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Commentary Paper

Baby Sherlyn Abigail Ubera Flores, who goes by Abi at home was born on April 29th 2020 and is currently 8 months old now. Baby Abi has short dark brown hair, white skin, and brown eyes. The baby lives with both her parents, mom and dad, and two of her older brothers, Alex and Marcos. Alex is the eldest, he is 10 years old, and Marcos is 8. The baby lives in the Sunset Park neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York in a cozy two-bedroom apartment. The home is fully furnished with many amenities for both the baby and the family as well as a pet hamster.

When we get into language, culture, and family background their first and native language is Spanish but they also make sure to incorporate English words here and there. Keeping a good balance between the two languages to raise Abi into a bilingual household. As for cultural, there is a lot to mention, being of Mexican decent Abi's mom wants to make sure that her and her kids stay connected to their cultural roots. Some of the way the family attempts to try to do this is through celebrating important holidays. These holidays include, "Dia de los Muertos", "Dia de la Virgencita de Guadalupe," as well as other religious days that are able to inform the family of the importance and meaning, of their culture. She also really values birthdays too, because she seems them as not only an opportunity to get the family together but to also celebrate and give thanks for another year of life. As a family-oriented people, some belief that the mother obeys by is things like when a mother is angry it is not good to breastfeed the baby. It is said that doing so the mother can pass that negative energy to the baby as well. The family also believes that sugar is used to stop the baby's hiccups. When it comes to family values, and what the parents want to make sure that the baby and the rest of the family to know is to love god, love and cherish others,

and mutual respect to not only your family but to all. As an infant teacher, a way you can help the family and Abi to stay connected to their native roots and culture would be through incorporating representation through materials and providing opportunities for the family to share about their culture to the infant teachers and class. Other forms of support that an infant teacher can implement to honor their belief and culture is through self-knowledge and knowledge of culturally being informed. Through putting this in practice they can begin to establish a shared understanding and appreciation of one another's beliefs and way of doing things (Im, Parlakian, & Sanchez 2) Apart from their beliefs, it should be made aware that the family as a whole are collectivists. Through the observation and what the mother has brought up to me is that long-term relationships are very important to them. Collectivistic individuals don't prioritize individual benefit or praise as much as they would with family's success as a whole, as well as being motivated by group goals and accomplishments. And what an infant teacher can do to support them as so, would be to implement group activities, group sessions, and other things they can do as a collective.

Baby Abi's parental history, birth, and early days was a very memorable one. After baby Sherlyn was born, mom tells me of her first week back home. She tells me how her two sons were excited and anxious about meeting her. But says that after leaving the hospital she would start to worry about health concerns. Mom was very cautious and overprotective of other people holding or touching Sherlyn because of the circumstance of COVID-19. But although the circumstances weren't the best for bringing in new life, it did allow the family to spend more time with the baby at home and really cherish Abi's early years and milestones with each other. The first month was very difficult for the mom because she couldn't breastfeed and had to rely

on the bottle. It was also very difficult because baby Sherlyn was a restless sleeper so she found preparing the bottle to be time consuming and baby Sherlyn would only cry more.

But after the rough first month, Abi's routine settled, her sleep schedule changed, and she began breastfeeding. Baby Abi soon got accustomed to sleeping all night, sometimes only slightly waking up 2 to 3 times at night. A much easier transition than before. In the day she wakes up at 6 or 7 in the morning and she's a bit active but around 10 she naps and around 12 or 1, she wakes up again and is active again, wants to play, and is also starting to want to crawl. Another nap time at 3 and wakes up at around 5. And that's where mom bathes her and entertains her with her various toys. Abi is constantly talking to her mom, of course in her own way, and enjoys spending time with her brothers as well. Around that time, the father and the baby interact up until her bedtime at 8 and she sleeps all the way through. The baby sleeps in her own crib at night, and in the day, she takes naps in her rocking cradle in the living room. For an infant teacher it would be best to provide Abi with a set-schedule like she has at home. Through the past observation, a set-schedule was implemented to correspond and fit in with the parents own schedule without compromising Abi's own needs. Infant teachers ensure this and follows this by conversing with the parents about what times would work best for them and Abi to follow in the classroom.

