, help all my kids on that level” (Tina, Interview 2, July 2012).

Lastly, one participant related how he believes physical activity will benefit his child’s confidence. Joe said, “Health, general good health, mind and brain, prevention of disease and illness, helps avoid obesity, builds confidence, ‘they can relate to people confidently’. I think it really helps health wise generally…” (Joe, Interview 3, July 2012). Joe firmly believes a person’s health is enhanced in many ways, via ‘brain, mind and the prevention of disease’ if they are an active participant in physical activity.

In each subtheme, parents believed the benefits of physical activity help their child avoid obesity, they described ways their child stays active and healthy, while providing several examples of how physical activity supplies their preschool children with positive outcomes, motivation, and increased confidence.
Theme 3. All I do... [families routines during the week and weekend].

A song titled, All I do…sums up the theme related to families routines during the week and weekend as families consider their daily routines. Specific subthemes, Working 9 to 5, a movie theme, allowed parents to consider their daily routine and whether they were variable or consistent. The subtheme phrase, It’s the weekend! Encouraged parents to consider weekend routines and whether they were variable or consistent. All families in this study had a routine, but one participant insisted that his routine is “variable” or changes due to his work schedule.

Working 9 to 5 exposes the accounts of the parents’ weekly routines and the standard activities that take place after picking their child up from preschool (e.g., get a snack, go outside to play, getting ready for activities). Support for this subtheme is garnered by parents’ accounts of their daily routines as well as the preschool children’s account of what they did during the week. Candace was very candid in sharing her weekly routine by saying,

Well during the week, we really don’t do too much. The biggest thing is that their Dad plays softball. So we go to his games and they just run around. I guess that’s my free time. Uhm...Yeah, somewhere I don’t know. I am not sure how to get there. Yeah, so it's like our big activity during the week...pause...[Candace begins listing the schedule] Tuesday is a game, maybe Wednesday if they need him (intonation higher here!), or Thursday, but they never need him Fridays, Yes! Always.

So... [Daily schedule] To come to school [Raintree] and they’re here [referring to children at preschool], I go to school [University class] and go home clean up, come and pick them up. Go home make dinner, then when I am cooking dinner they go outside and play or they go in their room and play. Then after dinner they take a bath and go to bed… (Candace, Interview 1, May 2012).

Jenae gave her assessment of the daily/weekly routine by saying,
I am currently now unemployed...For about a week now and I am currently looking for another job...[Explains routine when working]...uhmmm, we would wake up I would bring him to school, go to work...get off of work...pick him up, depending on the weather go to the park for a little while and then go home. Like a Tuesday, it depends on the days of the week. I don’t know it generally go home play with his toys, run around the house...

Occasionally we would sometimes, if I was too tired, just sit outside my house for a little while until I start seeing some of the violent behavior...Then on Wednesdays pick him up take him to speech. Mmm, sometimes let him play at the park at the hospital. Then come back home. We basically have an open and shut type schedule... (Jenae, Interview 1, May 2012).

She also added the following regarding her schedule: “Some days he’ll come home get a snack and then go outside, whereas other days he’ll just skip the snack and go right outside and play. It just depends on how he is feelin [feeling]” (Jenae, Interview 3, July 2012).

In support of Jenae’s statements, Jordan described how his mom took him to the park and then to the new park.

[Do you go outside?] Yes, to my other park. Uhh, it is called the other park and now we have a new park....Uhh, I play on the monkey bars. My mom helps me go pass them [assuming meaning to cross the bars, as it was hard to understand what he was saying]...I can even walk to there...[Park, but not sure that was what he was saying or what he understood.].

He also had an opportunity to draw a picture describing his daily activities as well as identify a picture of various activities (Appendix I). When identifying pictures, Jordan pulled the picture card of a playground and when asked what was the picture card he picked up from the table said, “Upside down on the monkey bars. I get to go on them and go UP [emphasis added here!] – Side down. [See’s the picture card of a boy running and
picks it up] uhhh, I, I run and skip [assuming at the park]. (Jordan, Preschool Child Interview 1, June 2012).

As Jenae shared, her routine was very basic each day and expressed that, she took Jordan to the park to play. This was verified by Jordan in his statements about going to the ‘other park and new park to play on the monkey bars and hang on the UP-side down’ (Jordan, Preschool Child Interview 1, June 2012). What was not discernible was the suggestion that Jordan had opportunities to run and skip at the park.

Alesia shared that her routine was constant each day, as she was required to be at school [preschool teacher] the same time every day. In discussing her routine, she said,

Well, pretty much they’re [routines] the same Monday through Friday and every week. I know we go to the library every week and we walk there. Cause it is right across the street. We walk there, weather permitting….She plays outside everyday at school and at home…[when at home] She wants to ride that bike. That bike is her best friend. She’ll play with her little friends…It’s,uhm, it’s our next-door neighbors it’s two of them, a boy..sister and brother. They play and they’ll go to the park or ummm ...I think they’re both older, but not much older…(Alesia, Interview 2, June 2012).

India, Alesia’s daughter, indicated a specific daily and weekly schedule during Interview 1. She identified activities she did during the week like swimming, watching movies, playing with her two friends, and riding her bicycle [India drew a picture of a waterfall and swimming pool], Figure 4.1. India described her activity by sharing, “Yesterday, I went swimming in the pool...the pool by our house”… (India, Preschool Child Interview 1, June 2012).
After this explanation the researcher asked, "What do you do from the time you wake up every day until you go to bed?" India replied, “Eat breakfast, take a shower, go to school, Mom brings me to school, goes to work, picks me up, we go home and watch movies” (India, Preschool Child Interview 1, June 2012).

Statements by India appeared to support Alesia’s claims that their family routine was consistent. India’s statements about swimming, riding her bike, and playing with friends seemed to authenticate her mother’s assertions about what India does to be physically active and accounts for their weekly routine.

Mark and Tina, shared they had a specific routine during the week as they were focused on getting homework completed, spending some time playing together as a family, and getting ready for school the next day. Mark gave a clear description of the family routine as he said,

Uhmm, just starting a new job, every day is a little stressful cause the time to start is a little different. But previously, it was the same 8 to 4:30p.m. or until Pool season starts and it might be a little later. Other than that just gettin’ out the house, ridin’ a bike, or inside the driveway just playin’ or just comin’ home to play wit
her anything like that. 8-4:30p.m. is just work. Then when we come home we just want to maintain and make sure they schooling together.

We stay on track with that….Doin’ physical activity over there wit them [St. Edwards, pseudonym for play area near the home]. Playin’ and jumpin’ around. I mean routines, uhhm, find out what time we need to start work…laughs… uhm…[Continues talking] Other than that.. git home, get dinner going on, make sure that [indicpherable and laughs]…get their homework. Maybe play around a little bit, wrassle [wrestle] around a little bit feed ‘em, get their baths and we is in for the night [laughs]. You know we’ll lay around and watch a movie or something like that after dinner (Mark, Interview 1, June 2012).

Tasha confirmed her father’s statements in expressing the following, “Then Daddy came and kept tickling me and wrestling with me” (Tasha, Interview 2, July 2012). [Note. As Tasha described what her dad did, she moved her body like he was actually in the room tickling her, by rubbing her elbows in her sides, and moving her head around, smiling, and giggling while describing the scene.]

Angel, on the other hand, gave a very detailed account of her week as hectic and chaotic. She did not feel as though she had a routine and gave the following comment as she said,

Uhm, my week is so unorganized it is ridiculous [sound of exasperation in her voice here]!!  It soo, stressful [emphasis here]! My day starts at 5a.m. every morning. I have to drop my husband off at work and he has to be there at 6a.m. which is 15 minutes from where we live. Then I come back home, get all the kids dressed, and now I am walking the dog making sure it uses the bathroom [laughs], that’s just, I don’t know why I added that stress on. Get them all up, do hair. Uhh…you know my son, he has a head full of hair, so I do his hair, do my hair, and do my daughters hair everyday.

Then I finally get out the take the 7 year old to summer camp which is 20 minutes away from my house. Then I take the other two and drop them off at the preschool [Raintree]. Then I go to work from 9-3, then I rush and pick up my husband because he gets off at 3:15p.m. and go and pick up the 7 year old, then rush back here [Raintree Preschool] to pick the kids up at school. Then I rush back home to get them all changed because we have football practice at 6p.m…So I am out at football practice from 6p.m. until 8:30/8:45p.m…so it’s crazy! You know it’s literally crazy!…(Angel, Interview 1, June 2012).
Ronnie affirmed his mother, Angel's dialogue about the weekly routine, when he shared his drawing of a picture during the first child interview. He drew a picture of a car (Figure 4.2) and then explained how he got ready for football practice.

![Figure 4.2. Ronnie's Drawing of Car and House.](image)

When explaining what he drew, Ronnie said,

> When I go home today, I am going to go home and play football. (He plays tackle football and his team has off-season practice)...Can you write [draw] a car [emphasis and enunciation here] on here. [I/Ronnie] Go in the house. Then I put on some clothes that I [indecipherable]...I put on shorts...Then I leave again. Then I go to football practice (Ronnie, Preschool Child Interview 1, June 2012).

As verified from Angel and Ronnie’s responses the data suggest a part of the family’s daily and weekly schedule involves being at football practice.

The families above provide specific examples of their daily and weekly routines. They have specific guidelines for how and what the family does throughout the week.
Although one parent, Joe, suggests his routine is variable due to many factors. When asked about his daily weekly routine, he asserts,

Mhhmmmmmn, okay! Ummm, its rough right now we don’t [have a routine], basically, we don’t, I’ll be honest, we don’t have a straight routine. Uh, like right now we find ourselves at a crossroads trying to find what we want to do, how we want to do it, and where do we want to start from. For instance I said, just in 2010 I made up my mind and go to school…My wife now is here [moved wife and daughters from Nigeria to United States] and she is …[indecipherable] and she is taking classes.

So itsss not that easy for us to have a set routine but we have, or our life right now and our career is not set…So it is kind of tough! So it changes…It varies, like my wife works right now and I don’t work right now. My wife works and her schedule changes, sometimes she goes to work in the afternoons between 3 and gets off at 11 at night. And sometimes she goes to work at 11 and comes home 7. So if she comes home in the morning at 7, its hard, you know. I have to get up in the morning and take care of Charli, you know, get her up and get her in the bathtub, when she is done, dress her up, and bring her to school. You know. So the first ting [thing] when I wake up about 6-6:15, I make sure she gets up, ahhh, by quarter to 7 she is ready…I make her, her cereal…So when I drop her off, I go back home and get my books and den [then] if my wife is working that day or not, she goes and does her own thing, as I said she doesn’t [Charlie] have a set routine…(Joe, Interview 1, May 2012)

*Working 9 to 5* provided a description of the weekly routine outlined by parents.

There were a variety of ways families’ routines for the week happened. Families reported participating in many activities during the week including going to softball games, football practice, completing homework, preparing for the next day, taking a walk, riding bicycles, and going to the park.

*It’s the weekend!* unpacks the weekend routines of parents by having adult parents and children recall their weekend routines. Responses from adult interviews and preschool children’s accounts confirm parent responses about weekend routines. The weekend is defined as Friday through Sunday; however, parents shared their family
routines occurring primarily on Saturday and Sunday. All families reported participating in some type of activity during the weekend and there was a clear delineation of activities and how they occurred on Saturday as opposed to Sunday.

An account regarding Saturday activities distinguishes the first portion of this theme with the later part of this theme including Sunday routines. On Saturdays, Candace and Angel reported formal sports activities for their children. Likewise, Jenae and Alesia described their families' communities or family based participation in activities. Joe detailed time spent with his family at the library and church on Sunday. Candace conveyed her weekend routine by saying,

Lately [on] the weekend Saturday is Nikki’s soccer game in the morning. Pause… So every Saturday morning at 10 she goes to her soccer game. She plays there from 10 to 11, pause, then we leave there, pause, go get lunch, go home and then [emphasis added here] she just finishes playing in the yard til she is tired. [I] Just let her run all of her little energy out. Then she comes in takes a nap and then she starts again [change in voice, more excited but with vigor in her description of how her daughter begins playing again]! [The child Nikki] Asks to go outside again! (Candace, Interview 1, May 2012)

During preschool child Interview 2, Nikki described playing soccer on the weekends, by identifying the picture card of a soccer player. She picked up the picture when she saw it and exclaimed, “A soccer player! I play outside in the backyard and with my team! [Do you have a soccerball?] Yes, I take it to the game” (Nikki Interview 2, July 2012).

Similarly, Angel, who works most all weekends, explained the following about her weekend routine she said,

[So] Every Saturday morning I wake up and I always cook breakfast for the kids cause I am not able to do it during the week. You know and we sit down and we eat and I will take them outside and play with them a little while before I have to
go to work, come back in and try to throw a coupla loads of clothes cause there’s so many of us, in the washer and dryer. Get that done just to stay up on my house work and then I go straight to work (Angel Interview 1, June 2012).

While this describes her weekend routine Angel also commented that her son has football games every Saturday as a part of physical activity he is engaged in on the weekends. She clearly indicated football occurs by saying, “So usually on Saturday’s they have games [Football]” (Angel, Interview 3, August 2012).

Another parent, Alesia depicts her Saturday routine involving community and family oriented activities. She expressed,

[Saturday] Very laid back! Very laid back! Usually we’ll go over my mom’s and they have a pool over there, swim at my mom’s house on the weekends or just stay at home or if she wants to go to the park we can go to the park. It just really varies….So it… she is either wit [with] a family member or she with at home and we’ll go to the park or she wants to go back to the library. Any activity that is going on, on the weekend [referencing the City activities here]…You know we’ve been going to the uhmmm, Big Park [pseudonym] downtown, the fountain park cause she likes that…(Interview 1, June 2012).

Lastly, Joe appears to make sure his children have plenty of opportunity to learn as he takes the children to the library consistently. He reports Saturdays includes spending hours at the library, taking breaks and then returning to the library. Here is what he said.

Weekend, weekend is like, uhhm, I get up in the morning. I try to do dis [this] every Saturday. Uhmm, get my kids up, uhh, the mom [his wife] will take care of dem [them]. And then uhhm, after a live breakfast at home, I try to alternate it…Then I take them to the library, yeah, the library… I leave the kids in ‘de [the]… in the kids section. I just leave them there, then I just go and…do my own thing, do some reading, also I keep my eye on them. So we stay there for about, sometimes we stay there for almost 6 hours. Not that it is straight…[At the library we] Stay for a couple of hours, go to the ice cream shop in de front of the library there and we drive around our city and then come back in there again.
Yeah, just take like a 30 to 45 minutes break, get them some ice cream and then go to the bathroom and then bring them back. We spend another two to three hours and then we are ready to go home...Basically, once we get home I make them take a nap and uhmmm...and then by evening time, if my wife is home she makes us dinner... So basically that I how the weekend [Saturday] goes (Joe, Interview 1, May 2012).

When describing her weekend routine, Charli endorsed her father’s claims about their weekend routine during the preschool interview by describing going to the library, swimming, and home to take a nap. When asked what she does on the weekend, Charli replied, “I made pictures for my mom, went to the library and...read and then go swimming and take a nap. Take a Nap!” (Charli, Preschool Child Interview 2, July 2012). As Interview 2 continued, Charli further corroborated her father’s weekend routine claims by identifying from the picture cards things she did on the weekend. [Picture of a swimming pool] “Swim, I like them. I jumped in the water” (Charlie, Preschool Child Interview 2, July 2012). Additionally, she picks up the picture of boy in the library reading a book and says, “I go to the library and read books” (Charli, Preschool Child Interview 2, July 2012).

After sharing their Saturday activities, Sunday represents a variety of activities families participate. When sharing activities completed on Sunday, Candace emphatically said,

No, laughs we don’t do nothing on Sunday continues laughing...That’s our relax day... [high intonation with a cheer] Yeah, look forward to Monday...Uhm, sometimes maybe like on Sundays we go to my aunt’s house for dinner because of course they have kids too. So they’ll meet their cousins there and play with them, but we just really just keep to ourselves (Candace, Interview 1, May 2012).

Joe and his family go to church and usually out to lunch as he said, “On Sunday mornings, we get ready to go to church, and uhmm, after church by 10 or 11 oclock if we
feel like, sometimes it depends on finance, we can stop by McDonald’s” (Joe, Interview 1, May 2012). Another parent, Jenae, also clearly described her Sunday as a day to do her laundry and get ready for the coming week. She said, “We usually just hang around the house and try to get ready for the week...that’s when we do the laundry, he has to help [referring to Jordan her son]... he likes putting the clothes in the washer” [chuckles] (Jenae, Interview 1, May 2012).

