What is Supportive Parenting?: Perspectives from Chinese Immigrant Caregivers with Low-Income Status Living in the Greater Boston Area

Xian Zhang[1], Jiayi Liu[2], Carolina Sopper[3], Ja-Hon Wang[4], Yoyo Yau[4], and Judith C. Scott[5]

[1]Mount Sinai Parenting Center

[2] Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Michigan State University

[3] Metrowest Behavioral Health Center, Justice Resource Institute

[4]Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center

[5] School of Social Work, Boston University

Author Note.

Judith C. Scott https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1561-9354

The data used in this manuscript was supported by research grants awarded to Judith C. Scott (PI) from the Child Well-Being Research Network (formerly Doris Duke Doris Duke Fellowship for the Promotion of Child Well-Being) Research-to-Action Grants, Chapin Hall

The authors have no known conflicts of interest to declare.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Judith C. Scott, Boston University School of Social Work, 264 Bay State Road, Boston MA, 02215. Telephone: (617) 353-7916. E-mail: jcscott@bu.edu

Abstract

Chinese immigrant families are the fastest growing immigrant population in the U.S. Yet, research on Chinese immigrant parenting is limited, mostly focusing on stereotypes such as the model minority myth and tiger parenting. Little is known about how Chinese immigrant caregivers (i.e., parents and grandparents), especially those with low socioeconomic status (SES), define and engage in supportive parenting. Drawing upon Crenshaw's (1990) intersectionality model and Darling and Steinberg's (1993) integrative parenting model, this phenomenological qualitative study investigated supportive parenting among Chinese immigrant caregivers with low SES. Twenty-four Chinese immigrant caregivers with low SES and children between the ages of 2 -12 from the Greater Boston area participated focus groups. The focus groups aimed to identify parenting goals, values and practices influenced by different cultural contexts. Supportive parenting goals, values, and practices – both culturally specific and multicultural – were identified and varied among Chinese immigrant caregivers. The findings have implications for researchers, parenting programs, and family service providers serving Chinese immigrant caregivers.

Keywords: supportive parenting, Chinese immigrant caregivers, Chinese immigrant parenting, socioeconomic status, intersectionality

What is Supportive Parenting?: Perspectives from Chinese Immigrant Caregivers with Low-Income Living in the Greater Boston Area

Chinese immigrants are the fastest growing immigrant population and the third largest foreign-born population in the United States (Migration Policy Institute [MPI], 2020; Pew Research Center [PRC], 2018). Yet more research is needed to understand parenting among Chinese immigrant families because most existing parenting research focuses on stereotypes about Asian immigrant parenting. Most of the parenting research on Chinese immigrant families focuses on families with middle and upper socioeconomic status (SES), demonstrating stereotypes related to the model minority myth. The model minority myth describes Chinese immigrants and other Asian families as economically successful and highly educated (e.g., Shih et al., 2019). However, there is considerable variation in SES among Asian and Chinese immigrant families (MPI, 2020). An intersectional lens, which considers how individuals' multiple identities (e.g., ethnicity, class) and societal forces such as racism associated with each identity converge to shape individuals' experiences (Crenshaw, 1990), is needed to understand parenting across the SES spectrum. Also, Chinese immigrant parenting is often stereotyped as "tiger parenting" – harsh, authoritarian, and primarily focused on their children's academic success (Chao, 1994; Cheah et al., 2015) – and this stereotype is reinforced when Western parenting frameworks (e.g., Baumrind, 1971) are applied in parenting research. However, Western frameworks may not be culturally relevant or accurately capture Chinese immigrant parenting. For example, supportive parenting, which is often conceptualized using a Western lens, is defined as authoritative and includes nurturing, positive reinforcement, and physical affection (McNeely & Barber, 2010; Pettit et al., 1997). However, this conceptualization of supportive parenting may not qualitatively capture cultural aspects of parenting among Chinese

immigrant caregivers (Chao, 1994; Cheah et al., 2015).

Drawing upon Crenshaw's (1990) intersectionality approach and Darling and Steinburg's (1993) parenting model, this study investigated supportive parenting among Chinese immigrant caregivers (i.e., parents and grandparents). Focus groups were conducted among caregivers living in the Greater Boston area with low SES and preschool and elementary age children. Data were collected on caregivers' goals for their children and the parenting practices that would help their children achieve those goals. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to analyze the data. The findings have implications for researchers, parenting programs, and family service providers serving Chinese immigrant caregivers.

The Influence of the Model Minority Myth on Parenting Research

In the U.S., the population of Chinese immigrants has increased seven-fold since 1980, resulting in approximately 4.2 million Chinese immigrants (MPI 2020; PRC, 2021b). Overall, Chinese immigrants are viewed as economically successful and highly educated due to the "model minority" myth (Shih et al., 2019). The model minority myth implies that Asian immigrants successfully assimilate in U.S. society, do not experience or are able to overcome racism and other forms of oppression, and achieve social and economic parity with the White population (Shih et al., 2019). However, in the U.S., the income inequality gap among Asian families is the largest of all the racial groups (PRC, 2018). The rate of Chinese families living in poverty (17 %) is higher than immigrants overall (15%) and U.S. born families (13%; MPI 2020). Most parenting research about Chinese immigrant parents seems to subscribe to the model minority myth and focuses on parenting among families in middle to upper SES. As a result, there is limited research on parenting among families with low SES.

Where parents fall on the SES spectrum significantly influences parenting and family

processes and the resulting children's outcomes (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Evangs & Kim, 2013). Economic stratification in the U.S. intersects with other identities such as race and ethnicity to shape the very contexts families live in and navigate, resulting in specific contexts for children of color (García Coll et al., 1996). Furthermore, individuals' multiple identities (e.g., ethnicity, class, nationality) and societal forces such as racism associated with each identity converge to shape individuals' experiences, according to Crenshaw's (1990) intersectionality model. For example, SES can affect immigrant parents' post migration opportunities and experiences, resulting in differential access to resources and capital. Drawing upon Crenshaw's (1990) intersectionality model, we examined supportive parenting among Chinese immigrant families with low SES in this study.

Conceptualizing Chinese Immigrant Supportive Parenting Using Western Frameworks

Along with the influence of the model minority myth, there is concerns that when researchers apply Western-based parenting frameworks, Chinese immigrant parenting often has been miscategorized as authoritarian. This categorization promotes the stereotype that Chinese parents are tiger parents – aggressive, controlling, and lacking in warmth (Chao, 1994; Cheah et al., 2015). Often, the authoritarian categorization of parenting is tied to academic socialization and success, promoting the model minority myth in which Chinese immigrant parents predominantly focus on academic achievement. This use of Western perspectives results not only in stereotypes about parenting but also limited examination of supportive parenting among Chinese immigrant parents.

The most used Western framework in Chinese immigrant parenting research is Baumrind's (1971) typology of parenting. Baumrind (1971) proposed four parenting patterns: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and disengaged. *Authoritarian* parents are characterized

as highly demanding, rarely responsive, and very psychologically controlling (Baumrind et al., 2010). *Authoritative* parents also are considered highly demanding but responsive and supportive of autonomy (Baumrind et al., 2010). Parents who are *permissive* are highly responsive but low in demanding and also lenient; whereas *disengaged* parents are the least demanding, responsive and supportive of autonomy (Baumrind et al., 2010). Within this framework, supportive parenting is conceptualized as authoritative (Pettit et al., 1997) and includes nurturing, positive reinforcement, and physical affection (McNeely & Barber, 2010; Pettit et al., 1997). Baumrind's (1971) typology is one of the most widely used typologies for parenting studies and made significant contributions to the field.

