

**Presence, Imaging, and Code-switching:
How Black Mothers Advocate for their Young Daughters
Attending Predominantly White Schools¹**

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Abstract

A trend occurring across the nation is that of the out-migration of African American families from predominantly black cities to predominantly white suburbs. As a result, African American parents are encountering school systems where their child is the only African American or one of a few in the classroom and/or school. The mixed-methods study described in this paper administered surveys and convened focus groups to identify the strategies suburban Detroit, middle-class African American mothers use to advocate for their elementary-age daughters attending a predominantly white school. Findings demonstrate that mothers engage three strategies which reflect a dimension of the motherwork concept: Presence, Imaging, and Code-switching. These strategies are aimed at influencing the development of a positive racial-gender identity and are embedded within the racial socialization process. Motherwork fosters and supports daughters' academic success, increases resilience, and allows daughters to excel in environments that may work to undermine their achievement.

Keywords: African American mothers, elementary-age daughters, motherwork, racial-gender identity, suburban Detroit, white schools

Presence, Imaging, and Code-switching:

How Black Mothers Advocate for their Young Daughters Attending White Schools

Over the past decade African Americans have continued to increase their presence in suburban, residential communities (Frey, 2011). Many of these transplanted residents have moved their families from predominantly African American cities to predominantly white suburbs in hopes of giving their children better educational opportunities. For some parents such a move is a double-edged sword: children receive opportunities that they would not have if they remained in the inner-city, yet these same children are now placed into a school environment where they may be the only African American or only one of a few. Previous research demonstrates quite convincingly the troubling psychological, physiological, academic, and social effects—associated with racial tokenism, racial microaggressions, and racial battle fatigue—of inhabiting environments where one is *the only one* or only *one of a few* (Chavous, Harris, Rivas, Helaire, & Green, 2004; Jackson & Stewart, 2003; Kelly, 2007; Mc Donald & Wingfield, 2009; Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007; Tatum, 2004; Williams, Neighbors, & Jackson, 2003). In predominantly white schools, black students tread in territory “consciously or half-consciously [thought of as] *white places*” (Feagin, Vera, & Imani, 1996, p. 51). These physical spaces (classrooms, cafeterias, playgrounds, etc.) become racialized, establishing who belongs and where, and who controls the space. Parents of children facing such a reality must wonder how to promote a healthy, positive racial identity in their children while navigating an institution that perpetuates the racial order (Tatum, 2004). Understanding how parents promote a positive racial identity is important as such an identity is associated with “positive psychological outcomes, such as an increased tolerance of frustration, a stronger sense of purpose, enhanced school performance, and greater security in self” (Sanders Thompson, 2001, p. 156).

Parents influence the racial identity development of their children through the process of racial socialization. This practice of transmitting messages regarding the meaning and significance of race and racial stratification, managing intergroup and intragroup relations, and personal and group identity (Lesane-Brown, 2006) is common for African American parents, but even more so for mothers as they are the ones to spearhead the socialization process (Harris & Graham, 2007; Thomas & King, 2007). Racial socialization is a gendered process as mothers transmit different types of messages to their daughters than they do to their sons (Brown, Linver, Evans & DeGennaro, 2009; Dotterer, McHale & Crouter, 2009; Hill, 2001; Thomas & King, 2007). Concentrating on African American women and their daughters requires exploring how being black and female—the black female experience—uniquely impacts racial socialization and racial identity development. For these reasons it is reasonable to investigate what mothers do to influence the racial identity development of their young daughters attending a predominantly white school. Studies of racial socialization and its attendant practices have tended to focus on urban, lower-income adult and adolescent African Americans (Suizzo, Robinson, & Pahlke, 2008). However, we know that a child's awareness of race and racial identity is present as early as three years of age (Clark & Clark, 1939; Comer & Poussaint, 1992; Tatum, 1997); yet, we rarely see such studies of African American parents and their prepubescent children. This paucity of racial socialization studies, with mothers of young children as the focus, produces gaps in our knowledge. To address this concern, I conducted a mixed-methods study—utilizing surveys and focus groups—of the strategies African American mothers use to promote a positive racial identity in their elementary-age daughters attending a predominantly white school. The metropolitan area which provided an important context for this research was Detroit, Michigan.

