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### **Commentary Paper**

Emiliano is now a 9-month-old infant but when I had the first initial contact with his family he was 7 months old. Emiliano's birthday is on August 14, 2020. Emiliano is a dark skin tone infant, he has round eyes, a pointy nose, and small lips. Emiliano is chubby. Emiliano is wearing a red long sleeve shirt that has a penguin in the middle with a green hat "Cool Little Dude" is written on his shirt. Emiliano is also wearing dark gray sweats and black socks. We held this interview through a FaceTime call. Emiliano's family was present during the FaceTime call, his parents Emma and Gustavo, and his older brother Jason, who is 23 years old. Emiliano's family lives in East New York, Brooklyn in a small apartment. There is a small tv mounted on their wall. There are 3 family portraits hanging around their bright yellow living room and there is two individual baby pictures of Jason and Emiliano. Emiliano's family was introduced to me by a close friend of mine. I held the interview with Emiliano virtually because we are in the middle of a pandemic. COVID-19 has really shifted our normal lives and for safety precautions this is the best way we could have done this interview.

Olivia is an 11-month-old infant, her birthday is on April 2, 2019. I did not have any contact with Olivia. Olivia lives in Ventura County, California. Olivia was observed through a YouTube video, the interviewer is Traci Drenen. Olivia's mom Rochelle was present and engaging with Olivia during the interview. Olivia is an only child. Olivia is very fair skin tone,

she has round eyes, a button nose and small lips. Olivia is slightly chubby. Olivia is wearing a navy-colored long sleeve with pink leggings. Olivia has light brown curly hair and her hair is half tied up. There is a lot of toys from a shape sorting cube to a walker in the living room. There is a big black couch, 2 square pillows on the floor. There is a big bed dog against the wall. There are two big white windows that have a view to the outside, you can see the trees. It is a baby proof home, there is fences around the house and there are outlet shields.

Emiliano's family is very united and have great communication. Jason and Emma take care of Emiliano; therefore they spend more time with him than his dad, but Emiliano is more attached to his father, Gustavo. Emiliano is a quarantine baby and has not been exposed to any family members only through facetime and his relatives receive daily pictures. Being able to get together to watch the baby is something every relative looks forward to seeing, watching them grow up but it is not the same through facetime or looking at pictures. Due to COVID-19 babies are used to having their parents around, seeing familiar faces every single day. There is clearly attachment. As an infant teacher you should make sure the infant feels welcomed and start building a bond. Knowing that child separation is a big deal for both the infant and the parents it's important to form an attachment. Attachment is an emotional bond between the infant and the adults in their lives. Being emotionally present and engaged with a baby helps to form an attachment with a teacher (Creating Healthy Attachments to the Babies You Care Gillespie & Hunter, 2011)

Emiliano's parents want Emiliano to say his first words before he turns One year old and for him to start crawling more and eventually start walking. Emiliano eats dinner with his family, although Emiliano is still breastfed he does eat solid foods. and they spend time together watching television. As an infant teacher you may support the unity because we will be seeing

each other on a daily basis and become comfortable with each other. As for communication, I would speak to Emiliano's parents on a daily basis about his progress and how he socializes with other children that are closer to his age group. Creating a relationship is very important when working with an infant, you're just not working with the child but also with their parents. Using the family will help us build a strong bond and working together will ensure that Emiliano's needs are being met (Relationships, the Heart of Quality Care Baker & Manfredi/ Pettit, 2004). Having the support of family, friends, and teachers makes a huge difference in a child's life, they're able to build trust which can also help with future emotional and social development.

Emiliano's parents were born in Mexico and only speak Spanish, they understand English but very minimal. Jason, Emiliano's older brother, speaks English and Spanish. Emiliano and Jason are Mexican American. They come from a very religious Hispanic family. Usually when your child is born you take the infant to church and have the Priest present the infant to God. The parents and the baby's future godparents would take their newborn to Sunday Mass but due to COVID they have not gone to church. Usually the babies get baptized around 2 months to about 3 years old but once again it has to be postponed till further notice. As an infant teacher you get children who have various backgrounds and understand each infant's difference because their culture and religious views are unique and gives them their unique identities. (Diversity in Early Care and Education Gonzalez-Mena, 2008), Even infant teachers understand that just because you come from the same background as someone else, there is still differences in their beliefs. C (Rocking & rolling: Supporting infants, toddlers, and their families. Meeting families where they live Block, M. N. 2014).