However, it is possible that Baumrind's (1971) typology and other Western based frameworks may not qualitatively capture parenting across different racial and ethnic groups (McNeely & Barber, 2010; Sorkhabi & Mandara, 2013). Baumrind (1971; 2010) posited that the parenting styles she identified among European American families should not be extended to other ethnic groups and that researchers should explore different cultures on their own terms (Sorkhabi & Mandara, 2013). In line with this perspective, Chao (1994) stated that Baumrind's (1971) conceptualization of parenting may not be culturally relevant or meaningful for Asian American parents, especially immigrants (Chao, 1994, 2000). In response to these concerns, we explored supportive parenting among Chinese immigrant caregivers by using an emic perspective which consisted of asking caregivers about the goals, values, and behaviors related to helping children achieve parenting expectations. Our exploration was guided by Darling and Steinberg's (1993) integrative parenting model.

Parenting Goals, Values and Practices

According to Darling and Steinberg's (1993) integrative parenting model, parenting goals

and values, which focus on the socialization of children, are significant determinants for parenting behavior which includes parenting practices and parenting style. Parenting practices are behaviors defined by specific content and socialization goals (Darling & Steinberg, 1993); examples of practices are helping with homework and attending cultural events with children. These practices address specific socialization domains such as academic achievement and cultural socialization (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Parenting styles describe the attitudes towards and communicated to children, creating an emotional environment in which practices and non-goal directed behaviors (e.g., tone of voice, body language) are expressed (Darling & Steinberg, 1993, p. 493). In this model, parenting goals and values influence parenting behavior. Parenting practices directly affect child developmental outcomes whereas parenting style moderates (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). In our study, we only focused on goals, values, and practices related to supportive parenting among Chinese immigrant caregivers with low SES. More information on these aspects of parenting is needed before investigating parenting styles.

Using Darling and Steinberg's (1993) model, we also considered that parenting goals and values may explain cultural variation in parenting behaviors such as practices. Parenting goals and values may be informed by beliefs, values, and traditions specific to a culture and as a result, caregivers from different cultures may engage in qualitatively different parenting behaviors (e.g., Chao, 2000; Mandara & Murray, 2002). Differences in how cultures define supportive parenting may result in differential parenting goals, values, and practices among caregivers.

Supportive Parenting among Chinese Immigrant Families

Parenting goals, values and practices associated with supportive parenting have been explored among limited Chinese immigrant parenting literature. Chao (1994) proposes that parenting goals among Chinese immigrant parents focus on "*chiao shun*" (or *jiao xun*) or

training; she identified training goals among parents with preschool and children in first through third grade (Chao, 1994, 2000). Training goals originate from the Confucian emphasis on responsibility to roles in service of family and societal cohesion and harmony and therefore, focus on ensuring that children have socially desirable and culturally approved behaviors (Chao, 1994). These goals can be achieved through care, concern, active involvement, and modeling proper behavior to children (Chao, 1994). Although parents practicing *chiao shun* utilize strict control, monitoring, and correcting children's behaviors – behaviors characterized as authoritarian in Baumrind's (1971) typology – *chiao shun* is accomplished through a nurturing and supportive parent-child relationship, and thus, does not carry the negative implications associated with European American authoritarian parenting (Chao, 1994). Chao (1994) found that the concept of *guan* explained relations between training and supportive parent-child relationships among Chinese immigrant parents. *Guan*, which in English translates as to care or love, described how parental care, concern, and involvement are connected to control and governance of children (Chao, 1994). Practices associated with *guan* may include monitoring and correcting children's behaviors (Chao, 1994).

Similarly, Chen and colleagues (2011) found that Chinese immigrant mothers with young children focused on training and nurturing their children. Mothers reported that two key elements of parenting guided their childrearing – *jiao*, which means educating, teaching, and training, and *yang*, which means rearing and nurturing. Mothers shared that the *jiao* aspect of parenting focused on training children in early childhood on moral virtues and cultural values (Chen et al., 2011). Chen and colleagues (2011) also identified *guan* as an aspect of training among caregivers. The *yang* aspect focused on the responsibility to ensure that children grow up physically healthy (Chen et al., 2011). Parenting behaviors focused on ensuring children's health

may also be a way for parents to demonstrate love and warmth (Cheah et al., 2015).

Although there is evidence that there are parenting goals, values, and behaviors that may be specific to Chinese culture, because the literature predominantly focuses on middle and high SES, it is not clear whether similar or different goals, values and behaviors exist among Chinese families with low SES. Furthermore, variation in culturally specific parenting goals, values and practices is rarely explored. Individuals vary in which cultural ideologies associated with their group identity are salient to them and the meaning they make of these ideologies (Mistry et al., 2016; Spencer et al., 1997). Variation in the meaning made of cultural ideologies results in variation in how individuals interpret their cultural experiences and contexts and their responses to that interpretation (e.g., parenting) (Mistry et al., 2016). Therefore, there may be more culturally specific parenting goals, values and practices among Chinese immigrant caregivers than have been identified, particularly when considering SES. Furthermore, it is also important to consider that Chinese immigrant caregivers' parenting is influenced by not only the cultural norms of their native country but also the ones present in the U.S. (Cheah et al., 2013; Mistry et al., 2016). Thus, the meaning made of multiple cultural norms may contribute to variation in parenting goals, values, and practices as well.

Current Study

In the current study, we used an exploratory qualitative approach to investigate parenting goals, values, and practices related to supportive parenting among Chinese immigrant caregivers, which include parents and grandparents, of preschool and elementary age children who have low SES. Grandparents were included in this study because within Chinese immigrant families, they may act as primary or secondary caregivers (Xie & Xia, 2011). Therefore, their perspectives of supportive parenting may impact Chinese immigrant children's development and outcomes.

This study had two aims. The first aim was to identify caregivers' goals and approaches to supportive parenting and the second aim was to explore what parenting practices can be used to successfully achieve those goals. Focus groups were used to explore both aims. Focus groups enabled us to access the language and concepts that caregivers used to describe their parenting experience and "identify cultural knowledge that is shared among group members as well as appreciate the range of different experiences individuals within a group have" (Hughes & DuMont, 1993, p. 776). We did not have hypotheses for either aim because of the dearth of supportive parenting research focused on Chinese immigrant parents with low SES.

Methods

A phenomenological qualitative study design was used to investigate parenting among Chinese immigrant caregivers with low SES. The phenomenological design captures and centers the lived experiences of individuals related to a specific phenomenon and the meaning they make of this phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). To conduct our study, we used a community based participatory approach (CBPR), which draws upon the strengths and resources among researchers and community partners to develop a research partnership defined by mutual trust, participation, and respect, resulting in actionable knowledge (Rubin et al., 2012). We engaged in this approach to improve the relevance of the research questions to the Chinese immigrant caregivers, reduce cultural distances between us, the research team, and the communities explored, and to increase the likelihood that the research would be used by practitioners (Rubin et al., 2012). Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC), a family services community organization, partnered with us in this study. BCNC's mission is to ensure that the children, youth, and families they serve have the resources and supports they need to achieve greater economic success and social well-being. BCNC is the largest social service provider to Asian

residents in Boston Chinatown and the Greater Boston area, particularly those with low SES. They participated in the study design and focus group guide development, recruitment, and dissemination; their contributions will be detailed throughout this section.

Reflexivity Statement

All the co-authors reflected on how their identities and experiences may influence their perceptions of parenting which has implications for data collection and analysis. The first author is a Chinese national educated in the United Kingdom and U.S. and currently living in the U.S. Some of her immigration experiences overlap with the study's participants but she grew up in an upper middle-class family. She was aware that her SES background may influence how she understood caregivers' parenting and lived experiences. The second author is a Chinese national, who grew up in a middle-class family with college educated parents in Beijing, currently pursuing graduate study in the U.S. As an international student, she navigates the cultural and contextual differences between China and the U.S. like the study's participants. However, she recognized that the study's participants may have different experiences and perceptions on parenting than an only child from a Chinese middle-class family.

