Ethnic-Racial Socialization in International Transracial Adoptive Families: The Many Facets and Complexities

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Workshop Outline

- Parenting challenges in ITRA adoptions
- Ethnic-Racial Socialization Concepts
- Discussion
Critical Parenting Goal

• Socialize children to be successful adults in society
  – Relationships with others, engaging the world, self-discipline, work ethic, as a cultural being…

• Typically, parents’ goals are linked to:
  – Their cultural group membership
  – Their own socialization experiences
International Transracial Adoptions

• Parents’ goals linked not only
  – Own socialization experiences
  – Own cultural background

• But also
  – Adoptee’s cultural background
  – Adoptee’s preplacement experiences
Challenges in International Transracial Adoptions

• Domestic transracial adoption
  - Child is of a different race
  - Child is of different domestic cultural group

• International adoption
  - Child speaks different language
  - Child is of different culture
  - Child is immigrant (parents are not)
  - Child may have health/developmental complications

• International transracial adoption
  - Above differences
  - Child is of different race
Complexities of International Transracial Adoptions

Childrearing (normative biological families) plus Normative adoption issues plus Cross-cultural adoption issues

Adoptive parents must consider these additional challenges
Ethnic-Racial Socialization (E-RS)

• Literature bases
  – Non-adoptive families: E-RS
  – Domestic transracial adoptive families E-RS
  – International transracial adoptive families E-RS
  – Adoptive families and communication
E-RS Facets

- Type of E-RS
- Contextual issues
- Modality of E-RS
- Parent’s Role
- Developmental Considerations
- Child and adolescent engagement
Cultural Socialization

Promotion of Mistrust

Preparation for Bias

Egalitarianism and Silence About Race

Ethnic-Racial Socialization (E-RS)

Hughes et. al., 2006
Types of E-RS
Hughes et. al., 2006

• Cultural Socialization
  – Similar concepts: Enculturation (Lee. 2003; Tessler et al., 1999); Cultural pride reinforcement (Stevenson, 1994); Ethnic Socialization (Yoon, 2004)

• Preparation for Bias
  – Similar concepts: Racial inculcation or racialization (Lee, 2003; Lee et al., 2006); Racism awareness training (Stevenson, 1994);

• Promotion of Mistrust
  – Similar concepts: mistrust Whites (Thomas & Speight, 1999)

• Egalitarian and Silence about Race
  – Similar concepts: Cultural assimilation (Lee, 2003; Tessler et al., 1999); Mainstream socialization (Boykin & Toms, 1985; Stevenson et al., 2002);
Ecological Systems of Adoption*

Applied to E-RS

Prevailing national issues

Extended family

Parent-teacher communication

Family

School

Peers

Connection with birth culture (and, maybe parents)

Adoption Supports for parents

Prevailing international issues

Chronosystem -> -> … Historical changes in challenges, supports, developmental considerations

*Palacios, 2009
E-RS Modality and other facets

Modality
- Language lessons
- Play group
- Culture Camp/School
- Meals, books, celebrations
- Parent-child discussions
- Mentor
- Travel to homeland

Level of involvement
- Child only
- Family
- Community

Structure
- Structured/planned
- Unstructured/informal

Setting
- Home
- Community
Parent’s Role

• Approach to difference
  • racial difference; cultural difference; adoption status as difference
  • Accept, reject, both accept/reject
    (e.g., Bebiroglu & Pinderhughes, 2010; Brodzinsky, 1990; Fong & Wang, 2001; Friedlander et al., 2000; Kirk, 1964; Johnston, Swim, Saltsman, Deater-Deckard, & Petrill, 2007; Lee, 2003; Lee et al., 2006; Tan & Nakkula, 2004; Tessler, Gamache, & Liu, 1999)

– Beliefs/values/attitudes  (e.g., Bebiroglu & Pinderhughes, 2010; Fong & Wang, 2001; Friedlander et al., 2000; Johnston, Swim, Saltsman, Deater-Deckard, & Petrill, 2007; Lee, 2003; Lee et al., 2006; Tan & Nakkula, 2004; Tessler, Gamache, & Liu, 1999)

  • Salience of race
  • Importance of cultural socialization
  • Importance of mainstream socialization
  • Connection to child’s birth culture
Parent’s Role

- Comfort level with differences and with dealing with them (Li et al., 2008; Wrobel et al., 2003)

- Confidence in how addressing E-RS (e.g., Li et al., 2008; Tessler, Gamache & Liu, 1999)

- Parental approach to activities/discussion
  - Proactive or reactive
    - Initiate, Propose or Wait/Child Choice (e.g., Bebiroglu & Pinderhughes, 2010; Tessler, Gamache & Liu, 1999)

- Parental Approach to child during discussion
  - Role: Teacher/facilitator, comforter, communication broker (Pinderhughes, Golden, Waddell, 2009; Rosenblum, Freeark, Mackenzie, 2009; Wrobel et al., 2003)
  - Sensitivity to child
    - Intrusiveness, detachment (Rosenblum, Freeark, Mackenzie, 2009)
Developmental Considerations

- At what ages do parents engage in each of the E-RS types*
- Content to be shared*
  *CS (e.g., Hughes et al., 2006; Johnston et al., 2007; Lee et al., 2006)
  *Age differences in Prep for Bias (e.g., Hughes et al., 2006; Johnston et al., 2007)
- When parents initiate, propose, or allow child to initiate discussions or activities (Hughes et al., 2006; Wrobel et al., 2003)
Child and Adolescent Engagement

• Activities
  – Participation
    • Frequency, continuity, breadth
    • Interest in activities
    • Understanding knowledge of E-RS*

• Discussions
  – Purpose: how children use discussions*
    • Cognitive, emotional purposes

*Bebiroglu & Pinderhughes, 2010; Pinderhughes, Golden & Waddell, 2009
Links to Child and Adolescent Outcomes

• Cultural Socialization and outcomes
  – Benefits for cultural competence (e.g., Andujo, 1988; Deberry et al., 1996; Friedlander et al., 2000; Lee & Quintana, 2005; Thomas & Tessler, 2007; Yoon, 2001)
  – Benefits for emotional/behavioral adjustment (e.g., Deberry et al., 2007; Johnston et al., 2007; Yoon, 2001)

• Prep for Bias and emotional/behavioral adjustment
  – Marginal negative effect on externalizing behaviors for older children (Johnston et al., 2007)

• Communication openness linked to adjustment (Brodzinsky et al., 2006)
E-RS Facets and Complexities

E-RS Types
- Cult. Socializ.
- Prep for Bias
- Promote Mistrust
- Egalitarianism

Parent role
- Approach to difference
- Beliefs/attitudes
- Comfort level
- Confidence level
- Proactive/reactive
- Role in discussions

Contextual Considerations
- Micro: Family/Peer/School
- Meso: PT, Birth Culture
- Exo: Ext family, Community, Adoption Supports
- Macro: Nat’l, Int’l issues
- Chrono: Hist. changed

Modality, etc.
- Modality
- Level of involvement
- Structure
- Location

Dev. Considerations
- When, what to share
- When let child lead

Child Engagement in Activities, Discussions
- Frequency
- Purpose
- Interest
- Understanding

E. Pinderhughes, UMass Rudd Conf. 4/2010
Discussion ideas