Mark summarizes his family's Sunday routine by sharing they mostly relax, get ready for the week, and stay close to home. He said,

So Sunday is kinda relaxed, either we’ll walk or another activity…Then we go to the library or anything gettin’ ready for school…Mostly we try and stay around the house…or if we have some extra money we’ll do an activity wit [with] ‘em [them]. We stay close to home, we stay to ourself, we are a real tight knit family and we always have been. We always try to stay close… (Mark, Interview 1, May 2012).

Tasha supported her father’s account of the weekend routine by naming one activity her family does during the weekend. During the preschool child Interview 2, when given the opportunity to identify pictures of physical activity Tasha picked up the picture of the boy in the library reading a book. “I went to the library with my Dad and I got a book”. (Tasha, Preschool Child Interview 2, July 2012).

The overall message imbedded in subtheme two, It’s the weekend illustrates the importance of family time during the weekend. From the responses, it would appear that all participant families indicated the importance being together and doing something together during the weekend.
Theme 4: We are Family! [cultural norms and niche profiles of families]

The song titled, we are family, encompasses 7 of the 10 niche profiles and they are identified below with their subsequent subthemes. To expedite and condense the subthemes that were generated from this theme, two niche profiles were combined as the data represented similar responses. The following are the niche profiles identified as subthemes with their respective music or entertainment reference and descriptor are listed below.

Work and work, a phrase from a movie, represents how work affects physical activity [subsistence and workcycles]; All in the family, a television show title, addresses childcare during the week/weekend [childcare]; It’s cool, a common phrase, depicts neighborhood safety [home and neighborhood safety] and who the child plays with in the community [children’s play groups]; Won’t you please, please help me, a phrase from a song, illuminates the child’s involvement in household chores [domestic workload]!

Who…helps you?! [a common phrase] reveals affiliate associations or groups that support physical activity for the family [supports or cultural influences] when the parent works or has to be away; and Amen, a song title, other community support for families [other information or resources].

Work and work illuminates how work affects the adults’ ability to be active [physically] with the family. Several parents did not answer the question and one parent, Angel provided a minimal response to this question. Angel previously stated she worked during the week and every Saturday and Sunday which limited her opportunity to spend much time with her children in activity. She said, “So, I close every weekend
[exasperated and reluctance in voice, half chuckle], so I work from 3:00 to 8:30 pm every weekend” (Angel, Interview 1, June 2012). Another parent Alesia, feels that her work does not inhibit her ability to spend time with her child in physical activity, as she said, “No it kind of falls into place. By the time I get off of work, there is still day light and we can do things. You know, we can go to the park if weather permitting” (Alesia, Interview 3, July 2012). However, the two remaining parents identified work as prohibiting them from being active with their children. Jenae reported,

When I was working, I had less time to be active with him. Normally, I would not get off [work] until after 5p.m. and then I would not be here [Raintree preschool] until before 6p.m. and then 9 times out of 10, I would have to be at work first thing the next day, so it was like we basically get him home, give him a snack, let him play outside for a half hour to an hour, then we were back in the house – bath, clothes out, and time for bed. (Jenae, Interview 3, July 2012).

Joe, on the other hand, shared statements that appeared to denote a concern about work interfering with time to be active with his daughter. He seemed to indicate that having to work at a “moment’s notice” really detracted from spending activity time with his daughter. He exclaimed,

If I have plans to do something with her, and when my job calls me, due to the nature of my job, I have to go. I mean its not just affecting her, it really hurts. You see what I am saying, you know you need the money, you know you need the job at the same time, you look at your daughter and say, ‘I know I am going to disappoint her again today’.

You know you don’t want to look at her face again, so I go tell the mom [wife] that I am going to work...It really hurts, I mean. It does drive, I mean, I know it shuts her down…she gets upset and runs to the corner (Joe, Interview 3, July 2012).
While the effects of work seemed to be different for each of the parents in this subtheme, Joe and Angel’s work schedules seemed to affect opportunities to be active with their children.

*All in the family* unpacks each family’s childcare needs when the parents had to work. All the participants detailed how they “worked out” their childcare situation with their spouse or other immediate family members like grandparents, brothers or sisters, and cousins. None of the participants had anyone outside of their immediate family provide childcare when the parent had to work. It appeared that all the participants felt comfortable with a family member providing care for their preschool child thus keeping it *all in the family.*

*It’s cool* emphasizes neighborhood safety [d. home and neighborhood safety] and who the child played with in the neighborhood [g. children’s play groups]. Most of the parents allowed their children to play outside as they felt it was safe and all described friends or relatives their preschool child played with when in their care. One parent was cautious about having their child play outside without supervision and another considered their neighborhood unsafe and only allowed her child outside with specific and structured situations.

One such parent who was more cautious, Alesia, only allowed her daughter to play in the neighborhood where she lives under her supervision. She said,

Well yeah…one day I went out and was like, *Whoa,* where’s my baby cause I didn’t see her. So I would rather be outside to watch her when she rides her bike or I gave her areas where she can go and then she has to turn around. Cause I don’t want her going around in this neighborhood period (Alesia, Interview 3, July 2012). To validate Alesia’s point India shared, “I ride the bike in the front yard. No training wheels”… (India, Preschool Child Interview 1, June 2012).
Alesia continued by explaining other activities that take place as she shared, “In my backyard…there is a lot of grass…So she likes to play out there and will take her ball and we’ll kick a little bit…practice out in back” (Alesia, Interview 2, June 2012). It is suggested that India also plays with friends from the neighborhood as referenced by her mother who said, “There is also two little friends who moved in next door and I will usually let her play with them” (Alesia, Interview 1, June 2012). India confirmed her mother’s statements by sharing during preschool child Interview 1, “I play with Jimmy and Anna [pseudonyms]…by my house. We play games like freeze tag…outside in the front yard” (India, Preschool Child Interview 1, June 2012).

This was not the only opportunity India has to play, Alesia described that India has chances to play with her uncles’ at her mother’s house. She said, “My mom bought a pool for the boys [Alesia has twin brothers who are six years old from mom’s second marriage] and India to play in when she comes over to the house. They swim and have their bikes they ride over there” (Alesia, Interview 3, July 2012).

The lone participant who felt their neighborhood was unsafe was Jenae as she discussed being very careful when allowing her son Jordan to play outside. She expressed, “Yeah, I honestly do not let him outside often because of the neighborhood kids [Its pretty bad?]…That’s not the word. They try to beat up every kid they see” (Jenae, Interview 1, May 2012). In asking her son Jordan during the preschool child interview if he gets to go outside and play when he gets home from school he responded, “No, My mom is not gonna let me go outside and play…[why not?] Because…” (Jordan, Preschool Child Interview 1, June 2012).
Jenae continued explaining the behavior of the other children in the neighborhood by saying, “And these kids are bigger than him, so if they’re out there hittin’ on him, he’s gonna think it is okay to go out and hit other people for no reason” (Jenae, Interview 2, June 2012). It appears from Jenae’s comments and actions that she is concerned for the safety of Jordan in the neighborhood by keeping him in close proximity to the house or in the house. She does allow him to play with neighbor children on occasion. She stated,

There are classmates that live over by us…the little girl about his age, the little boy that is older than him and another little boy that’s two years younger than him…But there mom feels the same way I do about the neighborhood and doesn’t let them come out either. But if they are outside and he sees them, then I will let him go over and play with them (Jenae, Interview 2, June 2012).

The remainder of the participants in this study shared their child had opportunities to play with friends in a number of places like the neighborhood, at cousins’ house, grandmothers’ house, or at home in the backyard. Mark and Tina were not involved in interview number three, therefore, did not have opportunity to respond to the question of where their child Tasha plays. However during the preschool child Interview 1 with Tasha, she said, “I play hide and seek at my cousin Trina’s house. Her [She] has an upstairs and down. I get to run in the house… I also play dress up…It’s me, brother 1, mean brother 2, cousin 1, and cousin 2” (Tasha, Preschool Child Interview 1, June 2012).

Won’t you please, please help me situates the preschool child’s involvement in work activities around the house also known as chores. Two of the six parents did not clearly identify whether their child had chores during the day or week. Two other participants did not see this as important for children at this time. When asked if Charli completed chores around the house Joe indicated,
No, not right now [completing chores]. It is something I told my wife to start getting her [Charli] things to do. From time to time, I see my mom tell her things to do and she will do them, but work no. She might be lazy, but that is something I don’t think about (Joe, Interview 3, July 2012).

Angel, on the other hand, while not requiring her preschool child and other children to do daily or weekly chores; she does have a standing work responsibility for all of her children. When asked if the children had chores, she explained, “No, they are so little. The only thing I make them do is clean up their room…Ronnie, he doesn’t do any chores [laughs]. He doesn’t even clean his room” [laughs] (Angel, Interview 3, August 2012). Candace explained that her daughter Nikki helped in a variety of ways. “Yes [they have chores]…and she helps wash the dishes and helps me fold laundry and clean up messes”… (Candace, Interview 3, June 2012). Jenae also clearly identified work responsibilities for her son Jordan in reference to happens on the weekend, she said, “That’s when we do laundry, he has to help [do the laundry]…he likes putting the clothes in the washer” [laughs], (Jenae, Interview 1, June 2012).

Families have mixed feelings concerning chores or work responsibilities for their children as stated in Subtheme 4, *Won't you please, please help me?* Some parents felt the preschool children were too young to have work responsibilities or that chores for them were not important at this time. Other families felt it was necessary for their child to help with chores.

*Who…helps you?!* This subtheme exposes affiliate associations or groups that support physical activity for the family [i.e., supports or cultural influences] when the parent works or has to be away. The essence of this theme asked parents to identify
family, agency, or other supports where their preschool children had opportunity to be physically active when the parent was away. Alesia was adamant about who supports her daughter and how as she exclaimed,

My mom and family, even my boyfriend [support] her…[when India is at her Grandmother’s house] they [India’s six year old uncle’s] swim and their bikes they ride over there…They’re outside as you can see the tan [she laughs]…they stay outside….Just family support, if I need anything they help me with my daughter (Alesia, Interview 3, July 2012).

Meanwhile, Joe shared his interpretation of support for his family while he works by saying, “Yeah, my wife is going to take them and my mom will go too [the community swimming pool and playground]. She [the mother of Charli] just sits there and watches them” [in the swimming pool]. Joe also shared that he has cousins who help when they exchange children for the weekend. He said, “Yeah, Charli went over to the cousin’s house to spend the night and play with them last weekend” (Joe, Interview 3, July 2012). He also feels that his mother is a big support for the family by stating, “Mom is a big support for the family. I don’t know what I would have done without my mom here! However, she only stays for half the year and then goes back to Nigeria” (Joe, Interview 1, May 2012).

Candace provides a more in-depth perspective of support for her family by giving the following description. She conveyed,

Yeah, either my mom or my cousins watch them. There is other kids, like people that bring their kids. She just plays with them, so…[same age as her, Nikki]. Yeah, so…and it depends….If they are are at my cousins they play with her son as he is the same age as she is…[but] they can’t do much, but if they go to her mom’s house [Candace’s Aunt] then they can go to the park across the street and play…or the backyard and run around (Candace, Interview 3, June 2012).
While Candace also shared that others provide support for her when she is at school or work and when she needs help. Here are her comments.

Like I said, before my mom helps, then my brother is moving closer to use and he sometimes comes and takes the kids for a night. He takes them to Magic Mountain [an entertainment play place]. I don’t know my family is very supportive, you know if we ever need something they are there or can be called to help out. (Candace, Interview 3, June 2012).

In these examples, it seemed as though the common idea generated is that support for the family came in the form of family members. As indicated by most parents they appreciated and were grateful for their family members support when needed and were comfortable leaving their children with these family members.

*Amen* unravels other community support for families [other information or resources]. When parents shared the views of agencies or community support for physical activity with their preschool child there were a variety of reports. Three parents shared their concern for the local recreation center as being unsafe and not going there for activities or services. Candace shared, “I think there is a recreation center near our house because there was a person that got shot over there so I am kind of leery of going over there” (Interview 3, June 2012).

Jenae also articulated her thoughts about the safety of the local community agencies for her son Jordan where she lives. “Yeah, I don’t know if people know this or not, but this is, kinda to me, a high crime area. Every time you hear on the news you always hear about someone gettin’ shot…over there” [by the Recreation Center]. (Jenae, Interview 2, June 2012). She continued to point out, “The only other thing they promote
around here is vacation bible school, but that is it”… (Jenae, Interview 3, July 2012).

Angel also described the recreation center closest to her home.

   Honestly, thinking about the neighborhood I live in the closest Rec Center is not a good option ‘cause it is really bad. You know there is a lot of guys, gang members, and people that hang out around the Rec Center and I don’t want to be trying to go in and coming out with all those guys who are around the Rec Center (Angel, Interview 2, July 2012).

Another parent, Joe, had a different perspective he described access to the local library as a great resource for his family as they spend most every Saturday there.

   Actually, the only place that they still have things to do is the library, in my City where they have things for the children to do. So I try to make time to take her to the library on Saturdays… (Joe, Interview 2, June 2012).

He also went on to say “I am sure there are [other supports or resources], but the difficulty is finding the information and getting the time to do them” (Joe, Interview 3, July 2012).

   Lastly, Alesia was not interested in finding or using any other agencies at this time as she feels as though she needs time alone with her daughter after spending it with children at her preschool.

   Since I work all day and she [India] is in daycare all day, I don’t want to put her back somewhere. You know. I wanna [would like to] spend some time with my baby on my own, so I don’t take her to any Rec Center unless she was actually doin’ [doing] a sport….besides, the things she wanted to do…it just didn’t work out for me right now financially and transportation wise (Alesia, Interview 2, June 2012).

   Another important part of a few families’ lives is the church, which is a valued community resource by two participants in this study. Participation in church is important for family and there are opportunities for activity as reported by Joe and Candace.
Joe said, “On Sunday, we wake up in the morning, first thing we get ready for is church, my church is early…8:30, sometimes we go to the 8:30 services” (Joe, Interview 1, May 2012). While sharing his family is committed to worship on Sunday mornings, he also states, “But when we get to church she plays with kids at the church too. ‘Cause the church we go to, they have a spot [an area for children to go] for kids too!” (Joe, Interview 2, June 2012).

Candace also shared that church is a part of the family and a resource for physical activity for her children, “This church we go to called Experience [pseudonym] and that was out west [laughs]… (Candace, Interview 1, June 2012). At the church Candace also shared,

Oh, they do lots of stuff, they have basketball. She wasn’t old enough to do T-ball this year and they have like these little groups where kids just come and play (playgroup). They have a big yard and divide the kids up into groups and have, what they call adventures. These groups have different activities like scavenger hunts and stuff like that. They keep the kids active (Candace, Interview 3, June 2012).

During the interview process additional questions arose such as asking families to identifying programs, activities, or information shared by the preschool facility that supported family involvement or engagement in physical activity. [Note. This critical question needed to be addressed since much of the interview questions revolved around physical activity, parents, and preschool children. The bulk of data collection occurred at the school, therefore, the researcher was curious to know how Raintree Preschool might influence or provide information, resources, or opportunities for physical activity and this was also not included in the original interview questions. It was generated from a}
thought after a few initial interviews and was included in all subsequent interviews for adult participants. Researcher's Journal, June 2012].

Parents replied that Raintree Preschool did not provide any relevant information other than activities and programming that take place in the curriculum like zoo trips, recess, physical activity program, and nutrition education program (i.e., food matters), however, one family depicted Raintree as a resource or support that keeps kids active. Tina praised the facility by saying,

I am not sure about the family [resources provided], but they are a big ball of information there, so I am sure that they have some information for the family you could tap into. I know for a fact they keep the kids very active…I volunteer for activities, just recently we went to the zoo and walked around the zoo. They keep the children busy and active at the school (Tina, Interview 2, July 2012).

Amen, which is Subtheme 5, reveals other community support for families [other information or resources]. In the adult participant responses, it is suggested that families have a concern about safety, lack of time, resources, and transportation as limiting factors toward participation in physical activity.

Theme 5, This is how we do it! [physical activity of child, parent, and family]

In this theme, a song title, this is how we do it, describes the researchers desire to know how preschool children, parents, and the families participated in physical activity. The parents and preschool children described their physical activity levels individually and then acknowledged their activities as a family. As an outcome of their responses it appeared evident these were important contributions and subthemes emerged.

The first subtheme, I like to move it, move it, a song title, relates to the preschool children’s report of physical activity through parents' and preschool children's interviews.
Parents reported that their children were physically active. Jenae said, “He love’s swimming…He loves the water. Uhm, yeah, he would do it just jump in the swimming pool on his own free will without anybody asking, he might do it when it’s not his turn” (Jenae, Interview 2, June 2012). She went on to say that her son, Jordan, “He’s a kid that does not stop. Like I said, it can be freezing cold outside and he wants to go outside and play” (Jenae, Interview 3, July 2012). Jordan validates these claims by his comments as he spoke about some of his activities.