The third author identifies as a white middle class European American. She is familiar with Chinese parenting and immigration experiences due to time abroad in China and is proficient in Mandarin. She has also worked with international students and immigrants from China as a higher education administrator and clinical social worker. This author is not a member of the population studied here and recognizes that the practices of individual people she has interacted with do not represent a monolithic approach to caregiving. The fourth author was raised in a Taiwanese immigrant family living in a middle-upper class white suburb. He has worked with Chinese immigrant caregivers and youth. These experiences and his own

upbringing have helped him understand Chinese and American differences in childrearing. However, he recognized that the meaning he makes of Chinese parenting may differ from the participants because of his economic background and U.S. nationality.

The fifth author is a Chinese American immigrant, who grew up in a middle low-income family with a college-educated father in Hong Kong. As a first-generation Chinese American immigrant and raising two Asian American children in the U.S, she navigates daily the cultural and social contextual differences between Asian culture and the U.S. She was very aware that the study's participants may have different lived experiences, social contexts, and perceptions on parenting than she does. The last author, who is the PI of the study, identifies as a Black cisgender woman who grew up in an immigrant middle-class family in an urban context. She became interested in Chinese immigrant parenting and some similarities in immigrant groups' experiences while conducting an evaluation with BCNC. Because her identities differ from the study's participants, she recognized that collaborating with Chinese immigrant caregiver experts (i.e., BCNC) was needed and that her multiple identities may shape the meaning she makes of parenting among Chinese immigrant caregivers. To be consciously aware of how their identities and lived experiences could affect the study, the co-authors engaged in an orientation on cultural sensitivity and reflexivity, journaled about reactions to focus groups and data, and/or engaged in frequent discussions within the team about capturing the caregivers' voices.

Participants

Twenty-four Chinese immigrant caregivers, which included parents and grandparents, participated in this study. Caregivers met the inclusion criteria which were: 1) to identify as ethnically Chinese; 2) be a first-generation immigrant (immigrated to U.S.) or second-generation immigrant (child of first-generation immigrant); 3) live in the Greater Boston area; 4) a caregiver

of a child between the ages of 2-12 and either biologically related to the child or a legal guardian; 5) over the age of 18 years old; 6) proficient in Mandarin or Cantonese and 7) have low SES. Caregivers' incomes were categorized as low SES if their income was less than 80% of the average annual income in the city or county they lived in; this is similar to how housing assistance eligibility in Massachusetts is determined (City of Boston, 2019; Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 2017). We used local instead of federal criteria because the local criteria limit considers cost of living, which impacts how much a family can afford (The White House, 2021).

Caregiver Demographics

Table 1 describes caregivers' characteristics. Twenty caregivers were parents with an average age of 38.45 (SD = 6.79), with ages ranging from 28 to 52. The four grandparents had an average age of 61.00 (SD = 4.32). Twenty-two caregivers were female, and 17 were married. Among caregivers, 12 had an income from $20K-50K. Caregivers' education ranged from less than high school degree to college degree. All but one caregiver identified as a 1st generation immigrant and immigrated from or near Guangdong province, China. Most caregivers (n = 14) lived in the U.S. for 3 to 10 years. Cantonese was the most spoken language at home (n = 18). The mean number of children ages 2-11 years old living in households was 1.67 (SD = 0.70) and their average age was 5.23 years old (SD = 2.99).

Procedures

Using flyers, phone calls, email, social media and in-person discussion, the research team and BCNC staff recruited caregivers through their professional networks and snowballing. All materials were translated into Chinese by BCNC staff. Interested caregivers contacted either the research team or BCNC. Research assistants, fluent in Mandarin and Cantonese, conducted screening calls to determine caregivers' eligibility, collected sociodemographic information, and

discussed the study overview, confidentiality, and potential risk and benefits.

Focus Groups

Through focus groups, supportive parenting was explored as part of a multifaceted study on Chinese immigrant caregivers with low SES. Supportive parenting was examined alongside families' perspectives on harsh and abusive parenting, the influence of contexts on their parenting, and caregivers' recommendations to services providers regarding the ways to support their parenting. A semi-structured focus group guide with open-ended questions was developed to facilitate discussion. BCNC contributed to the development of the focus guide by providing feedback through a mock focus group conducted with staff. The guide was translated into Chinese by the research assistants. Two questions from the guide examined supportive parenting. First, we asked caregivers what type of person they wanted their children to be in the future. Then we asked what parenting practices would help their children meet these expectations.

Four focus groups were conducted at BCNC offices, located in two Greater Boston cities, from August to October 2019. Two research assistants conducted the focus groups in Cantonese, Mandarin, and occasionally Taishanese. Each focus group was approximately two and half hours. Childcare and food were provided. Written consent was obtained at the beginning of the focus group. There were four caregivers in the 1st focus group, four in the 2nd, eight in the 3rd and eight in the 4th group. Caregivers were audio or video recorded unless they indicated otherwise. Research assistants served as notetakers to capture the discussion from caregivers who were not recorded. At the end of the focus group, caregivers received a community resource guide and a $50 gift card as an incentive. All procedures were approved by Boston University IRB.

Data Analysis

A research assistant with this expertise in translating Chinese to English translated and

transcribed the focus group recording and notes. After the transcripts were drafted, research assistants fluent in Chinese reviewed the transcripts to ensure the context was clear and that the translation was contextually based (Ho et al., 2019). They used a spreadsheet to track Chinese idioms and questions about interpretation. Then the research team met to discuss and resolve any interpretation issues. The transcripts were then finalized.

We used a phenomenological thematic analysis using emic (i.e., caregivers' views) and etic (i.e., researchers' views) approaches to analyze the data (Creswell, 2007). Thematic analysis is "a method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes" within data (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 2). This method is particularly useful in examining the perspectives and voices of different participants with consideration of similarities and differences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In phenomenological thematic analysis, the data are coded without preexisting coding frameworks or researchers' analytic preconceptions (Nowell et al., 2017); the analysis is data-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We chose this approach to examine the phenomenon of caregiving using the perspectives of the Chinese immigrant caregivers.

First, we read the transcripts to become familiar with the data and discussed and documented initial impressions and reflections (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). We engaged in first cycle coding using *in vivo coding*, which used words and phrases from the participants as codes, *emotion coding* and *values coding*, which captures participants' attitudes and beliefs, representing their perspectives (Miles et al., 2014). We used this initial coding to develop a codebook (Table 2) containing higher order and lower order codes (Nowell et al., 2017). Then, we engaged in second cycle coding, which is pattern and theme identification within- and across-focus groups (Creswell, 2007; Miles et al., 2014). Using the qualitative software, Dedoose, we applied the codes to the transcripts. Memos were used to record reflections, potential themes, and

coding questions (Nowell et al., 2017). For each transcript, all researchers' coding was reviewed, and coding inconsistencies were discussed and resolved; transcripts were recoded to reflect the resolutions. Therefore, interrater reliability was over 95%. After completing the coding, we identified initial themes. Then, we reviewed coded data for each theme and determined if there are coherent patterns within and across focus groups in research team meetings (Nowell et al., 2017). Themes were reduced and collapsed, resulting in the final themes.

Results

Several parenting themes were identified using the data from the 24 caregivers in the four focus groups. The following section presents findings about caregivers' parenting goals, values and beliefs, and practices. Pseudonyms were used to protect confidentiality.