Detroit is a prime example of the current demographic shift taking place in various areas

across the United States. Since 2000 African American families have continued to leave the city of Detroit for its surrounding suburban communities (U.S. Census, 2000; American Community Survey, 2005; U.S. Census, 2010). Many African American parents have moved their families to surrounding upper-middle class, predominantly white communities such as Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills, Farmington Hills, the Grosse Pointes, Novi, and West Bloomfield in hopes of giving their children better educational opportunities. In so doing, their children attend predominantly white schools in a region with a legacy of a stark urban/suburban divide (i.e. black/white) stemming from America's racist social structure and taking root through Henry Ford's need for a larger automotive workforce, the use of restrictive covenants and redlining to calcify residential segregation, rebellion/riot/uprising, and forced bussing. For these families, Metro Detroit's history of contentious race relations complicates an already complex challenge.

I found that mothers employ a particular set of strategies to face the challenge of promoting a positive racial identity in their young African American daughters. This set of strategies represents one dimension of Patricia Hill Collins' *motherwork* phenomenon (Collins, 1994). Mothers in this study use three particular strategies: Presence, Imaging, and Code-switching (Bailey-Fakhoury, 2013). *Presence* consists of the keen awareness of one's physical appearance and the role it plays as mothers advocate for their daughters; maintaining visibility in the school and at school functions; and being deliberate in interactions with school personnel to gain leverage that will benefit daughters. *Imaging* consists of mothers working hard to teach and show their daughters how to embrace their phenotypic features through the use of role models, home décor, and activities outside the home. *Code-switching* helps daughters navigate various cultural milieux with dexterity. The existence of these strategies is corroborated by the survey

data. The strategies provide a more nuanced understanding of the nature and process of African American motherwork which appears to support the academic success of young black girls.

Methods

Sample

Mothers who (a) self-identify as black/African American; (b) live in a predominantly white, middle-class suburb in Macomb, Oakland, or Wayne County (the counties that constitute metropolitan Detroit) which experienced an increase in its African American population from 2000-2005; and (c) have at least one daughter aged 5-11 who attends a local public or private elementary school were eligible to participate in this project. Mothers' ages ranged from 27-54 ($M = 39.17$ years, $SD = 6.22$). The majority of participants was married, had earned at least a BA degree, and was employed in professional occupations (Table 1). Median household income was reported as \$75,000-\$100,000 and all three (Wayne, Oakland, & Macomb) counties were represented, with the majority residing in Oakland County. One hundred and six women completed the survey and 21 mothers participated in the focus group interviews.

Data Collection

Recruitment was conducted using multiple modes and sites. Flyers recruiting participants were distributed through friends and family members, and sent to suburban elementary Parent-Teacher Associations/Organizations (PTA/PTO). I also made personal appearances at several parent network association meetings to recruit mothers. Advertising in church bulletins and visiting Detroit churches also reached potential participants as religious institutions continue to play an important role in the lives of African Americans (Brown & Brown, 2003) and it appears that many Detroiters who move to the suburbs often retain their places of worship.