What I witnessed during the interview, observations, and from what mom tells me, baby Abi is very communicative and interactive with others. Although most of the time Abi is with mom, and her two brothers, she tells me Sherlyn is rarely exposed to others because of the circumstances of COVID so she doesn't go out much with the baby nor do they come visit her often. Mom tells me that Abi is definitely a mommy's girl. And when she has a task to do, like a run to the store, she takes her with her, rarely does she leave the baby alone, especially now that

she is not working. The mom and Abi spend almost all their time together. When baby Abi gets comfortable, she allows others to carry her and interacts with her. Which brings me to her temperament type, which is very easy-going/flexible. During the observation, Abi demonstrated a positive mood, quick adaptability, and low sensitivity. This was mostly shown through play. Her favorite activity is grabbing and putting things in her mouth, she also really enjoys when people make funny faces or play peek-a-boo with her and using her colorful walker. She tells me how she moves Abi's arms and legs to songs as another form of exercise apart from the walker. Mom brought up that when she does diaper changes, she narrates things to the baby as well. And although she doesn't read to baby. One of baby Abi's favorite toys are a stuffed Minnie mouse toy, and unicorn plushie with a light up belly that changes colors and plays a nice delicate melody which she often sleeps to.

What I've learned and have observed about Abi, is that she has gone through many developmental functions such as cognitive, language and communication, emotional development, social development, physical development, and sensory processes. Beginning with her cognitive domain, compared to what I've read was that babies 0-18 months learn by exploring, problem solving and using their senses to learn about the environment (Peterson 2012). And this is what Abi was doing through hands-on learning activities and the relationships she has with her family----- . As for language and communication, communication with babies is said to validate self-worth, provide a model for babies about how to communicate (Kovach & Da Vos Roseles 2011). She worked on this domain by acknowledging her Abi's name, talking directly to her about what is happening (narrating) and respecting her as an individual. Which not only serves to help convey their thoughts and feelings, but also serves as an essential part of this domain of learning. This leads to emotional development domain that focuses on self-regulation,

something that babies cannot learn/develop all by themselves but with the support of others. Having these attachments with the family and others provides babies with learning opportunities for monitoring their emotions and expression (Elliott & Gonzalez-Mena 2011). Within these relationships, that Abi has with her family, she begins to explore and understand her own movements and emotions. Her relationships to her family also play a part in her social development. As infants and toddlers develop the ability to understand the difference between themselves and others, feel empathy, and learn prosocial behaviors during their first three years (Wittmer 2012), which leads to her social competence with the help of supportive adults. This is demonstrated by Abi's interactions with me during the observation and offering me water from her pink sippy cup. Physical development is also achieved through supportive adults, because the lack of mobility infants have in their first few months, adults play a huge part in doing that for them. And there are many possibilities for movement activities they can do. Researches also show that early movement experiences are essential to the neural stimulation needed for healthy brain development (Pica 2010). And that's exactly what Abi and her family do, such as moving her legs in between changes to music as well as providing her with materials that allow her to keep moving such as her colorful walker she uses throughout the observation. To conclude this domain sensory processing is where babies earliest learning happens through their senses. Touch, hearing, sight, muscle sense, taste, and smell. Sensory stimulation accompanied by careful observations of a babies responses, will help them manage sensory input (Honig 2007). Abi's family supports this domain through her various textured toys that she had around her during the observation, as well as the constant communication her mom, and other family members, keep with Abi to ensure this.

To conclude, the most important thing that an infant teacher should remember about baby Abi as she transitions into the infant class is that she is a very sweet and gentle infant that through appropriate attention and care she will become comfortable and confident to explore and socialize with new faces. Some actions that can be taken to secure this is by securing attachments with the infant, offering choices to the infant, supporting rather than intervening, and recognizing the infant as a person through respect. As for the Ubera Family, an important thing that an infant teacher should keep in mind is how family oriented they are and through reciprocal open communication and acknowledgement one can build a strong foundation with them and their infant. This includes things like providing the family with daily check-ins, daily notes and announcements, and just offering interactive and flexible ways to stay in the loop about their infant. Some strategies that I think would definitely help both the Abi and her family settle into the infant classroom would be through parent reassurance, keeping the family informed and updated, home visits, as well as creating opportunities for families to interact with each other builds belonging and creates community. Through these practices it will not only facilitate Abi's transition to the center but also create the partnership one needs to succeed.