Parenting Goals

When asked "What type of person do you want your child to be in the future?", caregivers described various hopes and expectations and had multiple goals for their children. The most common goal for children is to be self-sufficient (n = 13). They wanted their children to be able to support themselves as adults. JinJin, a mother with an 8-year-old child, described what her son supporting himself would look like: "Take care of himself, can have his own job, have an income, can support himself . . ." A mother with four children under the age of 12, AiChen described why supporting themselves was important. She said:

> When my kids play bubble[s], I told them, look at the bubble. It's beautiful but it's temporal . . . Just like our lives, it is beautiful on the outside but whether or not it is good, you have to be responsible for it . . . Educate them, tell them what is good and bad…so that they can support themselves in the future. When we get old, we cannot watch over them. How can I say this? Teach them how to control and give them opportunity to

develop in the future . . .

Along with self-sufficiency, they wanted their children to be self-disciplined and able to regulate themselves (*n* = 6). An example of a disciplined child was one who did homework without needing a reminder from parents. Academic success (*n* = 3) was also mentioned.

Good health for their children was another hope among caregivers. The desire for their children to have good mental health was mentioned by some caregivers (*n* = 5); however, they did not describe what this would look like. There were also caregivers that mentioned good health without specifying whether physical or emotional (*n* = 5). Similarly, caregivers mentioned wanting their children to be happy but did not detail what happiness looked like (*n* = 6).

In addition to children's well-being and success, caregivers had expectations regarding their children's interactions with peers and society. Some wanted their children to have positive social interactions (*n* = 8). They hoped their children would be caring, communicate well, be liked by others, and have healthy relationships. Ting, a mother of three, had several wishes:

> To thrive, to stay grounded, to thrive in work and live life. I care about my children in building emotional bonds between people. I feel that it's very important . . . [I] expect [my children] in the future to have a good job, to make money . . . I believe every caregiver will have [those expectations]. But I value more in their future interactions between people.

In addition, several caregivers wanted their children to contribute to society and not harm others (*n* = 6). For example, a mother of 3- and 11-year-old children, Lily, wanted that ". . . at least his heart is not bad [in the] end, will not do things to cause harm to others, or do bad things."

When discussing expectations, caregivers often listed multiple goals that span different developmental domains. For example, Mang, a mother, wanted her 6-year-old child to "be

responsible, have loving compassion, to grow up in good health". Caregivers also expressed different levels of expectations. When the Chinese expression, "Hoping sons become dragons and daughters become phoenixes" was raised by group facilitators as a parenting goal example, some caregivers agreed with this expectation and expressed wanting their children to achieve much (n = 3). A grandmother with two grandchildren, LiRong, said, "We hope they start young in studying hard, doing well academically, growing up having good health, to become a dragon". Some caregivers were not focused on achievement. ChunYan, a mother of two children, said:

> We don't insist on them to have big achievements, just that when they grow up and enter the society, they feel happy..…. First, don't bring harm to the society, haha, right? Second, you can live independently, and live happily. [I'd feel] very content.

In summary, caregivers had multiple hopes and expectations for their children and these goals were across multiple domains. Some explicitly discussed the level of expectations they have for their children. In addition to these specific goals, when asked, caregivers also discussed the parenting practices they use to help their children achieve their hopes and expectations.

Parenting Practices

Across the four focus groups, caregivers discussed a variety of parenting practices they would use to support their children to achieve these parenting goals. In our analysis, we grouped the practices into four categories – *encouraging desirable behaviors*, *preventing/addressing unwanted behavior*, *helping children explore and learn*, and *addressing emotional needs*.

Encouraging Desirable Behavior

Encouraging desirable behavior refers to practices that explicitly promote positive behavior among children. Nine caregivers mentioned the importance of modeling desirable behaviors for children. Modeling could be used to encourage reading, teach good manners, and

explain chores. While discussing her three children, Ying stated:

> I think we should intentionally educate them, to be a role model, such as to be concerned about others, to love and care for others, actually as long as [I] myself do well, then they will follow us.

In addition to modeling, caregivers set rules and taught children right from wrong to guide behavior (*n* = 9). Examples of rules were completing chores, finishing homework before playing, coming straight home after school, and avoiding dangerous places in the home. Some caregivers thought that it was their responsibility to tell children what is right and what is wrong, especially younger children (*n* = 9). A father of two children, GuoHua shared:

> During cooking, they cannot enter [the kitchen]. This is a rule (*gui ju*) . . . Because the child is still small, tell them clearly what is right and what is wrong. Because little kids do not know how to differentiate right from wrong . . . We want to guide them to do the right things . . .

Preventing/Addressing Unwanted Behavior

Along with promoting certain desirable behaviors, caregivers discussed practices that would prevent and address unwanted behaviors. When caregivers discussed right and wrong, they also considered the importance of intervening when an unwanted behavior occurred and compared Western parenting to Chinese parenting. Some thought the Western style of parenting gave children too much freedom and when an incident occurred, parents waited to teach children right from wrong. For example, caregivers in one focus group discussed how American and Chinese caregivers would address children fighting. They agreed that Chinese caregivers would intervene immediately and teach children right from wrong. They believed that the American caregivers would not interrupt to teach until the fight became severe, which they disapproved of.

Caregivers also discussed limiting potentially harmful or dangerous activities such as playing video games, watching too much TV, or entering the kitchen without supervision (*n* = 9). Some caregivers also described using *lengchuli* or "cool down" to correct unwanted behaviors (*n* = 10). Cool down was described as not acknowledging the child so that the child will calm themselves and regulate their emotions. One mother, Mang, explained that "Sometimes their emotions arise out of nowhere and they don't know how. So, you let them be quiet for a bit, [let] their emotions calm down then they are ok." Another caregiver, Lily, described her response to her daughter's anger. She said:

> My daughter is...when she is mad, she herself will throw things away in the trash can. . . The more she wants to throw [them] away, the more I don't pay attention to her, a few moments later she will pick them up herself.

Sometimes, cool down also was used by caregivers to give themselves space and time to calm down while parenting. AiChen, a mother, shared why adults need cool down as well. She said, "We as caregivers, first of all, [are under] a lot of stress from work and taking care of children and many things. We ourselves are not in good moods."

Caregivers also mentioned time-out as a separate practice from cool down (*n* = 9). When children misbehaved, caregivers asked them to stand still for five or ten minutes as a punishment; time out was used to discipline the child. One caregiver, JinJin, shared:

> Sometimes he is too naughty . . . I put a multiplication table on the wall, have him face the multiplication table, stay for ten minutes . . . Sometimes he can't stand still, so it is just right that he can quiet his heart, to face these things, and also can learn.

Helping Children Explore and Learn

In addition to discussing children's behavior, caregivers reflected on how to help children

learn about themselves and the world. One practice they used was trial and error. Caregivers discussed allowing their children to explore and learn from their own experience (n = 7). They believed that children have an innate curiosity and want to explore. Under adult supervision, children should be given opportunities to try and learn. For example, to teach her child to understand the danger of hot water, WeiWei, a mother of children ages 3 and 6, said:

> If they want to touch the hot water, I would let them do it. Under the adult's supervision, I will let them try, so they know that it is hot, to know what is hot, what is burning. It's better than telling them, without supervision, you can tell them ten thousand times and it's still useless.

Caregivers also believed it was important to give their children the freedom to explore, not necessarily with the goal of learning, but to let them experience and discover the world on their own (n = 8). For example, Fang said, "I want them to grow up and develop [naturally], let them explore what they like, or see what their strengths are . . ." They saw freedom as an important part of a happy childhood and the practice as a good way for their children to learn. Some caregivers compared Chinese and U.S. parents when discussing freedom. Some compared freedom to the more structured parenting many caregivers in China endorse. Ling, a caregiver with a 3-year-old and 9-year-old, shared:

> Eastern style has good things and Western style has good things….Like us Chinese, we are too anxious about our children. Westerners are more liberal . . . educational style focuses on happiness. As long as the children are happy.