Table 1: Select Descriptive Characteristics of Mothers in the Study

Variable	Category	Valid Percentage
Racial/ethnic background	Black/African American	96.2
	Black/African	1.9
	Biracial	0.9
	Other: Black American	0.9
Marital Status	Never married	10.4
	Married	77.4
	Separated	1.9
	Divorced	10.4
Religious Affiliation	Christian	30.2
	Baptist	23.6
	Non-denominational	7.5
	Methodist	6.6
	Lutheran	4.7
	AME	4.7
	Pentecostal	3.8
Educational Attainment	High School	7.5
	Vocational/Technical School	4.7
	Community College/Associates Degree	17.9
	College/Bachelors Degree	27.4
	Advanced Degree (ex. MD, MA, JD)	42.5
Household Income	Under \$15,000	1.9
	\$15,001 - \$25,000	2.9
	\$25,001 - \$50,000	18.4
	\$50,001 - \$75,000	12.6
	\$75,001 - \$100,000	28.2
	\$100,001 - \$125,000	10.7
	\$125,001 - \$200,000	16.5
	\$200,001 or above	8.7
County	Macomb	13.2
	Oakland	71.7
	Wayne	14.2
Number of girls raised	One	59.4
	Two	32.1
	Three	6.6
	Four	1.9
	Five or more	0.0

Reported Daughter's Current GPA	2.50-2.74	2.0
	2.75-2.99	5.0
	3.00-3.24	4.0
	3.25-3.49	7.9
	3.50-3.74	23.8
	3.75-3.99	41.6
	4.00 or higher	15.8

Lastly, contact was made with civic and professional organizations such as the NAACP and historically black sororities and fraternities who potentially had members fitting the study criteria or outreach programs attracting such persons. Women completing the survey volunteered to forward recruitment flyers to their contacts and to pass along to me knowledge of other mothers fitting the study criteria.

Data was collected using a survey administered to 106 participants from October 2010 to June 2011. The survey instrument for this research was composed of questions ascertaining demographic information and three existing instruments: the 53-item *Parent-Cultural and Racial Experiences of Socialization* (Parent-CARES²) that measures racial socialization practices, the 30-item *Cross Racial Identity Scale* (CRIS³) that measures racial identity development, and the 43-item *Womanist Identity Attitudes Scale-Revised* (WIAS-R⁴) that measures female identity development. Surveys were administered via the internet, using face-to-face (on the spot) completion, and via the U.S. postal service. A big box retailer gift card of \$5 was given to those who completed the survey. The final page of the survey packet was a tear-off sheet for those interested in participating in the focus groups (described as roundtable discussions). For the on-line version, the last screen before the participant exited the site asked if they would like to participate in a roundtable discussion. Those indicating interest completed the final screen and their responses were housed in a separate file. Twenty-one mothers committed to participating in the focus group interviews. Six focus groups were convened (and one telephone interview)⁵

from June to August 2011 in a conference room on the campus of a large, local university. The facility was convenient and accessible for the mothers and offered privacy for audio recording. Each mother participating in the focus groups was compensated with a \$10 gas card. Focus group discussions lasted anywhere from 60 to 150 minutes. At the start of each focus group each mother was asked to choose her own pseudonym. These are the pseudonyms that are attached to the quotes within this work and how each mother is referenced throughout (Table 2).

Table 2: Mothers Participating in the Focus Groups⁶

Pseudonym	Focus Group	County of Residence
Lola C.	FG #1	Oakland
Taylor	FG #1	Oakland
Kim S.	FG #1	Oakland
Ruth	FG #2	Wayne
Monique	FG #2	Wayne
Rita	FG #2	Macomb
Sherry	FG#3	Macomb
Vicky	FG#3	Oakland
Mac	FG#4	Oakland
Natasha	FG#4	Oakland
Auntie	FG#4	Oakland
Toni	FG#4	Wayne
Kim D.	FG#5	Oakland
Valerie	FG#5	Oakland
Tiffany	FG#5	Oakland
Lola L.	FG#5	Oakland
Renee	FG#6	Oakland
Lola S.	FG#6	Wayne
Christina	FG#6	Wayne
Paris	FG#6	Oakland
Lashawn	Phone Interview	Oakland