Play outside [are his favorite things to do]…Hide n go seek…with my mom. I watch TV in the mo-ning [morning]…I played with my brachiosaurus…[I went to the] Pool with my mom and easy [The researcher believed he was saying Niece or his Aunt]…He also played basketball [in the house]…dribbling from one hand to the other and bounced it and shoot it. (Jordan, Preschool Child Interview 2, July 2012).

Candace also explained how active her daughter Nikki is when she is at home.

“Run around, run to the neighbor’s house…She loves to kick the soccer ball around” [in the yard] (Candace, Interview 1, May 2012). She also shared, “Our key thing is to keep her active all summer. Keep her busy!” (Candace, Interview 2, June 2012). While commenting that she seems to be active when at home, Candace summed it up by saying, “Most of the time she is being active outside as I let them go outside in the backyard” (Interview 3, July 2012).

Nikki verified her mother’s statements by sharing what she does during the child interviews. “Libabby [Library]. Yea, I go to the library. Get books…. Running…not in the house, but outside” (Nikki, Preschool Child Interview 1, June 2012).

Another child, Ronnie, shared how he is involved in physical activity when identifying pictures during the interviews. He selected a picture card of a football player...
(Appendix I) and talked about how he gets ready for practice and what time practice starts. When he saw the card, he declared, “[A] Football player. I come…after I go home. Its [football practice] at 6 o’clock” (Ronnie, Preschool Child Interview 1, 2012).

The responses from these adult and children participants exemplify what many of the other parents shared regarding their child’s involvement in physical activity, that there child is active and participates in activity consistently.

*One day at a time*, a television show title, depicts the physical activity levels of mom and dad from the adult participant interview and preschool child interview. Three families portray a minimal level of physical activity, while two families chronicle their activity levels as more intense, while the last participant family describes the mom’s physical activity level as very focused and intense.

Those with minimal levels of physical activity, Candace, Joe, and Jenae are described below. Candace, when asked about her current physical activity level claimed, “[I] Chase them two [daughter Nikki and one year old daughter]. [Laughs…] Chase them two and then if I am capable [8 months pregnant] will play with them, but…[pause] that is about it”. (Candace, Interview 1, May 2012).

Joe reveals his level of physical activity and is not pleased with his efforts when responding to the question what is your current level of physical activity?

Nothing to write home about. Uhhm, really really bad right now. Even though we have a gym in my complex [apartment], I don’t go there…I live around the kids right now. I don’t have much time for myself. The only activity I have is walking back and forth up and down the stairs mostly. I would love to have more time to do stuff like that [physical activity]. (Joe, Interview 2, June 2012).

Like Joe, Jenae also describes her physical activity level.
I don’t know when or where I became lazy, but I was way more active then, than I am now....[Physical Activity] Honestly, probably not as much as I could be, but like when I can...I am tryin’ ta think...we have our spells of super activity, but he’s like a behavioral child. (Jenae, Interview 1, June 2012).

Jordan’s mom, Jenae, plays hide and seek with him in the park and at the house, however, when asked if his mom chased him at the park he responded, “No, she sits down...[when your mom plays with you does she run?] No, she walks!” (Jordan, Preschool Child Interview 1, June 2012). This evidence perhaps supports mom’s claim of inactivity or sedentary behavior.

Two participants made claims of more moderate physical activity, wanting to get more activity, as well as having more time in the day to get more exercise. One seeks to engage in more physical activity by weight lifting activities, while the other is looking to stay motivated.

Angel shared her perceptions of an individual desire to get more activity that is physical in the form of exercise and gym time.

I wanna focus on me and my body and health. You know, so I can better myself for my kids, but I can’t do that because I just have ...[sighs]...it’s just horrible. I am so not...organized...I’m so not on a schedule and my life is just up and down every day you know so...Something has to go [chuckles and smiles]. (Angel, Interview 1, June 2012)

She went on to share her work seems to have affected her schedule, which prohibits her from getting more time to exercise on her own.

As far as any type of exercise [short laugh], I don’t! My physical level is kind of...You know...cause I am constantly lifting, I am stocking, you know, doing a lot at work. I am constantly at work and that is the only exercise I get...I don’t get as much activity as I want to. I can say out of a whole shift [9 hours], I am probably at about 45 minutes where my heart rate is up and I am really doin’ something and uhhm that is probably because I try to get as much as the heavy stuff as possible to lift and put on the shelves.
So I am not getting as much physical activity that I should be doing or doing enough exercising to stay healthy that I feel. Like I feel I should have more, but I mean, you know my schedule is so ridiculous…So I would love to see that or try to make that time just to be able to exercise more. (Angel, Interview 2, August 2012).

It is apparent from her interview statements that Angel feels that she does not have or get enough time to go to the gym. Consequently she would like to seek ways to get more time in her schedule to make this a reality.

Alesia commented walking was the motivation to help her quit smoking [cigarettes] and has given her incentive to walk consistently. She also has a job as a preschool teacher that requires her to be active and moving with three year old children, so much of her motivation to be active appears to be related to her own desire to maintain her physical activity level for personal and professional reasons. She says,

Like when I [emphasis here] started walking and exercising as an adult, I’m like man I gotta [have to] quit smoking…I’m not going to be able to make it around this big track! So THAT [emphasis here] was a big factor. [Repeated statement] I’m not going to make it around this big track if I keep smoking, soo [laughs] I ended up quittin’….It [exercising] helps me eat a little [emphasis here] bit more healthier cause I see that I am gaining more weight now, since I quit smoking….So I gotta exercise or do somethin’, I just need to be more motivated (Alesia, Interview 1, June 2012).

Alesia continued sharing how she defines her workouts and that her work keeps her engaged in activity and moving a lot when working with the young children. She exclaimed,

I walk three times a week. I signed up for walking with Walgreen’s and they give you a time, uh not a timer, but a step counter [pedometer]…yeah a pedometer. So everywhere I went I would make sure I wear it and I would write down my steps and miles.

But three times a week, I would go to the park and walk two to three miles that evening. I think that is the most active I get cause I am here [at the preschool]
cause I work all day...[Are you active with the preschool children] Yes, they usually want me to chase them around or play tag with them. I move a lot when I am out there. They like to race me. (Alesia, Interview 2, June 2012)

Alesia indicates that she has an active lifestyle due to her personal choice to walk on the track and be active and moving when her children go outside on the playground at the preschool she works. Aside from Alesia’s statements about her physical activity, it does not appear in the preschool child interviews that India either confirmed or disconfirmed her mother’s statements regarding physical activity.

Tina briefly outlined her specific regimen for physical activity throughout the week as she participates in organized fitness activities in the community, family related activity, and household chores to maximize her physical activity level. She shared, “I been workin’ out at Victory Fitness and walkin’...I have been participating in this boot camp for three weeks now...” (Tina, Interview 1, June 2012). Tina continued by detailing her specific activities completed during the week and the time allotted for those activities.

I go two days a week [to the Fitness center] on Tuesdays and Thursdays and it’s an hour and a half each time. And uhhmm, no workout is the same and the instructor goes through an array of exercises with us and it’s intense [giggles and smiles]...definitely! Uhhmm I’ve been doin’ it for 5 weeks completed and I signed up for the running club [couch to 5k program]...so I’ll be going on Wednesdays, next Wednesday I’ll be going [to workout] three days a week.

This week we rode bikes, me, T, and Tim....Uhhmm, I know when I am cleaning my house I can definitely feel the difference. I feel like I am doin’ more cause I want to burn calories, you know so...I do everything from washing walls, to takin’ down wallpaper just doin’ little projects to keep busy...

[Do you have a big house?] Yes, I have three floors...I go downstairs, we have a deep freezer, taking stuff out of there and bring it upstairs. Also the laundry is downstairs, so I do laundry sometimes I will fold clothes down there and the bring them upstairs one time or I will bring up the baskets one at a time and fold clothes upstairs...Our house is a Cape Cod [third floor], so the kids live on the top floor, so I go up there and make sure everything is in order up in their
rooms…That is usually on the weekends when I do the deep cleaning. (Tina, Interview 2, July 2012).

Tina appears to be more focused on maintaining physical activity in her life and keeping it at an intense level as demonstrated by her responses. Tasha acknowledged her mother’s involvement in boot camp and fitness activity during the preschool child interview. “My mommy gets to workout” (Tasha, Preschool Child Interview 1, June 2012). When asked if she gets to workout with her mother, “Mmmhmm [No], I can’t there is no kids allowed!” (Tasha, Preschool Child Interview 1, June 2012). While she does not confirm that her mom rode bikes with her this week, Tasha did mention when looking at the pictures [Picture Identification] of a family walking she said, “Actually, we take a walk too. We take a walk with…yeah we take a walk. We take a walk with my brothers and my Mom.” (Tasha, Preschool Interview 1, June 2012).

Parents and preschool children as indicated from the interviews targeted specific types and levels of physical activity. All indicated a desire to be active and some like Alesia and Tina make a concerted effort to be active by walking or joining a fitness center. As Tina shared her desire to clean house is fueled by the need “to be doin’ more cause I want to burn calories…so…I do everything from washing walls, to takin’ down wallpaper just doin’ little projects to keep busy” (Tina Interview 2, July 2012), which gets at the heart of subtheme two completing activities one day at a time.

Everybody sweat now…, a song title, portrays a comprehensive picture of the families' physical activity level in subtheme three. The strength of the statements here derives from the parents' statements and acknowledgements from the preschool children about their families’ physical activity levels. The participant families share distinctive
time limits for their families’ involvement in physical activity, how often they participate in activity, the types of activities they complete, as well as who is involved in the family physical activity.

Two participants, Jenae and Candace provided relevant comments about their families’ engagement in physical activity as they both play with their children for specified periods while sharing that they also provide opportunities for the child to be active in the house or just outside.

Jenae related previously that her neighborhood is not safe and she desires to see her son, Jordan, go to other places like the Big Park.

I try to take him to the park. We basically live at the Big Park. I try to take him there so he can feed the ducks… give him something he’ll remember. I try to get him away from the house. (Jenae, Interview 1, May 2012).

[Do you play games with him at the park?] More or less when we go to the other park [Big park away from the house]. …I tickle him…just tryin to think. Just different things it all depends. I chase him around the house…We even have water fights in the house. Uhmm…he has a basketball hoop in the house, so I will play basketball wit’ him. Now he has this obsession with soccer, so now the basketball is quickly used as a soccerball. We play in his room, there is a table that is a goal and the doorway is a goal and we try to get the ball to each goal. So he enjoys playing that. (Jenae, Interview 2, June 2012).

Jordan confirms his mom’s statements about playing with him at the park and when asked if his mom plays a little or a lot with him at the park, he replied “Uhh, yeah. She plays at the park. A lot…[thinks about it] and a lit bit” He also related that what he does at the park. “We went to the park and the sign said no feeding the ducks” (Jordan, Preschool Child Interview 2, July 2012).

Additionally, he when asked about the picture (Figure 4.3) he drew in Interview #2 of weekend activities Jordan says,
[Researcher asks for the second time, what is the picture of?] “My mom. Uhh, [I] play with my mom” [barely decipherable]…[I play] Pass the ball to my mom!” (Jordan, Preschool Child Interview 2, July 2012). These statements support Jenae’s claims regarding physical activity in her family when in the house and at the park.

When asked how long he plays during these bouts of activity, Jenae responded, “Until he gets tired. Yeah, about 20-30 minutes.” (Jenae, Interview 2, July 2012).

Candace gave clear accounting of activities she plays with her children, Nikki and 1 year old daughter as well as how long she plays with her children.

Oh we would just run around in the backyard, we would play tag, of course play soccer, and then like we’d have those relay races. Like I would put flowerpots in a row and then time to see who runs the fastest to touch the garage and to come back. (Candace, Interview 2, June 2012).
Candace continued to provide more accounts of the family's involvement in physical activity.

Yeah, yesterday we was ridin’ our bikes up and down the street and then we had like it wasn’t a water balloon fight, but throwing water balloons in the yard, in the street…they have this skee ball thing…they wrestle with their dad a lot. (Interview 3, June 2012).

These verify that Candace and her preschool child are actively engaged in physical activity at home. It was unclear or not known how much or how often her husband plays with his daughter Nikki when they wrestle.

Evidence from Nikki reports some activity on the part of the family. During the second preschool child interview, picture identification Nikki picked up the card with a family holding hands here and exclaims, “Family! [Holds card of a family while smiling]…We [Nikki, Mom, Dad, Baby boy, and little sister] walked to the store this weekend.” (Nikki, Preschool Child Interview 2, July 2012). Nikki’s assertion of walking with her family as well as her mom’s reports of playing in the back yard, riding bikes, and dad wrestling with his daughters gives some credence to their families activities at home.

When asked to state the length of time spent participating in physical activity as a family Candace claims, “[We play] Maybe 30 minutes cause I get tired and then I sit down and let her finish” (Candace, Interview 2, June 2012).

Tina had some definitive statements about her family’s level of physical activity. She and her husband Mark are committed toward their family being active by making
sure it is scheduled on the calendar and that everyone participates in some form of activity.

We’ve done more this year than…we’ve always tried to do a lot. I think we’re [family members] all on board with trying to keep everybody physical. Like I’ve noticed that my 12 year old and T [Tasha] are a little on the thicker side [assuming to mean overweight] and I just don’t want that to be a problem.

We put it on the calendar, right along with our chores as somethin’ to do. To get off the computer and the television…I’ve noticed that we are more tight as a unit [family]. I think that it has definitely brought us closer. It seems like for my 16 year old implementing it on the calendar it seems like he had a lot of outside influences like TV, videos…I think he looks more to us…you know…which I like a whole lot. I definitely want us to keep our bond tight as a family through exercise and activities.

I think that exercise and all of that has brought a lot of positiveness to our lives. I want my kids to not be so in-depth into electronics, so my goal is to definitely keep them involved in outside activities. (Tina, Interview 2, July 2012).

While identifying the family has physical activity scheduled on the calendar Tina explained the length of time the family spends in activity during their scheduled activity sessions, she elaborated by saying,

Oh, I would say for about an hour or a little over an hour. [When] Bike riding we try and stay out for 35 minutes maybe 45 minutes. Same thing at the park as T [Tasha] plays and wants to do different things, so we stay a little longer (giggles)…than we want to be. Like we a lot of times will take her bike [Tasha rides her bike] and we’ll [Tina & Mark] power walk…When the kids go with us, my older kids will usually jog. (Tina, Interview 2, July 2012).

Tasha, Tina’s daughter verified her mother’s comments about activity in the following statement,

I go bike riding with my daddy and sometimes I go with my brother, and sometimes I get to go with my cousin. We go around again, around again, and then back home then around and around and around again. Yeah, it’s fun! It’s a workout….
[When looking at pictures to identify activities completed during the week, Tasha shares] I go to the park! Uhmm, we ride our bikes to the park. We go bike riding at B [pseudonym] school, E’s [Tasha’s brother] old school…Uhh, we like to play…[See’s picture of family holding hands walking].

Actually we take a walk too. We take a walk with…yeah we take a walk. We take a walk with my brothers and my Mom. (Tasha, Preschool Child Interview 1, June 2012).

From the references in Tasha’s interview regarding riding her bikes with her dad and to the school, while also taking walks to the park would suggest that Tina’s reports about the family physical activity are accurate.

This is how we do it theme five unveiled three components of the family, the preschool child, the parent, and the families' involvement in physical activity. There were a wide range of responses and families seemed to identify they were active, moving, and had many opportunities for physical activity. More than half of the families were engaged in intense bouts of physical activity while the others appear to indicate they have limited to minimal amounts of physical activity.

Observations

Observations of three specific areas were a part of the research design in this study. The goal was to observe the preschool children in three different settings at least two times in each setting. The areas indentified were the motor movement program, recess, and classroom. The researcher was unable to collect all the data he intended to gather during the observations, as the children were sporadic in their attendance on many days.

The motor movement program was a seasonal program initiated during the academic calendar (i.e., fall through early summer). Consequently, when the study began,
there were limited days for capturing the preschool children’s involvement in physical activity during these sessions. Specifically, four children had consented to participate in the study during the few remaining days of the motor movement program. On the days the researcher planned to observe these children, only two of the four children attended school that day. Therefore, observational data was collected on two of the four children available during motor movement program. The other two children did not have a chance to be observed in the motor movement program, while the two remaining participants consented to participate in the study after the motor movement program concluded for the season. Therefore, two observations of the children during the motor movement program only occurred for a few of the preschool children.