Emma and Jason talk to Emiliano. They tell him what they're doing. Emiliano and Jason communicate in English, while Emma and Gustavo talk to Emiliano in Spanish only. Emiliano

easily recognizes his parents and his brother's voice but when a stranger is trying to communicate with him, Emiliano takes his time to adjust and figure out who is talking to him. Emma reads books to Emiliano and points out what is on the book. If there is an animal drawing, she will make the noise the animal does and repeat it two to three times for Emiliano to grasp the sound. (Reading with Babies Matters! Gillespie, L. 2019).

Emiliano's mom, Emma realized she was pregnant when her period was late for 2 consecutive months, she decided to go to the pharmacy and buy Clearblue rapid detection. It was the longest minute of her life; she was not expecting for the pregnancy test to turn positive because the age difference between her infant and first child is 23 years! Gustavo, Emiliano's dad was a little worried because they have not had a baby in their household for so many years. Everyone in her family was surprised and shocked but were blessed to have a new family member. Emiliano's mom felt happy and worried because she felt that she was too old, and it was not common for her age to give birth. She did not have many cravings, but she would eat ice when she was about 6 months pregnant and Hibiscus juice was her favorite drink it helped her feel relax. She would walk around the park every day, she felt that it helped her have an easier labor. Her birth experience was a little risky because of her age but she knew what she was doing since she already went through it 23 years ago. Her oldest son accompanied her because Emiliano's dad had tested positive for COVID-19.

Bringing back a baby to a household where they have not had a baby in so long took some adjusting. Since Emiliano's dad had COVID-19 he was isolated to protect the baby. They had someone disinfect the whole apartment for safety measures. The baby was sleeping in the bed with his mom. He would cry because they live near a tire shop and a train stop so the loud ruckus would wake up the baby. Emiliano spent most of time sleeping and would only cry to be

breastfeed and get his diaper changed. Emiliano's mom was very attentive, and his older brother was able to understand the difference in his cries. Now Emiliano wakes up around the time his dad is going to work, his mom breastfeeds him around 7:30AM and by 9AM is having a diaper change. He gets breastfed about 6 times every day. Emiliano has tasted some solid foods already, he has had mashed banana, cereal and avocado. He takes a lot of naps during the day. He still sleeps with his parents in their bed. As an infant teacher I would adjust the infant to our eating schedules and adjust his nap times. As teachers we are responsible to ensure family engagement, I will involve the family into our program, have them attend our meetings and decide what is best for their child. Halgunseth advocates for families to act as their child's advocates and have a say in any decision-making opportunities that may come up (Family engagement, diverse families, and an integrated review of the literature, Halgunseth, L. 2009).

**Cognitive:**

Emiliano is easy, slow-to-warm up. Emiliano recognizes his family member's voice. Emiliano smiles when his family members talk to him. Emiliano knocks over any object that is on his way while he is trying to grasp his toys. He loses interests quickly; he does have a short attention span because when he sees a different object he drops what he has in his hand and goes for his new interesting object. While Emiliano was using the walker, he was only going straight until his mom fixed the direction of it. When Emiliano tries to move around or get up he is mostly feet oriented.

**Language & Communication:**

Emiliano babbles, he uses "eh-eh" or "uhh-uhh" with gestures. When he found himself having trouble he would communicate by shaking his hand. When the adults were speaking to him, he would make eye contact,

**Emotional Development:**

Emiliano likes doing things by himself. He is a very curious baby; he was crawling around and would use his walker to walk around the living room. Emiliano was able to distinguish familiar faces, plays peek-a-boo. Emiliano demonstrates independence by doing things his way. He was only interested in himself.

**Physical Development:**

Emiliano is a very chubby baby, he has very long light brown hair. He is able to grasp objects. He is able to sit when propped. He is able to crawl freely. Emiliano is able to sit up by himself. Emiliano has awkward coordination. He attempts to take his first steps but loose balance, he walks with his feet wide apart, arms out and head forward. He is in constant motion. Emiliano loves to pull/push objects that are in his way and well remove them for him to continue roaming around. Emiliano likes holding objects with both hands.

Infants come from various backgrounds, we have to respect each other's beliefs, just because an infant shares the same cultural background as someone else does not mean that they are the same. When you're working with families it is important to respect each other and form a relationship. When you form a relationship with a family, it is a positive impact for the infant because the caregiver and the parents come together to discuss about the infant and come to an agreement for the child's best interests. The interview connected with what we have in the class because I was able to witness how the infants relied on their parents when they were infants but as they grow up they start to become independent and choose to do things their own way. As a future infant teacher, I will form a professional relationship with all the parents and have them know about their child's progress. Respect each infant's cultural background and make sure that they know they are unique and there is no one like them.

*Citations:*

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