Analysis

The focus group data analysis was variable-oriented, calling for examination of the “interrelations among variables” (Babbie, 2005, p. 388) and made use of Glaser’s (1978) constant comparative method. The sessions were audio taped and transcribed; NVivo 9 software aided the analysis. The transcriptions were coded and the coding was used to ascertain emerging

themes. Codes were initially identified based upon concepts that appeared immediately across several focus groups (e.g., hair). Line-by-line coding produced a myriad of codes. Many of these were then connected to the major constructs under study: racial socialization messages, racial identity, and gender identity. While coding, a race-gender identity theme eventually emerged, as did aspects of the work mothers engage in inside and outside the school setting. Themes were connected using diagramming, not simply identified (e.g., the centrality of the racial-gender identity construct to racial socialization messaging). Typologies were derived based on the diagrams that were created. Internal validity was ensured by triangulation of data. The quantitative data collected through the surveys were interrogated for the themes that emerged from the focus groups. In addition, the notes I took while attending several parent network association meetings to recruit potential members were also evaluated for thematic connections. Lastly, member checking and the use of rich, thick description also provided evidence of validity (Creswell, 2003).

The survey data was investigated to determine whether, or to what degree, the motherwork strategies were embedded within. Through the construction of cross tabulations, various items on the Parent-CARES, CRIS, and WIAS-R measures were examined to see if the motherwork strategies were reflected. The internal consistency estimates for scores on each of the CRIS subscales based on Cronbach's alpha and standardized coefficients from the confirmatory factor analysis range from .79-.90 (Worrell, Vandiver, & Cross, 2004). The Parent-CARES is a unified version of four older instruments, as such the internal consistency estimates and EFA and CFA results for this revised instrument are currently forthcoming (per personal communication with the developer). However, the four older instruments have previously demonstrated good reliability. The WIAS-R, when its psychometric properties were tested by

Moradi, Yoder, and Berendsen (2004), exhibited internal reliability estimates for each subscale ranging from .31 to .76.

Results

Motherwork Strategies Uncovered Through the Focus Groups

As previously mentioned, mothers are more likely to spearhead the racial socialization process (Harris & Graham, 2007; Thomas & King, 2007) as a part of their mothering duties. The “assumption of mothering [is that] mothers are the primary persons looking out for their children’s well-being... [given that the] U.S. society is still structurally and socially organized around the gendered division of caregiving” (Uttal, 2002, p. 19). This mothering ideology “prescribes a perpetual set of tasks and activities for mothers, or motherwork” (Dillaway, 2006, p. 43). Racial socialization is important work for African American mothers. It has purposeful meaning for the mothers, their children, the black community, and society at-large. Patricia Hill Collins (1997) posits that Afrocentric motherwork provides “emotional care for children and [provides] for their physical survival...[while also endowing] Black women with a base of self-actualization, status in the Black community, and a reason for social activism” (p. 266). In the black community motherwork extends beyond one’s blood family into the larger community making black mothers “community othermothers,” charged with aiding in the development of the black community (Collins, 1997, p. 269). Therefore, motherwork is the “reproductive labor” that women of color engage in to ensure the survival of family, community, and self (Collins, 1994). Mothers in this study use the motherwork strategies of Presence, Imaging, and Code-switching to promote a positive racial-gender identity in their elementary-age daughters attending a predominantly white school.

Presence.

As mothers advocate for their daughters they are cognizant of their physical demeanor when interacting with teachers, administrators, and fellow parents. Presence also entails attending school functions and strategically engaging teachers and administrators to benefit their daughters. The physical presentation of self allows mothers to more effectively use their visibility and the interactions they deliberately create with school personnel.