During scheduled observations for recess, the preschool children had a specific time during the morning (i.e., 10:30 a.m.) and the afternoon (i.e., 4:00 p.m.) where they would go outside for recess. The goal in observing recess was to determine the activities the preschool children participated in on the playground as a measure that aligns with their statements about being active. However, when the researcher scheduled times to observe during recess several of the children either came to school late on the day of observation or did not show until later. Some days during scheduled observations, the children were not allowed to go outside because of weather conditions (i.e., raining or too hot). Special programs or changes in the schedule also conflicted with scheduled observation days. Therefore similar to the motor movement program, children were not observed for the specified number of sessions during the recess.
Classroom observational data sought to determine how the children spent their free time in the classroom. The researcher wanted to observe and document activities the children did when allowed to play at the various activity stations. Similar to the descriptions of observations, data were limited here due to most children missing school on the days of scheduled observations. Thus there were some children who were not observed during activity time in the classroom.

The intended goal was to gather observational data of the preschool children in three different settings, motor movement program, recess, and classroom at least two times each child. Of the observations that took place, those preschool children who were involved in the various settings were active and engaged. This did not occur and will be discussed as a limitation in Chapter 5.

*Program Ideas Generated from Parents*

During the interviews, the researcher was interested to know what physical activities would work best for adult participants and their preschool children. As a result, the researcher added a question to the interview that asked adults to share how professionals could enhance their family’s involvement and engagement in physical activity. Specifically, the researcher asked, “If a pilot activity program were provided for you and you had to choose inclusion into your daily schedule, what type of activity program would work best for your family?” Three choices were available for adults to select. These were: (a) participants get a packet of information with directions, take it home and lead their family in those prescribed physical activities; (b) participants come to the facility, receive training in physical activities in a workshop setting with other
parents for a few sessions, take the packet home and begin completing the physical activities with the family; and (c) participant families come to the facility with their preschool child, are lead with their preschool child and themselves through a physical activity program for a definite time each day for a specified period of time [60 minutes] by the activity professional. Each of the family’s within the study provided specific directions for implementation of this program within their families, which produced several key findings. The parents were asked to provide their thoughts about a program that could be piloted in their preschool known hereafter as the **Pilot Program**.

All the participant families provided a response to this question, however, Mark and Tina did not have an opportunity to address the topic, as they did not complete Interview 3 and thus their comments are not included here. Family responses posted in Table 4.3 below illustrate which Pilot Program choice would work best for their family. In the summary of activity choices by the parents, the common theme indicated C as the preferred choice of most families. They commented they would rather come to a facility (perhaps the preschool), and have a trained professional lead their families in appropriate physical activity for specified day and length of time [i.e., 60 minutes].
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Participant</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
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<td>Candace</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Alesia</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark &amp; Tina</td>
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<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angel</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Maybe</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2. Pilot Program for Family Physical Activity.

Note. This table is a summary of participant selection of Pilot Program choices. Hybrid indicates the person initially selected a combination of A and B, and then later settled for the choice of C. Maybe means they considered the choice as possible for their family. Not Applicable (NA) means this did not apply either because they did not provide an answer or did not participate in this portion of the study. No means the participant indicated this choice would not work for this family.

Many parents’ preferences were for choice b or c and their comments are noted below. Candace initially chose A, where the professional trains the parents and they take it home and complete with the family members, but due to unforeseen circumstances, she did not have another chance to respond. She stated, “I would take them [preschool children] in the front yard and tell them someone taught me this and then teach them how to do the activities” (Candace, Interview 3, June 2012). There was not much more information offered as the interview ended earlier than anticipated due to the children being restless and having difficulty sitting in a public place. It would have been good to see if she had other responses or ideas.
Other parents shared their responses like Joe who wanted two options for the Pilot Program. His comments were:

Uhh, can I pick two choices [laughs]. I come and you train me. Then at the same time have you all come to us to check us out. Yeah, I would like to get trained on it, come home and show my daughter, then have everyone [activity professional] come to us and show us how you/we are doing or if we are doing it right. It would give my daughter a sense of “Yes”, this is something that you need to do. She could see that it is just not me saying that she will see that someone from the outside is coming to see that she is doing it right. (Joe, Interview 3, July 2012)

After talking about the choices again and clarifying Joe’s choice, he changed his mind and stated he would like to have the second option. “Not necessarily come to my place, No. If I get the training then we could go with my daughter and she would have the sense to say yeah, this is important…Yeah, I could do it” (Joe, Interview 3, July 2012).

Two parents who agreed that options b and c would work for their family are Alesia and Angel. Both commented about how to make it work for the community in addition to their family and these parents highlighted concerns about length of time, seasons of the year, and access.

Uhmmm, probably the second [b] or third [c]…No if I actually interact with that person, you know, make sure they know what they’re talkin’ about and to pull my interest in and to tell me what to do…I wouldn’t mind that, but definitely not number one [a]. (Alesia, Interview 3, July 2012)

Alesia went on to share how to structure the classes for her and others in the community and where the activities should take place.

I am more willing to do it on my own, but I still want ya’ll’s [you all] input into what I am doing, you know….If it meets once a week? I would probably say like the duration of the summer. 12 weeks, but for me I am fine with that. Now for the community maybe like six. Like have a big bash at the end or something...
Yeah, if it is not weather permitted to do things outside it might be better to do activities inside. A lot of people don’t know what to do when it’s cold outside. ‘How can we still have physical activity?’ That might work better for them to come and do activities when the weather is not nice outside. (Interview 3, July 2012)

Angel had a preference to come in and have the professionals train her and allow her to go home and complete it with her children while also saying she could bring the family in and everyone does it together.

In my, me, I would come in and uhmm… you know like them teach us how to do it, give us the paper, and then take it home and do it with the family. I could also come in weekly and do it here. Hopefully with other kids where my kids could interact with them…

But I am a hands on person and I want to make sure if I am doing something, that I am doing it right. So I can make sure that I am doing it that they are getting the proper stretches and that the stuff that I am doing is correct and not going to hurt them. That is easiest for me. (Angel, Interview 3, August 2012)

She also commented that transportation for her is easy; however, there are some family’s that don’t have transportation. “But I have transportation…I feel like the people that don’t have transportation, they need to see and give them some direction and let them know how it can be done correctly and send them on their way” (Angel, Interview 3, August 2012). Lastly, Jenae feels the best choice for her family is having a group approach only.

I am going to say with my son, for us it would be better for us to do it, if there was a group of people doin’ it [working out]. ‘Cause I have tried to do little activities his class gives, like the counts or counting stuff…He doesn’t want to do it outside of school. Now he would be more motivated to do things if he had other people around him doin’ the same things he is doin’.

‘Cause if we were at home and I were to say, “Hey stink [her sons pet name] let’s see who can do the most jumpin’ jacks. He would look at me like, “Mom, please! [laughs] But If we came here and there were other families
here… he would be more excited to do it! So more of a group activity approach. (Jenae, Interview 3, July 2012)

The findings from the Pilot Program suggest that all preferred having physical activity professionals train them in a group setting. Specifically, four of the five families’ stated having a physical activity professional provide leadership to their family and others was appealing and something these families would participate. Alesia was vocal in her support of an activity plan by suggesting a six-week course for families, while Joe mentioned even with his busy schedule he could make time for it, “he could do it”! Angel and others stressed the importance making sure they were doing the activities correctly in the training and group activity, while Jenae thinks only a group activity would be motivation for her son Jordan to participate. While these were different approaches, they are the views and voices of the participants and express how these families see physical activity as an important part of life and the findings suggest a possible avenue for implementation among African American families.

**Parents' Recommendations for Practice**

The following discussion is an account from the parents related to reports about their need as consumers in the area of physical activity. To foster or facilitate these ideas, the adult participants were asked to provide recommendations for what they needed for their preschool child or community in the area of physical activity. The researcher asked the question, "So what do you suggest?" This was a way to ask the parents for suggestions to share with professionals about programming physical activity for preschool children. The families provided great ideas relative to their needs and others in the preschool community which was quite thought provoking and insightful (Researcher's
Six critical areas were identified from the interviews, so what do you suggest. Their comments align with previous statements in the literature regarding barriers to physical activity and offer guidance for recommendations in Chapter 5. Time and parent involvement, dollars and sense, safe programs, transportation, equal access to activities and more play space, and education were suggestions families gave for consideration by professionals to consider when programming for preschool families. These were the focus of discussion and conversation from the interviews and will be addressed and shared in this section. These reports are their words and expose themes for discussion.

*Time and Parent Involvement*

Time and parent involvement were the two areas the majority of parents provided their thoughts. Particularly, they felt physical activity programs should meet the needs and schedules of the parents’. One parent, Candace, was adamant about the time parents spend with their children in physical activity and admonished parents by saying, “Adults should get outside with their children and play. At least one hour with their child a day. I think nowadays it would help if more parents would were involved with their kids.” (Candace, Interview 3, June 2012). Joe gave his perspective by sharing that scheduling and time involved in the activities was important for Joe. He said, “You have to find time for yourself to be there, help encourage your child. The area where they set it up would be a place, whereby it would not be too far a commute.”
Three other parents shared that getting parent input and perspectives were important. Jenae, Alesia, and Angel felt getting parent consensus (i.e. involvement) on activities through the monthly parent meetings, timing of activities were critical. Alesia perhaps sums up the parents ideas about time and parent involvement in her statements,

Well since I am a single mom it’s like the timing. Like I work all every day, location, convenience, and things that would interest her…That would be nice though to go somewhere and gettin’ the family involved. I am big on family involvement and that would be good to have something that we would want to do all the time. Like, Hey it’s Thursday it’s time to do this! I think it is important to get that information out there [says quietly] (Alesia, Interview 3, July 2012).

The data suggest there is an emphasis that family feel it is important to get other community members involved in the decision making process by coming to consensus regarding ways to engage in physical activity.

*Dollars and Sense*

The question, "So what do you suggest?" yield a second theme titled, Dollars and sense, combined costs, resources, and fundraisers. The ideas generated here discussed resources needed, costs involved, and ways to fund physical activity programming for preschool families. Most of the parents responded yet had concerns about the funds needed for the programs. In thinking about future activities for the preschool community at Raintree, these families indicated funding could be an issue for starting programs. Joe shared, “They should also take into consideration the running costs. Is it on the parents or are they going to have a sponsor or something to cover the costs” (Joe, Interview 3, July 2012). Alesia had similar concerns as she stated, “You have to find the resources. Once you find the resources where would I go, who can help me, you know. Do I have to pay for this, pay for that”… (Alesia, Interview 3, July 2012). While Jenae suggested that the
family resource coordinator at Raintree should be the contact person for how to initiate such programs. She specifically cited a solution toward getting funding for these programs, “Come up with, some type of solution like…if everybody has like a few extra [dollars] that can put in and do fundraisers for just the kids to play. But it would be helpful if something like that could happen”. (Jenae, Interview 2, June 2012).

Safe Programs

As mentioned previously, some parents had concerns of neighborhood safety, while it is also known that children who don’t have opportunities to play outside are likely to be sedentary and potentially become overweight and obese, therefore, most parents responded that any program implemented would have to be safe. They all felt the program must be safe and as Joe stated, “Safety wise it is a safe place and everyone gets a fair opportunity for children to participate in whatever program they are running” (Interview 3, July 2012) indicating a physically and emotionally safe place for physical activity. While Jenae and Alesia convincingly shared they seek a safer community with more things for little kids to do was very critical. However, Angel summarized the idea of safety by sharing programs developed should be places where children are safe, learning, and staying healthy. She said, “Get kids out of their neighborhoods and get them in places like this [meaning the school or programs], settings where they are safe, they are learning, and they are staying healthy” (Angel, Interview 3, August 2012).
Transportation

Transportation was the third point of emphasis in ways to engage preschool families in physical activity to the question, “So what do you suggest?” Specifically, Joe, Jenae, and Alesia expressed that distance from home should be a major consideration, location (being in the neighborhood or outside), convenience or access to get to the site were critical in considering opportunities for physical activity.

Jenae had specific concepts related to this issue. She is interested in programming for preschool children but wants activities that are in closer proximity to her house. Jenae states, “Okay, so how are we gonna afford to get their everyday…Like I have a friend that has his own football league and if it wasn’t for the transportation issue, he (Jordan) would be playing football” (Jenae, Interview 2, July 2012). Her comments illustrate the lack of transportation that some families in preschool settings experience. If they lack access to opportunities for physical activity and their neighborhoods are, unsafe it is likely that their children resort to sedentary activities and do not have adequate opportunities for physical activity.

Angel had a different take on the transportation issue in that she felt the busses should be used to transport families that don’t have access to transportation. She states,

Some people don’t have transportation. I don’t understand why they don’t have shuttles, for the kids, like they talk about it all the time trying to keep kids off the streets, but yet they don’t have programs for these kids. They have all these school busses sitting around after hours and not using them… (Angel, Interview 3, August 2012).
Access to programs and more play space

The fourth idea parents provided in response to the question, "So what do you suggest?" was access to activities provided for preschool children and the space needed to play. The parents related there needed for more age appropriate activities for preschool children and space to play. Several parents suggested professionals provide “the same things they have for older kids, basketball, gymnastics, Tball, and flag football (Candace, June, 2012; Jenae, July 2012; Alesia, July 2012).

While age appropriate activities were a point of emphasis for most parents, one parent, Joe, feels that programming should include educational opportunities as well as the focus on sporting activities. He stated, “I would like for them to have something educational like reading and then sports: basketball and then track” (Joe, Interview 3, July 2012). Additional discussion included thoughts by parents on providing more chances for children to learn and participate in low organized games.

Previously in this study, there were two instances where parents indicated their neighborhood did not have adequate or safe places to play. Most parents commented on the space preschool children as a whole have to play as not being adequate. One parent specifically commented the need to focus on cleaning up the neighborhood and adding more green space. Jenae said, “they [children] need more space, not enough in the neighborhood or park. Take down some of the abandoned houses, put dirt on the ground, make a play space for children. They need to think about the kids” (Interview 3, July 2012).
Education

The sixth idea generated from the question, "So what do you suggest?" lead parents to state the importance of education regarding physical activity for preschool families. Earlier discussions of parent beliefs about physical education described knowledge gained from college courses, workshops, training, newsletters, doctor’s recommendations, and electronic sources [online]. Parents here indicated specific details for professionals to consider in providing knowledge of physical activity in the preschool community. Many parents previously indicated that daily physical activity was important for parents and children. However, Candace asserted the time of day would be beneficial for her. She believes physical activity should occur “in the morning for a half hour to an hour right after breakfast doing some activities. Then in the evening for an hour and half or so” (Candace, Interview 3, June 2012).

Alesia and Angel believe it is important to get the information out there and felt a newsletter for different types of physical activity as well as ideas for physical activity choices with their family were important. Alesia feels it is important to get the information out there, so parents know more about different ways to get involved with their family. Here are her thoughts,

The interest…what you could do to put it more out there. The availability for parents and the knowledge of it and how could I find out more about it. Umm, cause if I don’t know and someone else don’t know and their probably lookin, how would you put that out there bring…or how would you even bring in families…but it takes a lot, you know it could take one person, but to get it really kickin’ you gotta put it out there, you gotta push it out there in people’s faces. Uhhmm…fliers. Uhhmm…going to where the kids are…parks and stuff. (Alesia, Interview 3, July 2012).
Angel also believes educating parents is important through a newsletter and other resources to inform parents of opportunities for physical education and physical activity. She remarked,

I would like to see a newsletter go out or something that has different places that the kids could go and get physical education…I asked about the food, food, yeah food matters [program]. Just more stuff like that, programs that promote healthy eating and healthy lifestyle. If they could pass that out, it could change people’s lives…You have to figure out your parents and then make decisions how to give them information. (Angel, Interview 3, August 2012).

Summary

In summary, this chapter sought to gain the perspective of the families relative to their beliefs about physical activity, knowledge about physical activity. A report about routines present, if they were variable or consistent during the week and weekend, and an examination of the cultural norms and niche profiles of the families was recorded here as well. The narrative and quotes presented were findings that emerged from interview transcripts and researcher notes. The themes and subthemes that emerged were representative of all the families’ collective lived experiences, while the researcher did not attempt to make any interpretations of findings, but sought to present the data from the adult or preschool child’s perspectives.