Addressing Emotional Needs

In addition to discussing parenting practices targeting children's behaviors, caregivers discussed the practices they use to address children's emotional needs. Six caregivers talked

about the importance of just being there for children, playing with them, and spending quality time with children. One parent shared her insight about providing high quality accompaniment versus low quality accompaniment. High quality accompaniment referred to face-to-face time with children when children get parents' full attention. Low quality accompaniment referred to despite being in the same space, caregivers are busy doing their own work such as chores or work, and children play by themselves.

Caregivers also discussed the importance of helping children build confidence (n = 7). A mother, Shu, shared how she ensured her 7-year-old daughter builds confidence and saves face in front of her 2-year-old brother. A father, GuoHua, agreed with her approach.

> *Shu*: But for my daughter who is older, if I emphasize too much about right and wrong, it does not seem to be useful. She is 7 years old now, and her self-esteem is strong, on this aspect, I would not emphasize what she did wrong. It's better I just explain to her, what you've done the good, and the not-so-good. In front of her brother, she wants to save-face too. Because they are younger brother and elder sister, she wants to set a good model in front of her brother. So, I emphasize more on her self-esteem. If her mistakes are not too big, basically my attitude will not be too firm.
>
> *GuoHua*: To encourage more…
>
> *Shu*: Yes, to encourage more. Because generally here in America, I think [our] children do not have self-esteem, not confident enough.

Sometimes, encouragement and praises were discussed in the context of giving children freedom and letting them explore.

In summary, to ensure that their children would meet their future expectations, caregivers discussed practices that encouraged desirable behaviors, prevented, or addressed unwanted

behaviors, helped children to explore and learn, and addressed emotional needs. During the discussion of practices, caregivers also mentioned values and beliefs that guided their parenting.

Parenting Values and Beliefs

According to caregivers, values and beliefs that guide their parenting goals and practices are reasoning (*jiang dao li*), developmental awareness, and awareness of children's emotional needs. Caregivers emphasized the importance of incorporating reasoning into parenting practices. They believed children need to understand why certain behaviors are encouraged and other behaviors are prohibited (n = 10). For example, when caregivers taught children right from wrong, they often paired the teaching with explaining to children the underlying reasons. When they disciplined their children, they also provided justifications. One mother, AiChen, shared that when she disciplined her child, she would "tell him why he is wrong, why I treated him in that way and tell him where he was wrong and help him correct it." Some caregivers stated that they provided reasoning because their own parents rarely explained why they should do something.

Another belief was that parenting choices should depend on children's developmental stages (n = 15). For example, caregivers said that they use reasoning and encouragement with older children but focused more on enforcing the rules with younger children, especially regarding safety. A mother, Shu, explained "I feel that to teach a child, need[s] to [be done] according to [the child's different [developmental] stages, like the little kids…give them a set of rules… [like] what they can do and what they cannot do".

The third parenting belief was that parents should pay attention to children's emotional needs. Although not always explicitly explained, caregivers described actions such as soothing during an emotional reaction and taking emotions into consideration, stressing the importance of not ignoring children's emotions (n = 7). Caregivers expressed that they did not want to "force

their children" to meet their expectations or "make them suffer". These three parenting beliefs and values guided caregivers' parenting goals and practices in this study.

Discussion

We sought to advance knowledge about supportive parenting among Chinese immigrant caregivers with low SES by 1) identifying caregivers' goals related to supportive parenting; and 2) exploring what parenting practices they used to achieve those goals. Using Crenshaw's (1990) intersectionality lens, our study is one of the few that explored Chinese immigrant caregivers' perspectives on goals and practices related to supportive parenting with consideration of cultural and SES variation. To understand parenting practices, we also explored underlying reasons such as parenting goals (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

Findings related to parenting goals and practices had some similarities with existing literature but there were also unique findings. Although much of the literature on Chinese immigrant caregivers focuses on academic achievement (Juang et al., 2013), the caregivers in this study had goals for their children that spanned multiple developmental domains such as self-sufficiency and positive peer interactions. Some practices mentioned such as providing children with the freedom to explore and cooldown have rarely been discussed in prior research. Caregivers also consciously reflected on different cultural approaches to parenting (i.e., Chinese and U.S.), considering strengths and challenges. This finding demonstrates how caregivers make meaning of the cultures they are embedded in and engage in multicultural supportive parenting. Overall, our findings illuminate the need to further investigate supportive parenting among Chinese immigrant caregivers and have research and practice implications.

Supportive Parenting Goals and Values

According to Darling and Steinberg (1993), parenting practices are shaped by parental

goals and values. We found variation in caregivers' parenting goals and those goals covered multiple developmental domains. In addition, these goals aligned with prior research on *chiao shun* or *jiao,* which both describe educating, teaching, and training (Chao, 1994; Chen et al., 2011), and *yang,* which focuses on keeping children safe and healthy (Chen et al., 2011). Goals related to *chiao shun* or *jiao* included wanting children to be independent, self-disciplined, regulated, have positive peer interactions, contribute to society, and not harm others. *Yang* related goals included children having good physical and mental health.

Not only was there variation in goals but also in the levels of functioning caregivers expected from their children. Some expectations aligned with the Chinese expression "Hoping sons become dragons and daughters become phoenixes" which focuses on great achievements. Some cared more about their children's happiness than achievements. The variation in levels of expectations challenges the stereotype that Chinese caregivers only want children to have the highest levels of academic achievement (Cheah et al., 2015; Juang et al., 2013). Moreover, the Chinese learning model is a moral-oriented model (Li, 2002). The conceptualization of learning is not just academic achievement, but also effort, attitude, continuous pursuit of self-perfection, and a desire to better self and others (Li, 2002). Therefore, goals such as self-disciplined and contributing to society could be part of a moral-oriented learning goal.

Like Darling and Steinberg's (1993) integrative parenting model, we found that caregivers' values and beliefs informed goals and practices. A culturally specific belief caregivers mentioned was reasoning (*jiang dao li*). They paired reasoning with goals and practices that aligned with the training concept (Chao, 1994); caregivers stressed that children should know why a behavior was desirable or undesirable. Some provided reasoning because their own parents rarely explained why they should do something. Caregivers also displayed

emotional awareness through practices such as regulating emotion using cool down and respecting children's pride. The parenting value of emotional awareness is present in multiple cultures (Lan, 2022). Lastly, when discussing practices, caregivers often considered their children's age and development. Caregivers did not associate developmental awareness with a specific cultural context, but the importance of this value was clear. Future research investigating multicultural influences on parenting may provide insight into the origin of this belief.

Parenting Practices

Similar to Darling and Steinberg's (1993) model, caregivers identified parenting practices they use to help achieve their goals. We categorized the practices into four categories – encouraging desirable behaviors, preventing/addressing unwanted behavior, helping children explore and learn, and addressing emotional needs. Some practices seemed specific to Chinese culture whereas for others, it was not clear which cultural context was linked to the practices.

Culturally Specific Parenting Practices

The practices associated with promoting desirable behavior such as modeling, setting rules and teaching children right from wrong may be aligned with training (Chao, 1994). Certain practices associated with preventing/addressing unwanted behavior such intervening when an unwanted behavior occurred, limiting potentially harmful or dangerous activities, cool down, and time-out also aligned with the training concept (Chao, 1994). These practices also included the *yang* aspect of parenting such as keeping children safe. Caregivers used these practices to intervene/prevent potential physical or emotional harm. One of the practices, cool down, has rarely been discussed previously. Almost half of the caregivers described cool down as not acknowledging the child so that the child will calm themselves and regulate their emotions. Caregivers expressed that this practice was more than just ignoring emotional outbursts;

emotions can be overwhelming, and children need space and time to control their emotions.