Physical presence. Mothers are keenly aware of their physical appearance and how it can hinder or bolster their use of presence as they advocate for their daughters. Time and again mothers across every focus group spoke to the importance of appearing kempt and appropriate while being visible and interacting in various school settings. Quite a few mothers spoke to feeling as though they bore a burden, the burden of representing all African American/black women when encountering the predominantly white school or community setting. Mothers shared that they felt the need to carry themselves in the best light as they may be *the* African American/black person by which white neighbors, parents, or teachers would judge all other African Americans/blacks. In this way mothers were very sensitive to how they appeared when dropping their children off at school (whether walking them to the bus stop, into the school building, or remaining in the car), when working the book sale, or when attending parent-teacher conferences, sporting events, or school plays. The preoccupation with being viewed as the spokesperson/representative for all African American/black people carried over into the everyday activities African American mothers engaged in while moving through the predominantly white spaces of their community. Physical presence also encompasses annunciation, tone of voice, and the awareness of gestures used. Lola C. stated:

My appearance, yes, my articulation of certain words, my demeanor, my—how I'm sitting in my chair, everything...my voice. In my experience, black women's voices have

a little bit more bass and are a little bit more heavier than Caucasian women and I keep that in mind.

As Lola C. interacts with her daughter's white female teachers, she is acutely aware of the mainstream belief that black women are boisterous, quick-to-confrontation Sapphires (West, 1995), while white women are stereotyped as opposites in every way. Therefore, she finds it sometimes necessary to modulate her behavior.

Mothers feel that it is important to represent themselves and their daughters well when in the public sphere. Not only is it important for these women, it also seems they believe that it is vitally important for their daughters' self-concept and self-image. These mothers work hard to shatter the stereotypes and caricatures of black women that prevail in American society, whether one resides in suburbia or in an urban center. Mothers are very aware of how instrumental their aesthetic presentation of themselves is at allowing them to fully exercise the two additional aspects of presence.

Visible presence. For mothers in this study, being visibly present in the elementary schools of their daughters and using presence to instigate deliberate interactions are paramount. These two aspects of presence allow mothers to flex social capital that will ultimately help their daughters. Bourdieu defines social capital as "an asset of the individual or group that participates in social networks, which can be used to obtain information and assistance of various kinds" (as cited in Bailey-Fakhoury and Dillaway, 2011, p. 174). Caughy and O'Campo suggest that "[p]ositive parent involvement in child-rearing is the social capital within the family that supports healthy child development" (2006, p. 143). Kim. S. demonstrates this when she commented:

But I do...try to come in and speak to the teacher and [I] did tell her that I'm your ally and I'm on your side, I'm here with you however I can help you, and what do you need, and what can we do to work together, and speak to each other and help the children to gain their goal 'cause I know how hard it is. I know how hard what you do is. I'm very well and aware. And I tried to become a kind of a parent-peer with the teacher in the classroom and kind of be assistive.

The relationship and network that Kim S. seeks to form with the teacher is one of equality where each understands the part she plays in the academic success of Kim S.'s daughter. Kim S. understands that establishing this "parent-peer" relationship will have tangible benefits for her daughter. Kim S.'s efforts to be visibly present in her daughter's classroom and school demonstrate what Lacy (2007) found in her ethnographic study of three black middle-class communities in suburban Washington, D.C. Visible presence was enacted by Lacy's parents as a way to counter against teachers'/counselors' low expectations and to ensure their child's academic achievement.

As mothers seek to rear their daughters with a positive racial-gender identity in a predominantly white school setting, they are exercising social capital which can provide access that leads to optimal outcomes for their daughters. While flexing social capital, mothers are simultaneously becoming adept at amassing and transmitting cultural capital or (as Stanton-Salazar writes) the "high-status linguistic and cultural competencies (e.g., values, preferences, tastes) that students inherit from their parents and other 'cultural brokers' such as siblings, peers, and 'institutional agents,'" (as cited in Strayhorn, 2010, p. 309). Mothers shared that it was important for their daughters' sense of self and for their own well-being to be visible at school plays, fundraisers, parent-teacher conferences, parent group activities, and to just occasionally

“show your face” on an ordinary school day. Doing so demonstrates that you are an involved parent committed to her child’s education—that you are an active and engaged mother. Rita explains it quite succinctly when she shared:

I can’t just turn over my daughter and let it be, trusting that she’ll be all right...I’m not like some of these other moms, I have to be in her teacher’s classroom, in the school letting them know that I’ve not some passive momma, letting my daughter know I’m doing what’s best for her.