The chapter concluded with parent program related activities described by parents that professionals could implement within the preschool community. While the descriptions above also give recommendations for practice from parents to physical activity professionals. Further interpretation of these findings will be discussed completely in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5: Discussion, Limitations, Implications, and Conclusions

This chapter provides a discussion of the findings, limitations of the study, practical implications, recommendations for future research, and conclusions. Situated in ecocultural theory, the purpose of the study was to explore beliefs African American parents and their preschool children ascribe to physical activity. Ecocultural theory combines ecological and cultural approaches and posits that families act and react to circumstances in which they live and that they build and organize their life routines to meet the needs of the individual family members (Bernhiemer & Keogh, 1995; Gallimore, Weisner, Kaufman, & Bernheimer, 1989; Gallimore, Weisner, Bernheimer, Guthrie, & Nihira, 1993). The 4 research questions and data collection processes were guided by the logic of ecocultural theory.

Discussion

The data analysis yielded several major recurrent themes and their associate subthemes. Using musical overtones, the recurrent themes were: (a) movin’ and groovin’ [i.e., beliefs about physical activity], (b) stayin’ alive [i.e., knowledge about physical activity], (c) all I do… [i.e., family routines during the week and the weekend], (d) we are family! [i.e., cultural norms and niche profiles of families], and (e) this is how we do it [i.e., physical activity reports of child, parent, and family]. From a cultural perspective,
the themes and subthemes are discussed in narrative in the next section. To assess the beliefs of African American families, it is important to understand that beliefs lie in culture which is the totality of beliefs, behaviors, linguistic semantics, practices, and traditions; that is, general ways of life as it cuts across race and ethnicity and is highly associated with socioeconomic status, social positioning, and family histories (Hodge et al., 2012). Culture was operationally defined in the current inquiry as representing beliefs, behaviors, linguistics, practices, and traditions in the ways of life among African American families.

Examining parents' attitudes, values, and beliefs (Kimiecik & Horn, 1998; Raudsepp & Viira, 2000; Welk, Wood, & Morss, 2003) are foundational to understanding home environments that foster or hinder physical activity among African American children. Stated differently, it is important to know the backgrounds including early childhood experiences of parents in order to establish the narrative of how their beliefs were shaped and how those experiences and their current beliefs now influence their preschool children’s physical activity. The parents, under study, provided insights about their backgrounds including their early childhood experiences and most recalled that they were active in various ways such as playing games in the neighborhood. Moreover, some parents recalled participating in sport activities. Most of the parents had early childhood experiences they described as active and moving. Burdette and Whitaker (2005), and Ginsburg (2007) suggest that engaging preschool children in health enhancing physical activity during early childhood helps to socialize them regarding the importance of health behaviors throughout life and plays a role in developmental milestones such as cognitive
functioning, socialization, and emotional well-being. In the current study, the parents spoke about their early childhood physical activity experiences. Noteworthy, the parents voiced favorable sentiments about the importance of physical activity because they had established culturally-influenced beliefs about physical activity. Moreover, the early childhood experiences may have lead to these individuals staying active through childhood and into adolescence. Physically active children are also more likely to remain physically active throughout their adolescent years and possibly into adulthood (Malina, 1996). Research findings also suggest that youth who engage in physical activity during childhood and adolescence are likely to be physically active adults (Schneider & Lounsbery, 2008; Stodden et al., 2008). Clearly, the early childhood experiences of the parents helped them define their beliefs about physical activity into adulthood. Addressing early childhood experiences allowed the researcher to seek clarity in understanding how parents came to their culturally-influenced beliefs about physical activity.

Theme 1. Movin’ and Groovin’ [beliefs about physical activity].

Research Question 1 asked, “What beliefs do African American parents ascribe to physical activity in regards to their preschool children?” Parents' responses identified strong beliefs that physical activity was a key factor for their children. They believed staying healthy, being active, moving, and staying fit in a variety of ways was essential to the lifestyle of their families.

Moreover, all parents described how physical activity prevents disease and illness while keeping their children healthy. These were key descriptions regarding the beliefs
ascribed to physical activity as parents and children who are active are more likely to have lower incidences of illnesses. According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services (1996), physical activity is one of the health indicators that can improve children’s lives and reduce the risk of diseases. From the parents’ responses physically active means movement in motion, being able to stay busy, but more importantly to be active and move. These parents also indicated that fitness (i.e., stayin fit) meant maintaining the proper weight, exercising, and eating the right foods. These statements support the belief that physical activity is important for maintenance of weight, fitness, and proper diet.

Lastly, a few parents believed that physical activity is open to interpretation, which means open to including alternative activities or having chances to move in a variety of ways. Specifically parents referenced their involvement in activities like swimming, bowling, and walking as well as housework and yard work. These activities identified targeted various intensity levels of physical activity.

Ecocultural theory core concept one suggests that families construct their meaning of their circumstances, in this case, physical activity, and how their proactive responses, ways in which the engage in physical activity, to those circumstances or meanings (Weisner, 1984; Bernheimer 1990). It is evident from the data that parents’ beliefs about physical activity were internalized from their early childhood experiences; they were able to clearly define their beliefs about physical activity, as well as distinguish between different types of physical activity.
Theme 2. Stayin’ Alive [knowledge about physical activity].

Research Question 2 asked, “What knowledge do African American parents have about physical activity for their preschool children in regards to feasibility, access, opportunities, and more?” According to Francis Bacon (1597), knowledge is power and is the mantra of society today as the origins of this phrase are paraphrased from the original writings of Sir Francis Bacon in Meditationes Sacrae (1597). This phrase suggests that knowledge or education of individuals and their ability to be successful increase with more knowledge. The idea here is that in order to improve one’s status in life it was important to develop, gain, and share knowledge as a basis for improving one's status and influence, thus power (Bacon, 1597). When families have knowledge about the importance of physical activity and movement, they are able to be proactive in making this a priority in their lives, therefore giving them power to choose to be physically active. Parents have power to pursue physical activity and this aligns with ecocultural theory core concept one which stated that families construct their own knowledge of reality (Bernheimer et al., 1990).

Knowledge of physical activity came from personal experiences as the African American parents in this study shared their concern about avoiding overweight and obesity status in their families. This is validated as increased levels of inactivity have been related to increased risk of being overweight or obese (Reilly, 2008). Bogaert et al. (2003) suggest that excessive weight gain is associated with bad eating habits and lack of vigorous physical activity. Again, in the current inquiry several parents were concerned with their children being overweight or obese. While they had many comments, the most
vocal, Candace voiced very powerful sentiments regarding obesity by expressing the following.

I don’t want her to just lay around and do nothin’ and…[just stops responding]…I don’t want a fat kid…with health problems…So I know as they say physical activity and exercise is good and it helps sometimes counteract the problems that she has so… (Candace, Interview 1, May 2012).

This mother and the other parents were determined to make sure their children were physically active. They desire their children to maintain adequate levels of health by participating in physical activity. Spaulding, Gottlieb, and Jensen (2008) assert that establishing and maintaining physical activity in preschool age children may be one-step in solving the problem of childhood obesity. To further support and substantiate these parents’ beliefs that lack of physical activity and sedentary behavior may lead to overweight and obesity several researchers believe increasing physical activity for preschool-age children may be especially important in preventing obesity later in life (Janz et al., 2002; Moore et al., 2003). The view these parents have regarding overweight and obesity supports the idea that they know the ramifications of lack of physical activity.

Regular participation in physical activity is an important component of health and well-being in young children (Shen et al., 2012). Findings in the current inquiry indicate that African American parents are knowledgeable about how to maintain health and physical activity of their preschool children. For example, the African American parents exercised their knowledge of physical activity from reading articles, signing up for programs at local stores, going to the doctor, completing activities at work and transferring this knowledge to home, or learning about the benefits of physical activity from a college course. The findings are conclusive that parents are knowledgeable about
the benefits of physical activity because of their experiences researching it, reading about it, working experiences, training, and taking courses at local universities. The pursuit of knowledge has increased African American families understanding of the importance of physical activity.

Parents held positive attitudes, increased motivation to participate, and increased confidence from participation in physical activity. The findings provide evidence that the byproducts of physical activity produce traits that preschool children can use and maintain throughout their lifetime. According to Calfas and Taylor (1994), regular physical activity is associated with an increase in self-esteem and self-concept and a decrease in anxiety and depression. These African American families believe that their children will be able to accomplish many things in life because of the emphasis of physical activity in their lives. Responses from parents sum up the beliefs they ascribe to physical activity. That is, “being healthy and active then you will be motivated to do other things” exclaimed a parent.

**Theme 3. All I do... [families routines during the week and the weekend].**

Research Question 3, sought to investigate the routines families had during the week and weekend by asking, “What is the nature of the daily routines and interactions of African American parents and their preschool children and to what extent are these consistent (daily, weekly) or variable (periodic, weekend)?” Typically, daily routines are comprised of “linked sequences of activities and the contexts that organize those activities” (Bernheimer & Weisner, 2007, p. 193). The theme, *all I do* disclosed that a few families had a variety of situations that influenced their decisions about physical
activity or lack of physical activity during the week. The majority of the families had a consistent routine throughout the week. Many activities took place during the week some of which included going to softball games, football practices, completing homework assignments, preparing for the next day activities and routines, taking walks, riding bicycles, and going to the park for leisure activities. Preschool children interviews added support to the parents’ claims of routines as they described, drew pictures, and identified activities that took place during the week to verify the routines, further establishing consistency in their accounts of the daily and weekly schedules.

In ecocultural theory, daily routines are viewed as critical units of analysis that are created and sustained by ecocultural forces (Bernheimer et al., 1990). In this study, one such force that influenced some families’ ability to maintain consistent routines was work. Two families identified work as a factor that caused some variability in the daily routines. Their belief was that work contributed to difficulty maintaining a consistent routine throughout the week, as they believed time was limited to interact with their children during the week. Work caused their daily/weekly routines to vary; while other parents indicated, they had consistent schedules and routines.

The weekend has more variability in activities than the week. All families reported participating in some type of activity during the weekend (i.e., Saturday and Sunday). Moreover there was a clear delineation of what families did on Saturday as opposed to Sunday. That is on Saturday, many of the families participated in a variety of activities. For example, two families had sports activities (e.g., soccer, football) that consumed a lot of their time. These activities occurred each week giving evidence of a
consistent routine. The other families mentioned that they participated in leisure activities such as going to the park, swimming at the pool, and riding bikes. Further they mentioned being very relaxed (e.g., going to the library and reading books).

On Sunday, the routines for the families were different. A few of the families indicated having specific routines that included attending church. Other parents reported Sunday as a day of relaxation, getting ready for the coming week, going to their parents’ house, doing the laundry, taking walks, or going to the library. Moreover, these statements confirm and support core concept three, as daily routines are critical units of analysis and generated and maintained by the ecocultural forces (Bernheimer et al., 1990).

Most families have a weekend schedule that is consistent on Saturdays and for some variable on Sundays. Their routines are created and maintained as a result of cultural and physical activities that take place in these families lives during the week and weekend (Bernheimer et al., 1990). The overall message communicated in these findings conveys the importance of family time during the week and especially on the weekend as all the participants highlighted the importance of spending time together with family.

Theme 4. We are Family! [cultural norms and niche profiles of families].

Research Question 4 asked, “What are the cultural norms, contexts [ecocultural niche], and belief systems of physical activity and how do these influence or adversely affect opportunities for and/or engagement in physical activity among African American parents and their preschool children?” The premise of ecocultural theory focuses on embracing the children’s development from the perspective of the family’s cultural world
Researchers want to know, what is necessary for the child growing up in the culture and environment of their current family? How does the family arrange and adjust to competing forces in their lives like work, childcare, safety, resources, and support networks in order to care for their child? What adaptations does a family make to the daily routine to accomplish their goals (Weisner, 2002). Therefore, examining the niche profiles or cultural activities among African American families and how these affect their preschool children are important for determining how these adversely affect or influence these families’ opportunities for physical activity.

In this current study, 7 of 10 hierarchical niche profiles in the logic of ecocultural theory (Bernheimer et al., 1990) were identified as those that adversely affected or influenced physical activity for these families. In exploring these niche profiles there was a belief that a family may desire to participate in physical activity; however, many of the niche profiles compete with the family’s needs and are likely to inhibit families from being physically active (Bernheimer et al., 1990). Work and work, it’s cool, and amen were niche profiles that adversely affected the families opportunities for physical activity. Work and work served as a reminder for some families that work had an effect on their ability to be active with their children. As identified previously, work in the lives of these families was a priority and was necessary to support the families’ needs. As such work took time away for their time to be involved especially regarding physical activity opportunities.

It’s cool combined two-niche profiles neighborhood safety [home and neighborhood safety] and who the child played with in the neighborhood [children’s play
groups]. Most parents allowed their children to play outside in the neighborhood as they felt it was safe and everyone described friends or relatives their preschool children played with in the neighborhood. Two parents limited their children playing outside due to neighborhood safety. Their main concerns centered on violence in the park and neighborhood, insecurity with neighbors, lack of adequate space to play, and older children exhibiting inappropriate behavior. Goodway and Smith (2005) who studied factors influencing the physical activity of African American preschool children in urban communities reported the following concerns: (a) contextual barriers to physical activity for preschool children (e.g., gangs, lack of accessible parks); (b) unsafe neighborhoods required the children to stay inside and increased screen time and sedentary activity; (c) there were limited role models for positive physical activity among the household and neighborhood. These findings were consistent with concerns expressed by parents in the current study.

The U.S. Surgeon General has called for efforts to create neighborhood communities that are focused on healthy nutrition and regular physical activity, where the healthiest choices are accessible for all citizens (Office of the Surgeon General, 2010). However, neighborhood safety might influence exercise level, diet, or level of stress (Morenoff, Diez Roux, Hansen, & Osypuk, 2008; Fowler-Brown, Bennett, Goodman, Wee, & Corbie-Smith, 2009) as the social norms for health-related behaviors may vary across neighborhoods (Cohen, Finch, Bower, & Sastry, 2006; Christakis, & Fowler, 2007). In the case of a few of the African American parents, their actions were the supervision of their children for a limited time outside or inside activities that were likely
sedentary in nature. In either case, these limits the parent and preschool children’s participation in physical activity.

The seventh niche profile (subtheme), *amen*, unpacks other community support for families and other information or resources, which includes recreation centers, churches, sport programs, and a variety of activities. Many families insisted that recreation centers were bad, unsafe, and dangerous. They therefore would not use these facilities. Two parents offered specific concerns about community support (e.g., recreation centers and parks) in their neighborhood. At least one parent felt that the recreation facilities in the area where she lived were unsafe due to incidences of extreme violence and inappropriate behavior. Whereas another parent, when asked about her use of community agencies said that she preferred to go home and spend time with her daughter rather than having her daughter in a program after spending time in school all day. These families made accommodations for work, neighborhood safety, and community supports which affected their children’s opportunities for physical activity.

In contrast, *all in the family, won’t you please help me, who helps you?* and *amen* are explained in regards to how the African American parents organize their niche profiles to meet the needs of their families. The *all in the family* theme captured the second niche profile which detailed the families’ childcare needs. All the parents described how they worked out their childcare needs with a spouse or other immediate family members like grandparents, brothers or sisters, and cousins when needed. Only immediate family members provided childcare when the parent had to work and all the parents felt comfortable with a family member providing care for their preschool child.
thus keeping it all in the family. Childcare needs involved family members and did not adversely affect the families’ opportunities to engage in physical activity as children were often actively engaged with parents, cousins, or grandparents when in their care.

Would you please help me reveals preschool children and their work responsibilities at home. Some parents claimed their preschool children were too young to help do house work, while others had their children complete minor housework responsibilities. In many cases, the children provided limited help, and their involvement in house work did not appear to adversely affect or influence their opportunities for physical activity.

Who helps you? This subtheme identified family members who were available to care of the children as needed. As reported, all the families preferred immediate family members when needed to care for their children. Parents expressed strong sentiments regarding when and where they would allow family members to provide care for the preschool children. Family members who cared for the children had no bearing on the opportunities for physical activity of these families.

The subtheme, amen depicts accounts of a positive source of support in the community for some families, which was the local church. Families attended church weekly for spiritual guidance and opportunities for their preschool children to engage in physical activity. Parents chronicled their children’s involvement in basketball and playgroups at the church for example. Some families described involvement in community agencies, specifically, sport associations for their preschool children (i.e., soccer, football) or community programs (i.e., library reading program). These
community opportunities were sources of influence for the preschool children to be engaged in physical activity.

The aforementioned niche profiles (subthemes) are an amalgamation of cultural components that African American families and preschool children navigate together. Families shared their stories of how these niche profiles affect and influence their families, which offer a window into the way in which families make sense of their worlds (Bernheimer & Weisner, 1998). It is safe to say that the study’s findings support the notion that families value the opportunity to be together, support each other through care, nurturing, and support. In the case of these African American families, three niche profiles likely adversely affected their opportunities to engage in physical activity, while the other niche profiles appears to positively influence their opportunities to engage in physical activity regularly. This is because of how the African American families organize their niche profiles to meet the needs within their families.