Caregivers' responsiveness to children's' emotional needs, as seen in practices of spending quality time and being present, has been associated with parental warmth in prior research (Cheah et al., 2015). Caregivers' practice of building and supporting self-esteem also has been documented before and is considered very important among Chinese immigrants (Cheah et al., 2013, 2015). Overall, these practices may demonstrate caregivers' responsiveness to their children's emotional needs. Based on prior research, these practices seem to reflect the caring aspect of *guan.* However, none of the caregivers explicitly mentioned *guan.* This finding, in combination with prior research, challenges the stereotype that Chinese parents are monolithically lacking in warmth and responsiveness (Chao, 1994; Cheah et al., 2015). Furthermore, it raises questions about how emotional responsiveness is being conceptualized in Chinese immigrant parenting research.

Intersectionality and Parenting

Chinese immigrant caregivers have multiple identities (e.g., caregivers, immigrants, Chinese, SES) and the intersectionality of these identities shape their experiences (Crenshaw, 1990). Caregivers seemed to consider the multiple cultural contexts in their parenting practices. When discussing unwanted behavior intervention, some caregivers reflected on the negative aspects of Western parenting. They believed that American caregivers gave their children too much freedom and interfered only when harm was done which they disapproved of. In another conversation that explicitly compared both cultures, caregivers reflected about trial and error and giving children the freedom to explore, which was rarely mentioned in prior research. Caregivers discussed the importance of children learning through their own experiences about themselves and the world while caregivers supervise. They specifically mentioned the freedom to explore as

a practice that makes children happy. Some decided to use this practice in response to their own upbringing or concerns about how parents in China may have limited children's exploration. Others felt that one of the strengths of parenting among U.S. families is the freedom to explore.

Caregivers' discussion of parenting practices demonstrated that they considered the multiple cultural contexts they were in and navigating (Mistry et al., 2016). They may reflect upon the strengths and challenges of parenting in different cultures. The meaning they make of different cultural parenting approaches may inform their selection and/or adaptation of parenting practice (Cheah et al., 2013). Meaning-making related to cultural contexts depends on the individual, resulting in variation on whether and which parenting practices Chinese immigrant caregivers may choose to keep from their culture, adapt from the U.S. or incorporate from both cultures (Mistry et al., 2016). More research is needed to explore the process in which Chinese immigrant caregivers reflect upon and incorporate multiple cultural influences in their parenting.

Limitations

The limitations of this study should be considered. First, all but one of the caregivers immigrated from or near Guangdong Province, China and all lived in the Greater Boston area. The cultural influences on their parenting may be specific to these geographical contexts. However, this specificity demonstrates the need for more examination of the interplay between culture and multiple contexts and its influence on parenting. Second, the original study design included following up with the participants to verify findings, but the lockdowns associated with COVID-19 prevented this. We were unable to verify our findings and ask follow up questions such as what does good mental health look like and how to achieve that. Lastly, although we included fathers' and grandparents' perspectives in our findings, the number was very small; we were unable to make subgroup comparisons.

Implications and Future Research

This study contributed to knowledge about supportive parenting among Chinese immigrant caregivers by focusing on families with low SES and identifying goals and practices with consideration of multiple cultural influences. Our findings have implications for parenting interventions and family service providers. Parenting interventions provided to Chinese immigrant caregivers should have a curriculum inclusive of Chinese immigrant supportive parenting values and practices, emphasizing the strengths within families. They should also initiate discussions about how caregivers navigate multiple cultural norms, make meaning of those norms, and incorporate that meaning making into their parenting. We also encourage family service providers to discuss with caregivers training goals related to physical and mental health and determine if any services can be provided to support their parenting goals. Providers should ensure that the institutions that may interact with Chinese immigrant caregivers such as schools can recognize culturally specific and supportive parenting strategies.

Future research is needed to determine if our findings are specific to a geographic area or can be generalized to a broader population. Researchers also should investigate more in depth how multiple cultural contexts can influence parenting among Chinese immigrant caregivers and result in variation. Furthermore, more studies should consider alternate ways to qualitatively capture parenting among this population instead of applying Western frameworks. More research is needed that investigates parenting beyond academic achievement. Lastly, parenting research on Chinese immigrant caregivers should be more inclusive of those with low SES to better understand how SES and racial/ethnic cultural contexts interact to influence parenting.

References

Baumrind, D. (1971). Current patterns of parental authority. *Developmental Psychology, 4*(1, Pt.2), 1–103. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0030372

Baumrind, D., Larzelere, R. E., & Owens, E. B. (2010). Effects of preschool parents' power assertive patterns and practices on adolescent development. *Parenting: Science & Practice, 10*(3), 157–201. https://doi.org/10.1080/15295190903290790

Bradley, R.H., & Corwyn, R.F. (2002). Socioeconomic status and child development. *Annual Review of Psychology, 53,* 371-399.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Chao, R. K. (1994). Beyond parental control and authoritarian parenting style: Understanding Chinese parenting through the cultural notion of training. *Child Development, 65*(4), 1111–1119. https://doi.org/10.2307/1131308

Chao, R. K. (2000). The parenting of immigrant Chinese and European American mothers: Relations between parenting styles, socialization goals, and parental practices. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 21*(2), 233–248. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0193-3973(99)00037-4

Cheah, C. S. L., Leung, C. Y. Y., & Zhou, N. (2013). Understanding "tiger parenting" through the perceptions of Chinese immigrant mothers: Can Chinese and U.S. parenting coexist? *Asian American Journal of Psychology, 4*(1), 30–40. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031217

Cheah, C. S. L., Li, J., Zhou, N., Yamamoto, Y., & Leung, C. Y. Y. (2015). Understanding Chinese immigrant and European American mothers' expressions of warmth. *Developmental Psychology, 51*(12), 1802–1811. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0039855

Chen, J. J. L., Chen, T., & Zheng, X. X. (2011). Parenting styles and practices among Chinese immigrant mothers with young children. *Early Child Development and Care, 182*(1), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2010.533371

City of Boston. (2019). HUD income and rent limits. https://www.boston.gov/sites/default/files/file/2020/12/HUD%20Income%20and%20Rent%20Limits_06.28.19.pdf

Commonwealth of Massachusetts. (2017). Section 8 income limits. https://www.mass.gov/doc/amify17-18/download

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2007*). Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (3rd edition). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Crenshaw, K. (1990). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review, 43*, 1241–1300.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Darling, N., & Steinberg, L. (1993). Parenting style as context: An integrative model. *Psychological Bulletin*, 487–496.

Evans, G.W., & Kim, P. (2013). Childhood poverty, chronic stress, self-regulation, and coping. *Child Development Perspectives, 7*, 43-48.

Garcia Coll, C., Crnic, K., Lamberty, G., Wasik, B. H., Jenkins, R., Garcia, H. V., & McAdoo, H. P. (1996). An integrative model for the study of developmental competencies in minority children. *Child Development, 67*(5), 1891-1914. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.1996.tb01834.x

Ho, S., Holloway, A., & Stenhouse, R. (2019). Analytic methods' considerations for the translation of sensitive qualitative data from Mandarin into English. *International Journal*

of Qualitative Methods, 18. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919868354

Hughes, D. L., & DuMont, K. (1993). *Using focus groups to facilitate culturally anchored research. American Journal of Community Psychology*; New York, 21(6), 775–806.

