 Adopted Child’s Race and Sex Predict Parent’s Engagement in Cultural Socialization  

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### Background
- Cultural socialization, the transmission of the child’s birth culture (e.g. traditional foods, cultural festivals, support groups, etc.)
- Linked to positive adoptive child outcomes (Feldman & Masalha, 2010; Yoon, 2001; Mohanty, Keeoske, & Sales, 2006)
- Engagement in cultural socialization may vary based on sex (Lee et al., 2006), motivated by child’s appearances (Scroggs & Heitfield, 2001)
- Little research in domestic transracial adoptions; increasingly common in the United States (AFCARS, 2006)

### Study Objectives
- To examine the effect of child’s race/ethnicity and sex on parent’s cultural socialization practices in domestic transracial adoptions

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I was unprepared for “how much racism by family members and the community would affect us.”  
– Adoptive parent
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### Participants
- Early Growth and Development Study (EGDS) (Leve et al., 2007)
- N=561 sets of birth parents, adoptive parents and child in two cohorts Cohort I (N = 361, 6.5 years old) and Cohort II (N = 200, 36 months)
- A sub sample (N=112), adoptions in which the race/ethnicity of the child was different than both adoptive parents

### Method
- **Measures**
  - Cultural Activities with Child(ren) (Paulsen & Merighi, 2009)

### Results

#### Cultural Socialization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Mean Cultural Socialization Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White, Hispanic</td>
<td><strong>70</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, Hispanic</td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* t (74) = 3.34; p < .01

#### Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Mean Cultural Socialization Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* t (78)= 2.46, p < .05

### Implications
- Adopted child’s race and sex may unknowingly evoke unique cultural socialization
- May have implications for racial and ethnic identity development
- Interventions may need to target cultural socialization practices for parents of Latino/Hispanic and male children
- Adoptive parents whose child’s ethnicity is less salient may have the flexibility to downplay cultural issues in order to facilitate assimilation

### Interpretation
- Adoptive parents engage in many cultural socialization activities at least once a year
- Race related differences
  - May be motivated by child’s appearance
- Sex related differences

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“Love is not enough. We need to find and cultivate friendships with black families.”  
– Adoptive parent
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