Theme 5. This is how we do it [physical activity of child, parent, and family].

The theme, this is how we do it, captured distinctions in how physical activity occurred among African American families in view of the child, the parent, and the family as a whole. Ecocultural theory combines ecological and cultural theories and considers the families’ goals, beliefs, values, and needs while providing a comprehensive view of the family in their environment (Bernheimer et al., 1990). As such, questions regarding the current physical activity levels of the preschool children, the parents, and their family members sought to enlighten the researcher as to what families do relative to physical activity. The researcher sought to know cultural and contextual influences within
African American families and how this affected their ability to participate in physical activity.

The African American parents claimed their preschool children were physically active. The triangulation of the data supports this claim. In the current study, the parents described specific ways their children were active and gave specific examples throughout the study. In particular, parents described their children as being busy, active, and moving non-stop. They described their activity as running, playing, or participation in sports activity (i.e., football and soccer). The extant literature suggests that youth who engage in physical activity during childhood and adolescence are likely to be active adults (Schneider & Lounsbery, 2008; Stodden et al., 2008).

The findings support the claim that the African American preschool children were physically active. Most of the preschool children provided responses of their activity from the data through their drawings and identification of physical activity from the picture cards. However, the data do not provide clear evidence regarding the level of activity these children maintained. There is no indication of the level of physical activity, referring to light, moderate, or vigorous (CDC, 2008) or the length of time the children stay engaged in physical activity from the data. Knowing the physical activity level of the children will help in determining if the children are getting recommended amounts of daily physical activity as per NASPE guidelines. What is known is African American preschool children do engage in a variety of physical activity experiences at home and in the community and these were validated by children’s and parents responses throughout the study.

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The thematic phrase, *one day at a time* derived as a result of consideration of each parents' description of physical activity and their participation daily. The intentions here were to describe the physical activity level of each parent. The rationale for probing the parents’ level of physical activity might provide specific indications of parents who were active. The results of their activity may serve as models of physical activity among their preschool children. Brustad (2010) stated, “The physical activity-related behavior and attitudes of parents are excellent predictors of the physical activity behaviors and attitudes of their children” (p. 3). Moreover, the inquiry of parents' physical activity may also confirm or disconfirm previous statements about their activity. In evaluating the parent levels of physical activity, the activity levels were classified using light, moderate, and vigorous (USDHHS, 1999). The current findings exposed three parents who described light levels of physical activity; two parents chronicled moderate activity levels; while one parent described her physical activity as moderate to vigorous. Light physical activity is described as any activity that burns less than 3.5 calories per minute (e.g., a relaxed pace in walking, stretching, or work where one sits for long periods) (USDHHS, 1999). Three parents described their activity as walking, playing in the park, and doing light housework which qualifies as light physical activity.

A moderate level of physical activity occurs when an individual burns 3.5 to 7 calories per minute (e.g. walking uphill, weight training, recreational swimming, or housework with intense cleaning) (USDHHS, 1999). For instance, one of the working mothers feels as though she does not get the desired level of physical activity by sharing that she views working out in the gym as effective physical activity. She described her
level of physical activity as non-existent, while her daily work regimen counters her argument for getting a workout. While at work she indicated she lifts heavy boxes, walks the floor, and moves items in the store for extended periods of time (i.e., 45 minutes). Moreover, earlier commentaries detailed how this mother gets her children ready for school. This mother’s activity level, as per her description, would mean a moderate level of physical activity because the amount of time she spends moving at work, lifting heavy objects, and walking. Likewise, another mother accounts for moderate levels of physical activity. This mother's job requires her to run, move, bend, lift, and engage children throughout the day as a preschool teacher. While these accounts specifically indicate what they do at their jobs (i.e., walking, lifting boxes, playing with children, and moving to get the heart rate up for periods), it clearly satisfies the definition of moderate physical activity (USDHHS, 1999).

Only one parent recalled her physical activity experiences with specific detail. She committed to regular participation in organized fitness activities in the community and with family, while also completing intense housework. Based on her experiences her activities qualify as moderate to vigorous levels, which are defined as movement activities that burn more than 7 calories per minute like jogging, running, high impact aerobics, lifting heavy items or rapid movement (USDHHS, 1999). This mother shared her activity history in detail and stated that she attends boot camp two times a week, adding another day of workouts by starting a running program, riding bikes with the family, cleaning the house, and doing laundry. This example provides a clear proof of a person participating in moderate to vigorous levels of physical activity. This mother is a
model of physical activity for her family, specifically her children. This is evident by her
daughter, who shared during the preschool child interview and identification of pictures
that she gets to see her mom workout and how they ride bikes and take walks with the
family. The child shared how she plays, “exercise” at home with her brother mimicking
the activities their mother completes at boot camp.

The findings indicate the African American parents had specific levels and types
of physical activity they completed on a daily or weekly basis. This may influence their
children in some way by serving as models of physical activity. The responses from the
children indicate they see their parents engaged and involved in various forms of activity
and may likely model their parent’s activity (i.e., Tasha). While some parents indicated
light activity, others indicated moderate to vigorous levels of activity. It is assuring to
know that these African American parents model physical activity and have preschool
children who are physically active as well.

The subtheme everybody sweat now described the intensity level, length of time
engaged in physical activity and types of activities completed among families. The
findings suggest that parents spend at least 20 minutes to upwards of an hour and half or
more being physically active with their children. The time spent engaged in physical
activity with their children seemed to be important for all families as pointed out in the
adult and children’s responses. Some parents were especially committed to making sure
physical activity was a part of their daily routines. They recommended that it be put on
their calendar and have committed their families toward being physically active by
making sure everyone participates daily. One mother shared how the time committed to
physical activity was a priority for their family and how it reduced sedentary behaviors (i.e., watching TV, playing video games). Time spent engaging in physical activity had a bonding affect on these families drawing them closer together. Drayton-Brooks and White (2004) declare that within the African American community, the role of family is highly valued and greatly influences the ability or inability to exercise. In this case, it appears to have drawn this family closer together and is something they look forward to as a family.

Consistent with these findings, Goh et al. (2009) reported that “parents stated that they should take responsibility for their own children by making physical activity a priority and setting limits on sedentary activity like watching television, playing video games, and using computers” (p. 498). The theme, everybody sweat now, captures many perspectives in physical activity or exercise common to these families. That is the importance of making time to do something as a family unit. It is apparent from one mother’s responses that physical activity leads to positive energy and family cohesiveness. Findings from the current study confirm that families who are committed to physical activity and take time to schedule it as a priority benefit from it as a family. Further, they will look forward to spending time together as a group, have more energy, be more cohesive as a family, and grow closer. Preschool children and their family units who adopt this lifestyle choice will build and maintain a cultural community and develop a cultural norm that will become a routine within their family. This aligns with ecocultural theory as families will structure their routines and lives around opportunities to be physical active.
*Observations*

The observations served as means to: (a) see what was happening in the setting, (b) describe the context of the preschool child in those settings, and (c) create a descriptive picture of the activities the child participated in school. The intended goal during observation of preschool children was to gather observational data in three different settings, motor movement program, recess, and classroom. There were intended to be at least two observations per child in each setting. This did not occur as the researcher envisioned it due to issues of absenteeism or schedule changes. However, observations of a few preschool children, Jordan, Ronnie, and India, confirmed they were very active and moving during recess observations. Typically, these children were on the playground for 25 minutes actively engaged in play for about 20 minutes continuously. When on the playground, they were running (i.e., Ronnie and Jordan), riding the tricycles (i.e., India), and playing simulated basketball with a wooden structure and ball (i.e., Ronnie). These descriptions triangulate previous references of the children’s descriptions of physical activity at home or in their home community and validate preschool children and their physical activity.

It is important to note the physical descriptions of the parents in the study as a means of determining their physical appearance. This description may provide insight into the physical appearance of adult participants as to whether or not they may model physical activity outwardly. Patton (2002) describes participant observation “as a description of the setting that was observed, activities that took place in that setting,
people who participated in those activities, and the meanings of what was observed from the perspectives of those observed” (p. 262).

Observations also occurred in the analysis of parents and their physical appearance. Most of the parents in this study appeared to be overweight and in a few cases some were obese. Several parents previously shared their beliefs about physical activity and concern for their children being obese. While sharing their beliefs and knowledge about physical activity these parents did not appear to have a physical appearance which modeled physical activity or healthy lifestyle. Yet many commented that they maintained a health enhancing lifestyle through various forms of physical activity.

It is commonly accepted that some in African American culture consider being “on the thicker side” or “big boned”, which references a person who may be overweight and/or possibly obese, are beliefs that demonstrate cultural norms. Thus, the parents’ physical appearance and cultural beliefs may be in contrast to their verbal descriptions about their physical activity. In some instances within the data, parents’ statements conflicted with their reports of physical activity. “I don’t know when I became lazy, but I was way more active…” (Jenae, Interview 1, June 2012). Yet she earlier described how she goes to the park and plays with her son. These conflicting statements about physical activity are cause for further investigation.

*Community Mapping*

The intention in this study was to identify and describe the neighborhood surrounding Raintree preschool. Requirements for enrollment in Raintree Preschool were based on criteria established by federal Headstart guidelines which were related to family
income, work or school status, and other demographic information. Attention to the socioeconomic status of the families within Raintree Preschool located in Hanby Row was intended to guide the researcher in determining claims regarding access and feasibility of physical activity in the community. Thus supporting Research Question 2, What knowledge do African American parents have about physical activity for their preschool children in regards to feasibility, access, opportunities, and more? However, most of the families lived outside of Hanby-Row and commuted to the facility for school. Thus, data collected here did not apply to majority of the families.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the beliefs African American parents and their preschool children ascribe to physical activity. Ecocultural theory contends that all families organize their life routines to meet the needs of the individual family members (Bernhiemer & Keogh, 1995; Gallimore, Weisner, Kaufman, & Bernheimer, 1989; Gallimore, Weisner, Bernheimer, Guthrie, & Nihira, 1993). I believe that every family has a daily routine and that examining what each African American family in this study did on a daily basis may be a window into determining where physical activity can be implemented within each of these African American families. I asked each parent and preschool child about beliefs, knowledge, daily and weekly routines, and how these routines affected or influenced their ability to participate in physical activity. Using the theoretical framework of ecocultural theory, the study was focused on examination of the families’ routines. Nonparticipant observations, community mapping, and interviews were multiple data sources that captured the lived experiences of African American
parents and their preschool children. I wanted to know how they constructed knowledge, carried out routines, and how they made sense of the day-to-day concepts and meanings (Pope, 2006). As suggested by ecocultural theory, I had opportunity to engage parents in identifying important niche profiles and daily routines through “conversational” interviews (Siedman, 1998). In that context, the African American parents and preschool children were able to tell me about what life is like in their family (i.e., culture) from their own perspective.

In using ethnographic research methods, I was able to target specific culture normalcies like work, safety of the neighborhood, and community agencies that may inhibit families from participation in physical activity. It was discovered that African American parents and their preschool-aged children in this study have a belief and knowledge that physical activity is an important part of their family. I learned that the family’s here have routines, participate in different forms of physical activity, and desire to be more physically active. Finally, African American parents and their preschool children would participate in physical activity programs promoted by physical activity professionals.

The findings presented documented the accounts of family units who participate in physical activity. They mostly engage in these experiences at home which include walking, playing games, going to the swimming pool, and or playing with friends. The types of activities varied. Less is known about the intensity levels (i.e., light, moderate, and vigorous) and duration the African American families participated in physical activity. NASPE’s (2011) recommendation is that children should engage in at least 60-
minutes of structured and/or unstructured physical activity daily with their parents or caregivers. Adults are encouraged to be active for 30-minutes or more daily (USDHHS, 2008). Knowing these points of emphasis is useful in determining if parents and preschool children are getting the recommended amounts of daily physical activity.

These accounts of activity among families are just a few examples of what families do when they take time to be physically active. When describing who is involved in physical activity, the whole family reported being involved from the commentaries by parents and preschool children. The nature of their activities indicates that various physical activities such as running, riding bikes, and playing sports are a part of the culture and regular occurrence in these families thereby constituting a norm. African American families have cultural norms and beliefs systems that influence their willingness to participate in physical activity. This was illustrated and demonstrated in the many examples highlighted in this study. The overriding narrative that permeates the fabric of this study is the family. It has been emphasized in various ways that family is important. Many of the participants expressed this throughout their descriptions of physical activity. What may be confounding and not verifiable is the extent to which families participate in physical activity. Only a few families identified how long they spend involved in activity and this was specifically accounted for throughout the interviews. Also determining the physical activity level (i.e., light, moderate, and vigorous) was not measured directly with these families. In short, preschool children and parents alike participate in physical activity with their family and see it as an important part of their lives.
Recommendations for Practice

The extant research literature describes various barriers to physical activity. The study’s findings on the question, “So what do you suggest?” yielded six thematic areas. These thematic areas were listed based on the number of times parents suggested these recommendations on the basis of responses that were cited most often to least often. These were: (a) time and parent involvement, (b) dollars and sense, (c) safe programs, (d) transportation, (e) equal access to activities and more play space, and (f) education. These suggestions are explainable in the logic of ecocultural theory as accommodations that could be made to assist families in providing appropriate physical activity for their preschool children. Embedded in these thematic areas are suggestions families gave for consideration in programming physical activity programs for families with preschool children.

Limitations in terms of time (Gordon-Larsen et al., 2004; Hesketh et al., 2005; Irwin et al., 2005) and parent encouragement (Dwyer et al., 2008; Goh et al., 2012; Goodway & Smith, 2005) were barriers to physical activity in previous studies. Most of the parents mentioned the importance of having a set time to participate in physical activity. These parents emphasized the importance of committing time and themselves to being involved with their children in physical activity opportunities. Their suggestions produced the idea of community collaborations by way of seeking consensus on ways to
engage in physical activity. As reported, they wanted to have parent meetings to
determine ways to seek opportunities for physical activity in the preschool community.
The findings revealed that an emphasis on group activities for the whole family was a
priority. Likewise, consideration for when physical activity is scheduled must conducive
to parents time availability. Further, the parents stated that their involvement in physical
activity should be a priority with their preschool children. Finally, parents shared that
group consensus for selection of activities would likely capture the interest of all families
and increase participation in a community centered program. Early parental support
(Bauer et al., 2008) and role modeling of physical activity behavior, attitudes, and
emotions influence children to participate in physical activity (Brustad, 2010).

The thematic notion of *dollars and sense* emphasizes the costs associated with
participation in physical activity. Previous research confirms how finances are possible
inhibitors to physical activity (Hessler, 2009; Irwin et al., 2005). Costs associated with
potential programs should be a consideration in encouraging parents to participation in
physical activity. For instance, financing of programs could come from donations and
fundraisers on the part of parents to help offset costs needed for programming within the
preschool community. These strategies appear to be possible solutions to help offset the
cost of funding physical activity initiatives for preschool children where parents could
pool their resources.

Previous research has also showed that parents of preschool children desire *safe
programs* (Dwyer et al., 2008; Goh et al., 2012; Goodway & Smith, 2005; Gordon-
Larsen et al., 2004; Irwin et al., 2005; Roemmich, Epstein, Raja, & Yin, 2007). African
American parents have a clear understanding that safety is a priority for their children. Safety encompasses physical safety as well as emotional safety. The parents value the safety of all preschool children and envision safe places for their and other children to play.

Many parents do not have adequate transportation and this is problematic for many families of young children (Tucker et al., 2006). Parents suggested alternative means to transportation such as using school buses that are usually parked in the bus garages after delivery of schoolchildren to their homes. It was suggested that most preschool families do not have reliable transportation, so having access to participate in physical activity was problematic. Parents in this study offered an alternative means for transportation to the facility via idle school buses. The other option was offering activities after school at the Headstart facility which would eliminate this barrier to participation for these preschool families and provide more access.

Limitations in equal access to programs and limited play spaces has been identified as barriers to physical activity among preschool children, particularly those of lower socioeconomic status in urban communities (Dwyer et al. 2008; Goodway & Smith, 2005; Hesketh et al., 2005; Hessler, 2009). Most parents’ recommended more chances for children to participate in activities like older children (i.e. basketball, T-ball, and cheerleading). The parents exclaimed that recreational programming in their community (i.e. recreation centers) targeted older children. There were no opportunities for families with preschool children to try activities with same age peers. They wanted their children to have access to better play spaces. They wanted parks that were age
appropriate and accommodating to preschool children as many felt the equipment in the park was not appropriately sized for small children (i.e., basketball hoops were not adjustable or swings that were too high). One parent suggested demolition of old, abandoned homes in the community and development of an open field (i.e., green space) to develop play spaces for preschool children in the neighborhood.