Juang, L. P., Qin, D. B., & Park, I. J. K. (2013). Deconstructing the myth of the "tiger mother": An introduction to the special issue on tiger parenting, Asian-heritage families, and child/adolescent well-being. *Asian American Journal of Psychology, 4*(1), 1–6. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032136

Lan, X. (2022). Perceived parental warmth, emotional awareness, and positive adjustment profiles in Chinese and Italian early adolescents: A person-centered approach. *Journal of Adolescence, 94*(2), 206–223. https://doi.org/10.1002/jad.12018

Li, J. (2002). A cultural model of learning Chinese "heart and mind for wanting to learn." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 33*(3), 248-269. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022102033003003

Lim, S., & Lim, B.K. (2003). Parenting style and child outcomes in Chinese and immigrant Chinese families-current findings and cross-cultural considerations in conceptualization and research. *Marriage & Family Review, 35*(3–4), 21–43. https://doi.org/10.1300/J002v35n03_03

Mandara, J., & Murray, C. B. (2002). Development of an empirical typology of African American family functioning. *Journal of Family Psychology, 16*(3), 318–337. https://doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.16.3.318

McNeely, C. A., & Barber, B. K. (2010). How do parents make adolescents feel loved? Perspectives on supportive parenting from adolescents in 12 cultures. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 25*(4), 601–631. https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558409357235

Migration Policy Institute. (2020, January 14). *Chinese immigrants in the United States.* https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/chinese-immigrants-united-states-2018

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd Edition). SAGE.

Mistry, J., Li, J., Yoshikawa, H., Tseng, V., Tirrell, J., Kiang, L., Mistry, R., & Wang, Y. (2016). An integrated conceptual framework for the development of Asian American children and youth. *Child Development, 87*(4), 1014–1032. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12577

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 16*(1), 1609406917733847. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847

Pettit, G. S., Bates, J. E., & Dodge, K. A. (1997). Supportive parenting, ecological context, and children's adjustment: A seven-year longitudinal study. *Child Development, 68*(5), 908–923. https://doi.org/10.2307/1132041

Pew Research Center. (2018). *Income inequality in the U.S. is rising most rapidly among Asians.* https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2018/07/12/income-inequality-in-the-u-s-is-rising-most-rapidly-among-asians/

Pew Research Center. (2021b). *Chinese | Data on Asian Americans*. https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/fact-sheet/asian-americans-chinese-in-the-u-s/

Rubin, C. L., Martinez, L. S., Chu, J., Hacker, K., Brugge, D., Pirie, A., Allukian, N., Rodday, A. M., & Leslie, L. K. (2012). Community-engaged pedagogy: A strengths-based approach to involving diverse stakeholders in research partnerships. *Progress in Community Health Partnerships: Research, Education, and Action, 6*(4), 481–490. https://doi.org/10.1353/cpr.2012.0057

Shih, K.Y., Chang, T., & Chen, S. (2019). Impacts of the model minority myth on Asian American individuals and families: Social justice and critical race feminist perspectives. *Journal of Family Theory & Review, 11*(3), 412-428. https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12342

Sorkhabi, N., & Mandara, J. (2013). Are the effects of Baumrind's parenting styles culturally specific or culturally equivalent? In R. E. Larzelere, A. S. Morris, & A. W. Harrist (Eds.), *Authoritative parenting: Synthesizing nurturance and discipline for optimal child development*. (pp. 113–135). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/13948-006

Spencer, M. B., Dupree, D., & Hartmann, T. (1997). A phenomenological variant of ecological systems theory (PVEST): A self-organization perspective in context. *Development and Psychopathology, 9*(04), 817–833.

The White House. (2021). The cost of living in America: Helping families move ahead [Council of Economic Advisers & Office Management and Budget Issue Brief]. White House. https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Costs-Brief.pdf

Xie, X., & Xia, Y. (2011). Grandparenting in Chinese immigrant families. *Marriage & Family Review, 47*(6), 383–396. https://doi.org/10.1080/01494929.2011.594218

Table 1

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Caregivers

Characteristics	n	Percentage	Mean (SD)
Caregiver Role			
Parent	20	83.3	
Grandparent	4	16.7	
Gender			
Female	22	91.7	
Male	2	8.3	
Age			
Parents	20		38.5 (6.6)
Grandparents	4		61 (4.3)
Marital Status			
Married or domestic partnership	17	70.8	
Divorced, or Single	7	29.2	
Highest Level of Education			
Less than high school degree	8	33.3	
High school degree	8	33.3	
Trade/technical/vocational	3	12.5	
College degrees	5	20.8	
Annual Household Income			
Less than $20K	11	45.8	
$20 – 50K	12	50.0	
$50 – 102K	1	4.2	
Immigrant Generation			
1st	23	95.8	
1st gen place of birth			
Guangdong province	20	87.0	
Provinces neighboring Guangdong	3	13.0	
1st gen time living in U.S.			
1 – 2 years	1	4.4	
3 – 6 years	7	30.4	
7 – 10 years	7	30.4	
11 – 14 years	3	13.0	
15 – 18 years	4	17.4	
19+ years	1	4.4	
2nd	1	4.2	
Languages Spoken at Home			
Cantonese	18	75.0	
Mandarin	3	13.0	
English	2	8.3	
Other (Taishanese, Fujianese)	9	38.0	
Number of children 2 – 11 years old in households			1.7 (0.7)
Ages of children 2-11 years old in households			5.2 (3.0)

N = 24

Table 2

Qualitative Codes Applied to Understand Supportive Parenting Goals, Practices, and Values/Beliefs

Code Name	Code Definition	Example
Parenting Goals		
Independent	Caregivers want children to support themselves [children as adults] materially. That is, caregivers want children to not be reliant on caregivers or others to function.	So I feel that if after he grows up, [he] can take care of himself, can have his own job, has an income, can support (養活) himself…in any case , can take good care of himself, I'm very satisfied, really
Discipline	Caregivers wish for their children to be self-disciplined (自己约束自己，one regulates oneself, according to Contemporary Chinese Dictionary).	1 sometimes to give them some, to give a little bit of...how do I say it, some self-regulation (自我管理). The older one is seven years old. Sometimes when the teacher assigns homework, [the child] does not necessarily need Mama to remind [him]. He needs to have self-awareness (自覺), self-awareness…
Academic success	Caregivers want academic success for their children. Academic success can mean academic achievement or doing well in school.	. . . the old belief that girls can't go to school, boys can, is bad. It is no longer like that now. If you can study well, you can do it. Some [caregivers] might say, "砸鍋賣鐵" (to put everything on the line) to [put their children] through school.
Emotional/Mental Health or Wellbeing	Caregivers wish for their children to have good mental health now or in the future.	It's most important to develop an overall healthy development of the personality (全面健康發展的人格).
Physical Health	Caregivers wish for their children to have physical health now or in the future.	When we get to the elevator, sometimes a thought came through my mind, don't go to that escalator, wait for the lift and don't cross [to go to the escalator] because you never know about accidents. So if you can avoid it, try your best to minimize the risk. It's something so casual in daily life, you would relate to that, to consider the child first.
General Health	Any mention of wanting children to be in good health with no specific mention of physical or emotional	For me, it is very simple, I'm just talking about me, right? I just want them to have responsibility (責任心), to have loving compassion (愛心), to grow up in good health (健康成長)
Happiness	Caregivers wish for their children to be happy now or in the future.	I try my best to fulfill them, to give them a very good childhood. Because my childhood was bitter (苦), my family was very poor. Every day [I would] go home and do homework and chores. Unlike others' happy childhood. So I want to give them a good childhood . . . I used to go home to wash clothes, carry water, water the vegetables and a