*Education* involved making parents of preschool children aware of the types of physical activity available and where these activities take place. Research has demonstrated that some parents do not have knowledge about physical activity related to type, intensity, and areas they can participate (Tucker et al., 2006). The findings in this current study suggested that parents should allot an hour or more of participation with their children in physical activity. Parents in this study also suggested programs should inform other preschool parents of the most appropriate ways to be active. It was also recommended that newsletters, notes sent home, and parental meetings are useful avenues to promote physical activity experiences in the community.

Additionally, when asked if parents would participate in a physical activity pilot program that targeted preschool children and families within the current Headstart program, a majority of the families responded favorably. They stated having a physical activity professional provide leadership to their family and others in a group setting was most appealing and something these families would do on a consistent basis. This physical activity program or workshop for parents and preschool children could be in the Headstart setting, once a week for 30-45 minutes, for a few weeks (about 6). This model physical activity program would be a viable option for increasing physical activity among
African American parents and their preschool children. What’s more, physical activity professionals would educate these families as to appropriate ways to engage in physical activity which could be transferred to home environments.

Again the six thematic areas, (a) time and parent involvement, (b) dollars and sense, (c) safe programs, (d) transportation, (e) access to programs and more play spaces, and (f) education are explainable within the framework of ecocultural theory as African American parents and preschool children would make accommodations to their daily routines. Implementing these recommendations would assist physical activity professionals and allow families to make accommodations to their daily routines. All of which might enhance involvement in physical activities provided at the preschool facility.

**Limitations**

Time and length of the study was a limitation. The time for the study was short, only 10 weeks. Typically, an ethnography occurs from across various spans of time typically six months to one year or longer. Seeking to unwrap the lived experiences of African American parents and the preschool children in the span of 10 weeks was difficult, but having prior prolonged engagement and history with the preschool program and families helped toward gaining access to these families’ stories. Having a longer period to conduct the study would allow for added data from the preschool observations, follow-up interview questions, and chances to re-schedule interviews missed or further interviews for clarification.

The potential for receiving socially desirable responses from participants was another study limitation. There were occasions during the study, where I questioned the
parent giving me information because they wanted to do the right thing (and thus articulated socially desirable responses) and help me out (Hawthorn effect) or if their descriptions were truly accurate. In particular, one parent stated that her routine after work consisted of coming home and walking three miles daily. Later in the study, she stated that she usually comes home to relax because she was too tired to do anything else. This mother’s preschool child verified the parent’s typical routine consisted of watching TV or a movie. These inconsistencies caused me to question the reliability of the parents statements and offer opportunity for other methods to hold parents more accountable to their responses.

Parents reported the type of physical activity and how often it occurred. However, accurate details of the amount of physical activity completed by the adults and preschool children in this study were not measured. Future studies should plan for follow up questions or an activity journal where parents and preschool children would write down their daily activities. Adding a quantifiable component would strengthen the study.

Developing better interviewing technique for parents and preschool children would improve clarity of information regarding activities completed. I believe that portions of my interviews with the parents and preschool children during the first few interviews were not clear. I used my research journal and documented what was not clearly communicated during these occasions and how to phrase certain questions to gain the information I was seeking. In the future, piloting my interview questions and technique would assist in improving my interviewing skills with adult and preschool participants.
Additionally, I was distracted during the preschool children interviews as the circumstances of interviewing children were more problematic than I had envisioned. It was not feasible to be in quiet spaces with each child due to the preschool policy where each child must be supervised by preschool staff at all times. The interviews were set up in the classroom, usually in a corner space, where other children and teachers were within earshot of the interview. The other children would occasionally come over to the area and inquire of their classmate, me, or bother the camera or tape player. The noise level during the interviews made it difficult for the preschool child and me to concentrate. A solution to this issue may be to conduct the preschool child interviews just outside the doorway of the classroom. The teacher could leave the door open and stand by the door while the child is being interviewed, thereby still meeting preschool policy and allowing the interview to have some level of volume control and privacy. Additionally, it may be more efficient to use an audio recorder just outside the door to interview the child so that they are not distracted by the video camera.

Another limitation was interviewing in public places and with their children present. Interviews were scheduled with parents during times that were most convenient for them, in public places (i.e., McDonald’s, Wendy’s, at work and home of a parent). Conducting these interviews in these environments, especially in the public, was difficult because there were others around who were listening which may violate confidentiality of the participant. As some shared information, but they seemed to be reluctant in sharing the information.
When their children were present the flow of the interview was interrupted when the child would interrupt or have to be corrected for inappropriate behavior. When this happened the parents would have to stop during the interview and correct or discipline their children. In the final interview with Candace, there were several mishaps involving her children during the interview where the interview had to be suspended and valuable information was not addressed. Future studies should maintain interviews at the preschool facility or public spaces (e.g., library) that have access to private rooms so these could be conducted without distractions.

Five mothers and two fathers provided relevant data for the study, while all but two parents in the study were married. Failing to capture the partner or spouse beliefs in this study was a limitation. Many of the adult participants shared knowledge regarding their partner or spouse and it is reasonable to expect that there may be differences in the beliefs and experiences of these family members whose voice was not represented. It would be advantageous to recruit or include these family members into one or more of the interviews, which would add to the richness of the data and allow for a more complete assessment of the beliefs African American parents and their preschool age children ascribe to physical activity.

**Implications**

African American parents in this study believe physical activity is important. However, there were inconsistencies in determining appropriate levels of physical activity and knowing what resources were available in the community. Therefore, physical activity interventions may be the mechanisms that provide more consistency in
the type and intensity of physical activity among these families. The parents suggested a resource based physical activity program would be beneficial toward keeping them regularly involved in physical activity with their families. This suggestion is supported by previous research (Fitzgibbons et al., 2002). Thus, knowing the needs of parents in this study, physical activity professionals could design a program based on their needs (i.e., day of the week, time of day, and types of activities). Interventions that account for the type and the level of physical activity (e.g., light, moderate, and vigorous) among these populations may provide data for extended research in this area (Fitzgibbons et al., 2002).

Furthermore, the current inquiry further confirms that African American families have knowledge about benefits of physical activity. The families expressed concerns regarding obesity as a factor that helps them focus on creating opportunities for physical activity for their preschool children. Dietz and Gortmaker (2001) asserted that increased physical activity should be a daily goal and routine and suggest one way to increase the frequency of physical activity daily is by walking to school [Walking School Bus] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2000). Knowledge about physical activities was culturally-influenced and was derived from their past and present-day experiences, training, and outside resources (e.g., internet, doctors, course work). Continued focus on accessing these resources will help parents to know what is needed to maintain a health enhancing physically active lifestyle.

This study also exposes the importance of family routines and their consistency and variability within and among African American families. The theoretical framework, ecocultural theory focuses on understanding families’ routines. In that regard, physical
activity professionals could track daily and weekly routines with specific attention to when parents and preschool children participate in physical activity. It would also provide detailed information regarding where in the life of these families they might implement physical activity as well as type and intensity. Bernheimer and Weisner (2007) state,

> If there is one message for practitioners from our parents and from our longitudinal studies, it is that no intervention, no matter how well designed or implemented, will have an impact if it cannot find a slot in the daily routine of an organization, family, or individual. The intervention must fit into the existing beliefs and practices already in place” (p.199).

In other words, physical activity routines must have consistency, time allocated, and safe places within the daily lives of African American families to occur regularly. If it does not have a priority and place within these families’ daily lives it is much less likely to happen.

Findings in this study represent several areas of the families’ overall niche profiles. A focused culturally-influenced dynamics of the family were evident in relation to physical activity. The niche profiles in each family have a direct influence on what parents and their preschool children do on a daily basis. The narratives of how parents and children see the family as important part of their daily world were enlightening. Brustad (2010) suggests that family influence is an important untapped resource for promoting lifelong physical activity behavior and suggest it is time to move beyond the traditional thinking and traditional strategies for physical activity promotion. In this current study the parents commented on how the family looked forward to their time together. Likewise the children commented on how they took walks with the family, went
to the park, rode bicycles, or spent time at home with their family. Parents and children alike have cultural norms and beliefs that influence their participation in physical activity. In general, they valued physical activity. Therefore, physical activity professionals have knowledge that physical activity programming for families is a key toward promoting interventions in this area. Brustad (2010) asserts that “Family-based physical activity promotion efforts have tremendous potential for facilitating physically active lifestyles among Americans and to strengthen feelings of enjoyment and intrinsic motivation toward physical activity” (p. 6). In essence, a focus on the family should be a priority toward designing and developing physical activity programs among African American families. Logically the “family unit is the ideal context for physical activity promotion efforts” (Brustad, 2010, p. 5).

Lastly, findings in this current study reveal that both parents and their preschool children ascribe importance to participation in physical activity as a family unit. What is not known was the amount of physical activity and intensity level. Additionally, there may have been inconsistencies in parents sharing their physical activity experiences from the parent reports. Additionally, the parents’ physical attributes do not seem to align with their personal statements about physical activity. Therefore, using both qualitative (e.g., interviews, observations) (Brown et al., 2006; Brown et al., 2009; Pate, McIver, Dowda, Brown & Addy, 2008) and quantitative (e.g., pedometers, accelerometers) (Louie & Chan, 2003; Nevill, McKee, Boreham, & Murphy, 2005; Oliver, Schofield, Kolt, & Schluter, 2007) measures will identify and confirm their levels of physical activity.
Future Research

Future research should include a study length of at least 12 to 16 weeks or longer to conduct. The current study was 10 weeks long and was very tight in meeting the interview and observation schedules. A longer study would allow more time between interview sessions, observation schedules, and opportunities for follow up between interviews for conflicting or confounding issues in the data. It also would allow rescheduling missed appointments or to recruit additional participants if participants were to drop out of the study.

Future research should include focus group interviews with adult participants in addition to one-on-one interviews. Focus group interviews allow for the open exchange of conversations in a larger setting and may generate ideas for programming while also confirming previous accounts from the one-on-one interviews.

Moreover, future research should include the perspectives of the partner or spouse of the adult participants. In the current study, five of the six couples had a partner or spouse, specifically a father or male image that were present in the home and mentioned within the study. Bopp et al (2007) stated there were very few studies that specifically examine the perceptions (beliefs) and experiences of African American men, regarding social, psychological, or environmental influences on physical activity. Gaining the perspective of father’s and their role in physical activity would add further depth as well as different perspectives regarding the beliefs relative to physical activity. Also when using the ecocultural theory framework would add another niche profile from which to
investigate how the father’s role influences or affects the families opportunities for physical activity.

The use of objective measures to determine specific physical activity amounts in African American families are recommendations for future study. “Measuring physical activity in early childhood is critical for establishing physical activity prevalence, dose response relationships between activity and health outcomes, and intervention effectiveness” (Oliver, Schofield, & Kolt, 2007, p. 169). Thus, future research should use both qualitative and quantitative measures to gain a true sense of physical activity levels, types, and intensity among these families.

Future research should include having families track their weekly and weekend routines according to time standards and specific activity completed. The current study provided narrative accounts of parents and preschool children’s physical activity. In examining neighborhood environments, physical activity, and sedentary behavior in youth, Roemmich, Epstein, Raja, and Yin (2007) asked parents and youth (i.e., 8-12 years old) to complete a habit book for six days that described their non-physical activity behaviors. Similarly, an accelerometer was used to measure their activity counts and comparisons of both measures were used to evaluate physical activity and sedentary behaviors of the children (Roemmich et al., 2007). Using a similar method of evaluation of qualitative and quantitative measures provides a reliable evaluation of level, type, and time spent engaged in physical activity. Targeting this specific focus provides for more detailed analysis of where and when families complete physical activity and will give a
more accurate record of the family routine during the week and weekend as well as where physical activity could be included.

Future research should also investigate opportunities for sport programming in Head Start neighborhoods. Of the families who lived within the neighborhood of Hanby Row reported the local community support agencies (i.e., Recreation Center) was not open during the time of the study due to remodeling and did not have adequate programming for their preschool children. The minimum age for participation was eight years old and the children in these families were four and five years old. Investigating programs where children in Headstart communities have access and opportunity to community supported programming would be beneficial to these families.

Future research should explore programs that have been successful at promoting physical activity among African American parents and their preschool children (i.e., Fitzgibbons et al., 2002). These parents would like to participate in organized physical activities with their children. They also suggested ways that physical activity professionals could involve and engage other families in physical activity. Exploring the beliefs African American parents and their preschool children ascribe to physical activity has provided a beginning step for what these families believe and do related to physical activity.

**Conclusion**

What has been evident throughout this study is the relevance parents spend time with their preschool children in activity and consider this an important part of their family time. Tucker et al. (2006) gives perspective here, “we also encourage parents to
participate in physical activity with their preschool child, establishing themselves as active role models will help to normalize physical activity lifestyles at a very young age” (p. 257). Parents spend time with their children in physical activity and it is an important part of their cultural norm. This study has presented ecocultural theory as a framework from which to investigate the beliefs, goals, and needs of families, how they arrange their daily routines which is based on their cultural and environmental niche profiles. The most salient message in this study’s findings provides professionals with empirically-based information that consideration of the African American family as a whole, parents and preschool children, is a key to promoting physical activity. Therefore, a focus on the family should be a priority when designing and developing physical activity programs for African American families.
References


APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT FLIER FOR STUDY
RECRUITMENT Flier

The Ohio State University is looking for parents and children to volunteer to participate in a study titled:

"Exploring the beliefs African American parents and their preschool children ascribe to physical activity".

Requirements of the study. Have a 4 or 5 year old child at 6 Tyree, complete permission form, and 3 individual interviews (30 minutes each).

If you are interested in participating in this study contact
Michael Norris at 515-450-8347
or email: norris.99@osu.edu.

Contact person: Michael Norris
515-450-8347

Please contact by
May 31, 2012
Interviews will be conducted at your convenience April–June, 2012.

Families will receive a $10 gift card to a local retail store at the completion of the study.
APPENDIX B: CONSENT AND ASSENT FOR PARENTS & CHILDREN
Dear Parent and Child,

My name is Michael Norris a third year Ph.D. candidate under the advisement of Dr. Samuel Hodge and I am conducting my dissertation research study that seeks to explore the beliefs African American parents and preschool children’s ascribe to physical activity. Specifically, I am interested in knowing what parents and preschool children understand as it relates to physical activity and if this is something that is important among members of this cultural and ethnic population. My interest in this information will allow me to document families’ perspectives and provide opportunity for future development of physical activity programs for
these families. You and your child’s participation will provide the valuable information needed for this study.

This is a parent permission form for research participation with you and your child. There is important information included below that gives details about what to expect should you consent to participate and permit your child to partake in this study.

Your participation is voluntary. Please read and consider the information carefully. Feel free to discuss this study with family members, friends, and associates while asking questions before making your decision whether you will participate and also allow your child to participate in the study. If you consent to participate, you will be asked to sign this form. Signature on this form indicates that you freely consent to participate and give permission for your child to participate in the study. You will receive a copy of the permission form.

Purpose: To explore the beliefs African American parents and preschool children’s ascribe toward physical activity.

Procedures/Tasks: I will collect data from your family in several different areas:

1) Interviews will be used to gain information and in-depth understanding of the families in the current study as both parents and children will be interviewed.

2) Observations will take place within the school, community, and home where possible. These observations serve as means to: (a) see what is happening in the setting, (b) describe the context of the parents and preschoolers in those settings, and (c) create a descriptive picture of the family, while being sure to accurately record data of families’ physical activity.

3) Written Documents will be collected from the Headstart facility such as parent handbook, fliers for parent meetings, health initiatives for program participants, and class homework the teachers assign to preschool children.

4) Videotapes will be conducted of the child interviews to transcribe child perspectives.

Duration: Child interviews (individual) and observations will take place during the time the child is typically in the preschool program. The two interviews will take approximately, two, 30-minute sessions to collect this data. The researcher will videotape interactions during the child interview. Observation of the child will take place during classroom time, recess, physical activity time. Parent interviews will take place at the most convenient place available to the parent and the researcher. Three-four interviews scheduled for parents lasting about 20-30 minutes in length (less or more) will be audiotaped and occur at various points during the study. All these data will be collected over the course of 10 weeks of the study.
You may leave the study at anytime and your child may choose to not participate in the study or answer questions. If you or your child decides to stop participation in the study, there will be no penalty and neither you nor your child will lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision will not affect your future relationship with The Ohio State University.

**Risks and Benefits:** This study will primarily ask you questions relative to your level and involvement in physical activity. This study will provide me with important information about what parents and children believe about physical activity. The information gained will help understand families daily demands and routines, while providing in-depth understanding regarding physical activity in families and potential opportunities to develop physical activity programs among parents and their preschool children.

**Confidentiality:** The demographic questionnaire will have your name and your child’s name listed as an initial point of reference, however, an agreed upon pseudonym will be used to identify you as well as your child to maintain confidentiality during the research process. All subsequent references to you or your child will be addressed by using your identification name(s). When writing about the study, this pseudonym will be used to maintain participant anonymity, however, there may be circumstances where this information must be released. For example, if it is required by state law. The following groups (as applicable to the research) may also review your records:

- Office for Human Research Protections or other federal, state, or international regulatory agencies;
- The Ohio State University Institutional Review Board or Office of Responsible Research Practices.

**Incentives:** Study participants will receive a $10.00 gift card. There is no penalty if you decide to stop participating in the study at any point or for choosing not to answer some questions in the study.

**Participant Rights:** You may decide not to participate in this study without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to participate in this study, you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. By signing this form, you do not give up any personal legal rights you or your child may have as a participant in this study.

If you would like to look at the information collected on you and/or your child we would be happy to provide this information to you in a private meeting with myself, Michael Norris and the Principal Investigator, Dr. Samuel Hodge. You may request this information by emailing Michael at norris.99@osu.edu or phoning 614-292-5679 (administrative office phone). An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subject’s research at The Ohio State University reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable, according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research.

**Contacts and Questions:** For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study, or if you
feel you or your child have been harmed by participation in the study, you may contact Michael Norris, 614-292-5679 (Administrative office phone) or norris.99@osu.edu.

For questions about you rights or your child’s rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other concerns or complaints related to this study with someone who is not on the research team, you may contact Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251. We hope that you and your child will participate in this study, as it will provide important information about the activity of preschool children now and in the future. Thank you!

I___________________ acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to read or have someone read this form and I am aware that I am being asked to provide permission for myself and my child’s participation in this research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate and give consent for my child’s participation in this study. Furthermore, I am free to withdraw consent at any time and to discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to me. I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form and I will be given a copy of this form.

Please check one of the boxes below as well as signing and dating on the lines below:

□ I give my consent to participate in this research study
□ I do not give my consent to participate in this research study

Child ID #___________ /ID Name_______________________________________________

Parent ID #___________ /ID Name_______________________________________________
(Printed Child’s Name)  (Printed Parent Name)

(Signature of Person authorized to consent for participant, if required)  (Signature of Person authorized to consent for participant, if required)

(Parent’s Name)  (Parent’s Name)

(Signature of Person authorized to consent for participant, if required)

Investigator/Research Staff

I have explained the research to the participants or his/her representative before requesting the signatures above. There are no blanks in this document and a copy has been given to the participant or his/her representative.

Printed Name of person obtaining consent

Signed Name of person obtaining consent  ___________________________ AM/PM

Date and Time
Assent Form for Child Participation in Research Study

Protocol Title: Exploring the beliefs African American parents and their preschool children ascribe to physical activity.

Protocol number: 2012B0116
Child’s Name: __________________________ ID # __________

Script for Child Assent

Hello __________________________ (Child’s Name), my name is (Mr. Michael) and I am a student at The Ohio State University who works with physical education teachers (gym teachers) like (PE teachers name). I want to know what you think about playing and moving around (physical activity) both in school, at home, and in your community (recreation, church, or sports). There are several ways I want to ask you these questions, the first thing I will do is ask you questions with a partner, then ask you questions by yourself in the classroom. The second thing I would like to do is to collect copies of pictures or drawings you make of physical activity. The last thing we will do is take pictures of you playing and moving around in different places like the playground, in the classroom, at your sports games, at the recreation center, and at home.

If you would like to help Mr. Michael with this project, circle and point to the face that shows me how you feel about helping with this study. The smiley face means yes and the sad face means no.

😊 😞

If the child points to the smiley face, then they are included in the study – If the child points to the sad face, they do not assent to the study and will not be included in the sample.
APPENDIX C: LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM RAINTREE PRESCHOOL
Letter of Support

March 11, 2012
G Tyree Head Start Center
1077 Lexington Avenue
Columbus. OH. 43201

Dear Members of the IRB,

This letter is to indicate my full support for Michael L. Norris and his investigators to conduct their study "Exploring the Beliefs African American Parents and their Preschool Children ascribe to Physical Activity" at G Tyree Head start center.

Mr. Norris has been a part of the preschool program as a researcher from the Ohio State University working on the National Institute of Health (NIH) grant entitled Examining the dynamic relationships between motor competence and physical activity during 2009 to 2011. In addition to those years working at G Tyree in the past year he has served as a guest instructor and supervisor in the physical activity (gross motor) program working with the preschool children, the Ohio State University students, and our staff.

We are interested in the findings of this study, as it will serve to inform physical activity professionals about the cultural characteristics and dynamics of African American families, their daily routine, and ability to be physically active. Additionally, information shared by families in this study supports the Headstart wellness curriculum and community by providing ways to serve their needs as it relates to physical activity.

Sincerely,

Ms. Barbara Michael
Center Director, G Tyree Learning Center
Demographic Information

Background Information

A. Information about the Child

Child’s name_________________________Date of birth_/_/ Male ____ Female____

What are you childcare arrangements?
___Preschool Center ___Family Daycare
___Babysitter ___Home with a parent or relative
___Other, please specify_____________________________

What is the length of time the child spends in a childcare when not at home?
___Hours per day ___Days per week

B. Information about the Parent

Relationship with the child, are you the child’s:
___Mother ___Father ___Grandmother ___Grandfather
___Guardian ___Other, please specify_____________________________

__________Age ________________Date of Birth

What is your ethnic/cultural background? ______________________________

What is the highest education you have earned? ______________________________

What is your present occupation? If a student, what is your future occupation?

____________

Number of additional children you have including child in the study___________

_____Age of the youngest _____Age of the oldest

Parent (s) Name(s) ____________________________
APPENDIX E: ADULT INTERVIEW GUIDE
ADULT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview #1 (Grand Tour) “What do you do on a daily basis and could you take me through a typical day?” (Beliefs RQ 1, Knowledge RQ 2, & Routines [Weekly & Daily] RQ 3)

Adult interview Questions. These interviews will be audiotaped.

1. Could you describe what you know about being physically active? (Beliefs & Knowledge)
   a. Think about your childhood and please describe opportunities to be physically active as a child?**Sub question here: Demographic questions here. Describe your life as a child? Active/Inactive, Where did you grow up? How many in family? What is your place in the birth order? Neighborhood? Urban, suburban, rural? Playmates, activities.
   b. Think about how your family? In what ways were they involved, did they encourage you to be physically active? If so, in what ways, if feel comfortable sharing their situation at that time?
      i. If you can think back to a time again in your childhood, can you recall specific instances when your parents mentored or model physical activity, in other words do you recall them playing sports or being activity and describe those times or situations?
      ii. Who was your first teacher or coach in learning a sport or activity? What lessons did you learn from them? Did this help you to be successful in physical active games or sport activities?
      iii. Are there things about how your parents raised you in your participation in physical activity that you avoid doing with your own child or children?

2. Working or going to school is a full-time commitment and takes a lot of time, you described your daily routine or schedule earlier. Take time and think about a typical week, would you describe how your routine flows from Monday to Friday? What are the weekly activities that occur during the week?

3. Describe what happens in your family from Saturday morning until Monday morning when it is time to get back into the weekly routine. Could you provide a sequential or identification of the weekend activities?
   a. Identify people that provide support for your family (Ecocultural niche #6).
Interview #2 Experiences related to physical activity in the lives of their preschool child
(Beliefs RQ 1, Knowledge RQ 1, & Ecocultural Niche profiles RQ 4)

1. Review transcripts of first interview and follow up with questions from participants.
2. Clarify any questions that were unclear or need added information.
4. You described physical activity as … in the previous interview. For this interview, would you share your views on your belief about physical activity related to your child?
   a. What happens when your child comes home from preschool?
   b. Ecocultural Niche profile #2 – Do they play outside? In the community?
   c. Other spaces or areas? Identify them, please.
   d. Do you play physically active games or activities with your child?
   e. If so, what do you do?
      i. Where do you go to play or be active?
      ii. Inside or outside?
      iii. The park, gym, or recreation center, or at home?
      iv. When you play, how long do you play (are active)? Explain
   f. If not, are there circumstances that keep you from playing (being active with them), explain?
5. What opportunities are there for leisure or sport activities for your preschool child? (Knowledge/Influence)
   a. How does this work in your daily schedule?
   b. Share with me how your child views participation in these activities? Is this a choice or non-negotiable and how does the child get along in the activity? If none, explain what keeps them from getting involved?
6. Do you have physical activity goals for your child? (Knowledge Transmission & Influence)
   a. Is so, what are they? If not, if you were to think about your child being active, could you describe some reasons why they should be active?
   b. Would you explain why you have these goals for your child?
   c. How do you promote those goals to your child? Can you give an example of teaching one of the goals for physical activity to your child?
   d. Think about being active and describe the benefits of being active? (Knowledge and Influence/Affect)
   e. Similarly what are the consequences of not being active?
Interview#3 This interview will continue to examine knowledge while seeking to understand influence and affect of physical activity in the lives of preschool children. (Knowledge RQ 2, Routine RQ 3, & Ecocultural Niche profiles – Influences and Affect on PA; RQ 4)

1. Follow up questions from interview number two.
2. Your family has a specific routine and you have shared and described how that works. This interview will ask you to think about some specific elements within your routine and family related to specific areas. If you can think about these areas and respond.
   a. How does your work affect your ability to be active with your family – specifically your preschool child? Do you have opportunities to play with them as much as you would like? Why or why not?
   b. If they are under the care of someone while you are working, describe what they do while under this person’s care? Do they have a chance to be active?
   c. If they are at home, describe who the child plays with, where they play, and what types of activities?
   d. Are the children allowed to play outside in the neighborhood? Why or why not? What would you recommend?
      i. What are the barriers that prevent your preschool child’s ability to play actively near your home?
   e. Are there other support and influences that are common in your family (i.e. church or friends.)
      i. Talk about any agencies or resources that promote physical activity in that you are aware?
      ii. Do you all participate in these agencies or resources? How?
   f. If you were to try and include PA into your week day as a family when could you do it?
   g. If you were to try and include PA into your weekend as a family when could you do it?
   h. What other information or resources are there available to help or provide support for the family?
      i. How does your community promote active play of preschool children?
      ii. If they do not, are there other areas or programs that you would like to get them actively involved? Explain?
iii. Is this something that is common or just a every once in a while thing?

iv. What would you like community leaders to know about the physical activity needs of your preschool child?
   i. Do the children have household chores and does this impact their ability or opportunity to play or be active?

3. We have talked about physical activity and getting active. If you were to give a recommendation for a person who had no idea of what life was like in your family and they shared they are looking to develop or start a program for you and your family. (RQ4)
   a. What types of things would work for you and your family?
   b. If it involves developing a play area, please share how you would create the active play space for your preschool child. What would it look like?
   c. Please include resources or supports that you think would be needed for this effort

4. Are there other ideas or thoughts you have regarding physical activity for your child?
   a. Have you considered how to get this done?
   b. Would you be willing to serve as a family that would test or pilot activities for your family?

5. If you were to be taught some movement activities to do with your child what would be the best approach?
APPENDIX F: PRESCHOOL CHILD INTERVIEW GUIDE
Child Interview (Task Oriented Activities)

Child Interview 1 (Weekly Routines & Activity Choices children like)
These interviews will be videotaped.
Drawing prompt to be completed the day of the interview with the child regarding the drawing.

1. Use the pieces of paper and draw some pictures of what you do to get ready for school every day? **Drawings.**
2. Tell me about what you drew in your picture?
   a. Interview prompts:
   b. Tell me what you drew in the pictures?
      i. Ask they child to describe the picture and what they drew?
      ii. Does the picture describe any aspects of physical activity?
      iii. If not, transition to question c i – routines/schedule.
   c. Transition into questions regarding the daily schedule/routine.
      i. When xxx comes to get you from school? What do you do until it is time for bed?
      ii. If the child mentions playing, explore where they play and with whom they play?
      iii. What do you play? Where do you play? Are you breathing hard and sweating when you play?
      iv. Do your parents get to play with you? Brothers, sisters, other family members?
   d. Have pre-cut pictures of different types of activities.

**Picture Identification.**

i. Put them on the table and ask the child to pick activities they like to do.
ii. Pictures of activities – Soccerball, basketball, football, track or runners, shopping mall, staying home, video game systems, Wii, Xbox, PS3, Computer, dancing people, books or people reading, people in church, people cleaning house, people cooking, riding a bike, playing in the park or on the sidewalk,
iii. Each picture they select, ask them to talk about why they like it, if they get to do it at home?
Child Interview 2 – (Follow up from Activity Choices & Weekend Routines)

Drawing prompt to be completed on Monday after the weekend.

1. Use the pieces of paper and crayons to draw some pictures of what you did on the when not in school (like yesterday and the day before)? **Drawings.**
   a. Child takes time to draw the picture.
2. Tell me about what you drew in your picture?
   a. Interview prompts:
      b. Tell me what you drew in the pictures?
         i. Ask their child to describe the picture and what they drew?
         ii. Does the picture describe any aspects of physical activity?
         iii. If not, transition to question c i – routines/schedule.
   c. Transition into questions regarding the weekend schedule/routine.
      i. When you go home on Friday what happens on the weekend until you come back to school on Monday?
      ii. Explore topics they suggest, recreation center, shopping, staying home, going to play?
   d. Have pre-cut pictures of different types of activities as previous interview. **Pictures.**
      Recreation center, shopping mall, staying home, video game Wii, Xbox, PS3, Computer, Swimming pool, Skating rink, Movie Theater, Church, Library, Bus, Cooking, Cleaning house.
      i. Put them on the table and ask the child to pick activities they do on the weekend.
   e. Each picture they select, ask them to talk about when they do that activity? Describe how it fits during the day.
APPENDIX G: FAMILY FUN DAY PROMOTION FLIER
FAMILY FUN DAY CELEBRATION FLIER

J. Tyree Learning Center
End of the Year Celebration
Thursday May 17, 2012
9:00am-12:00pm

Agenda
Welcome-Casa Managers
Food Matters
Michael Norris "Mr. Michael"
Breakfast: Provided by Food Matters

Classroom Activities
Certificates

Games
Lunch
Closing
APPENDIX H: IRB APPROVAL LETTER
May 4, 2012

Protocol Number: 2012B0116
Protocol Title: EXPLORING THE BELIEFS AFRICAN AMERICAN PARENTS AND PRESCHOOL CHILDREN ASCRIBE TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, Samuel Hodge, Michael Norris, Physical Activity and Educational Services
Type of Review: Initial Review—Expedited
IRB Staff Contact: Michael Donovan
Phone: 614-292-6950 Email: donovan.6@osu.edu

Dear Dr. Hodge,

The Behavioral and Social Sciences IRB APPROVED BY EXPEDITED REVIEW the above referenced research. The Board was able to provide expedited approval under 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1) because the research meets the applicability criteria and one or more categories of research eligible for expedited review, as indicated below.

Date of IRB Approval: May 4, 2012
Date of IRB Approval Expiration: May 4, 2013
Expedited Review Category: 6, 7

In addition, the research was approved for the inclusion of children (permission of one parent sufficient).

If applicable, informed consent (and HIPAA research authorization) must be obtained from subjects or their legally authorized representatives and documented prior to research involvement. The IRB-approved consent form and process must be used. Changes in the research (e.g., recruitment procedures, advertisements, enrollment numbers, etc.) or informed consent process must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented (except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects).

This approval is valid for one year from the date of IRB review when approval is granted or modifications are required. The approval will no longer be in effect on the date listed above as the IRB expiration date. A Continuing Review application must be approved within this interval to avoid expiration of IRB approval and cessation of all research activities. A final report must be provided to the IRB and all records relating to the research (including signed consent forms) must be retained and available for audit for at least 3 years after the research has ended.

It is the responsibility of all investigators and research staff to promptly report to the IRB any serious, unexpected and related adverse events and potential unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.

This approval is issued under The Ohio State University’s OHRRP Federalwide Assurance #00005378. All forms and procedures can be found on the ORRP website – www.orrp.osu.edu. Please feel free to contact the IRB staff contact listed above with any questions or concerns.

Michael Edwards, PhD, Chair
Behavioral and Social Sciences Institutional Review Board
APPENDIX I: 20 PRESCHOOL PICTURE IDENTIFICATION CARDS
Child Identification Pictures