		lot of other things. It's more important for the children to be happy and then tell them what is good.
Social development	Wanting their children to have positive social interactions.	I hope that my two children after growing up can thrive (積極), to stay grounded (腳踏實地), to thrive in work and live life. I care about my children in building emotional bonds between people (人與人之間的感情), I feel that it's very important. And in terms of what you said, expect [the child] in the future to have a good job, to make money, earn money, I believe every caregiver will have [those expectations]. But I value more their future interactions between people, being able to interact well [with others] is very important.
Do No Harm/ Contribution to society	Want children as adults to contribute to society. Caregivers mentioning or describing how they do not want their children to do wrong or be harmful to society but to contribute to society.	To be academically successful and a contribution to society
Hoping a child becomes a dragon/phoenix	To long for one's child to succeed in life; to have great hopes for one's child future.	We hope they start young in studying hard, doing well academically, growing up, having good health . . . to 望子成龍 (hoping the child to become a dragon). To listen in obedience (乖乖聽話), grow up in good health (健康成長) . . .very simple (好簡單)
Parenting Practices		
Modeling behavior	Having children watch what adults are doing to learn how to do those tasks or activities themselves	I think we should intentionally educate them, to be a role model, such as to be concerned about others, to love and care for others, actually as long as [I] myself do well, then they will follow us.
Right or wrong	Showing the child right from wrong using actions without explaining.	To set rules, and it [sic] must not be violated. Because the child is still small, tell them clearly what is right and what is wrong. Because little kids do not know how to differentiate right from wrong, but if you do not tell them, when they have done something wrong, didn't tell them or even jokingly encourage them . . . We want to guide them to do the right things.
Setting rules	Caregivers mentioning the use of rules or creating rules for their children	At my children's current age, I regret not having developed a set of customized self-discipline methods [for her]. She is now very lazy, she cannot be on time. Right now, I have a set of rules, every day I ask the child to do chores, and every night, [I] give her reading time for about 20 mins. It's too late now. Because the child is 7 years old now, and she has just started. Just starting when she's 7 years old. Now she's slowly developing self-discipline. . . That's why it is very important. She has to know how to

		be responsible. To know that caregivers do not always give them everything. She needs to learn to give to herself, to her family, and whatever. To share something.
Limiting activities	Caregivers limit children's engagement in certain activities they feel could be problematic or have a negative impact if they engage in the activity too long.	Sometimes a little force [is necessary], because [the child] is too young. They don't know what is the priority . . . here they like to play iPad! When they see the iPad, their eyes light up. If you tell them to embrace the iPad, of course they will. If you tell them to embrace the books, it is impossible. So of course [you need] to force them for an hour to read books or something, to finish what they did in school. Every day [have them] read half an hour or one hour. If you don't force them, they won't read.
Cool down	Not acknowledging so the child can calm down and get a handle on their emotions. Also, caregivers to give themselves space and time to calm down while parenting.	"If they are throwing a tantrum, then it is nothing. I won't pay attention to them. If they are throwing a tantrum, I let them quiet down. They're quiet and I'm quiet […] I don't pay attention to them. They're sitting there. If no one answers them, naturally they're okay again. Then they will come over and say, "Mom, I'm ok. Let's go to school now."
Time-out	Caregiver mentioning the term "time-out". The caregiver may also describe standing as punishment thing (罰站) which is the Chinese version of time-out	For me to discipline them…it's difficult for my grandson and granddaughter to listen to me. Their mother, sometimes tells me to use other ways to distract them, to guide them so they won't throw tantrums. It's a method. Also, if they are still naughty, it's also to make the child stand up for a period of time as a punishment (罰站) . . .
Trial and error	Allowing the child to learn through experience with the possibility of them being right or wrong	What I would do is, what I would do is, if they want to touch the hot water, I would let them do it. Under the adult's supervision, I will let them try, so they know that it is hot (熱), to know what is hot (熱), what is burn (燙). It's better than telling them, without supervision, you can tell them ten thousand times and it's still useless. You let them try, let them try once, under your supervision and making sure it is safe.
Freedom	Allowing kids to explore their own interests.	Right now, I don't want to give them a frame (框框 Cantonese colloquial). I want them to grow up and develop [naturally], let them explore what they like, or see what their strengths are in the future…because they are still little now. Right now if I put them in a frame, it would not be fair for them if they don't like it
Accompanying child	Engaging in an activity with a child or being present with the child.	So accompaniment…there are many types. One type is high quality (高質量) [accompaniment] and [one type is] low quality (低質量) accompaniment. Sometimes I can't do 24 hours high quality, because sometimes I have to cook, I have to clean the house. I have to do a lot of my own things. During this time, I will let them play by themselves. That is low quality accompaniment. But during the day, I will take some time, perhaps in the morning when I am still in bed after waking up, or at night time right before going to sleep, that's when [I] can reach high-quality accompaniment because we can be face-to-face…very close… to talk and chat with them

Encouragement and praise	Verbal or nonverbal approval and encouragements. Encourage（鼓励）: to motivate future actions. E.g., encourage child to explore and do what they want Praise（表扬）: to approve past actions. E.g., praise child for what they have done	But for my daughter who is older, if I emphasize too much about right and wrong, it does not seem to be useful. She is 7 years old now, and her self-esteem is strong, on this aspect, I would not emphasize what she did wrong. It's better I just explain to her, what you've done the good, and the not-so-good. In front of her brother, she wants to save-face too. Because they are younger brother and elder sister, she wants to set a good model in front of her brother. So, I emphasize more on her self-esteem. If her mistakes are not too big, basically my attitude will not be too firm [...] To encourage more. Because generally here in America, I think [our] children do not have self-esteem, not confident enough.
Parenting Values and Beliefs		
Justification/jiang dao li (讲道理）	Caregivers explain to children the logic behind right and wrong or behind social norms; also explaining the logic	[Regarding the "cool down" approach] Turn around I will tell him why he is wrong, why I treated him in that way and tell him where he was wrong and help him correct it. Let him cry, he says, "mom is bad, [she] always tells me to [go to] time out"… (indistinguishable laughter) I'll give him a time-out and tell him, "mom is going to tell you the reasoning (道理) and see if what you've done is right or not." Or I'll switch position with him, and tell him, how would you feel if I did this to you? He would then understand, after I explain reasoning to them. If you don't explain to them reasoning, they will turn around and do the same thing, right?
Developmental awareness	Caregivers being aware of the developmental stages of the children and parenting their children based on that	I feel that to teach a child, need[s] to [be done] according to [the child's different [developmental] stages, like the little kids…give them a set of rules… [like] what they can do and what they cannot do. I'm the same way myself. I really buy that style. Sometimes I cook something and it's still hot, my son wants to eat it no matter what, I told him, you can eat it. He says, too hot, too hot. Let him try it, and next time, he will listen to you.
Addressing emotional needs	Caregivers use the term but may not necessarily define the term. Caregivers address the emotional needs of their children. They may also describe actions such as soothing during an emotional reaction and taking into consideration emotions, stressing the importance of not ignoring children's emotions.	If the child is crying and vomiting, then pick him up and pat him for a little bit, then put him down, and say, "what you are doing is not right." If everyone is like this, how can that be? He has his ability to make [a] judgement. That's why, as the doctors say, our little kids as newborns are like a white piece of paper, how you teach him . . .

Table 3

Themes Related to Parenting Goals, Practices, and Values and Beliefs

Theme	n
Parenting Goals (Hope and Expectations for Children)	
To support themselves	13
Be self-disciplined and able to regulate themselves	6
Academic success	3
Good mental health	5
Good health (not specified physical or emotional)	5
Happiness	6
Positive social interactions	8
Contributing members to society and not harm others	6
Sons become dragons and daughters become phoenixes"	3
Parenting Practices	
Encouraging desirable behavior	
Modeling desirable behaviors	9
Setting rules and teaching children right from wrong	9
Preventing/Addressing Unwanted Behavior	
Limiting potentially harmful or dangerous activities	9
Lengchuli or "cool down"	10
Time-out	9
Helping Children Explore and Learn	
Allowing children to explore and learn from their own experience	7
Giving children the freedom to explore	8
Addressing Emotional Needs	
Being there for, playing with, and spending quality time with children	6
Encourage children and helping them build confidence	7
Parenting Values and Beliefs	
Jiang dao li or reasoning	10
Practices should depend on children's developmental stages	15
Awareness of children's emotional needs	7

N = 24