Presence through deliberate interactions. Mothers are calculated in their interactions with school personnel. When encountering personnel, especially their daughters’ teachers, mothers view these encounters as opportunities to gain leverage to be used to benefit their daughters, in some fashion, either at present or sometime in the future. Interactions with teachers may be used to elicit information that not all parents are privy to, to assess what supplies or additional things the classroom teacher needs/desires, or to forge an open line of communication between the mother and the teacher. Taylor said that:

I definitely gain favor with all my teachers. I go in to win you with kindness.

Intentionally to be like...is there anything you need in the classroom? [My daughter] gains favor in her class based on what I do, my participation.

In these instances the mothers seek to do what they deem necessary to give their daughters an advantage in a setting where they may be disadvantaged because of their race and/or gender. Deliberate interactions with the teachers and other school personnel may erode barriers that were erected as a result of faulty perceptions and preconceived notions.

Imaging.

Another strategy mothers employ to promote a positive racial-gender identity and to advocate for their daughters attending a predominantly white school is that of imaging. Mothers are sensitive to the images they put before their daughters whether transmitted through household décor, personal grooming, extracurricular activities, or popular media.

Imaging through hair. One area which led to very impassioned conversations was that of hair and how mothers of these young girls deal with this issue. The subject of hair has a long, turbulent history in the African American community, especially for African American women (Collins, 2000). One's hair texture, length, hairstyle, and adornments can signify a great deal about the person (Johnson, 2013). Numerous African American women have *hair stories* to tell. As young African American girls attempt to find their place in their family, clique, school, or community—in a society that places overt value on long flowing, straight blonde locks—hair and the meaning it is imbued with can be a harbinger of things to come. Mothers are supremely cognizant of the American standard of beauty and realize that their daughter's phenotypic features are antithetical. For the majority of these mothers it is essential to provide various alternatives to the American standard of beauty, images which reinforce the unique, versatile beauty of African American women. As such, mothers pride themselves in the ways in which they style and adorn their daughters' hair, styles that many non-black girls are unable to achieve. Mothers work hard to teach and show their daughters how to embrace their natural self and to take pride in what is uniquely their own. Renee demonstrates this tactic when she stated:

So she [my daughter] was just like, well I just don't understand why my hair does this and M's [her white classmate] hair doesn't do this. And I said, well there's different grades and textures. And we have that book right there, the *I Love My Hair* [pointing to book on resource table]. And we have some other books that speak to that as well. And I

was like, everybody's hair is not the same...But I think sometimes it bothers her just because she wants to be like the other girls. And I'm like, well this is just something that's gonna--that makes you unique. As I tell you all the time, God makes everybody different. Mommy can't wear her hair down without some form of chemical or something and you're not ready for chemicals. So we just gonna do what little girls do. I said, look, you're only eight. Little girls wear ponytails.

Many mothers were forced to address the subject of imaging through hair when their daughters came home asking to wear their hair in styles worn by their white counterparts. Daughters were told that their hair was "unique," "special," "different" and could not be worn "down" or "long." Tiffany demonstrates how mothers help their daughters to recognize and appreciate their hair's versatility:

And the most recent thing was they had spirit week and it was 70s day. And so we went online to look at how black folks looked in the 70s. And she was like, can I do an afro? I was like--Uh-huh, you can. And I talked to her. I said, now let me be clear. Don't be surprised when you go to school and they [non-black classmates] gonna want to touch it...I was like, so there's a certain beauty to that that they don't even have that option no matter how much grease and gel they want to put in. And she was so proud and her teacher and everybody else. She came back. She said, Mommy you were right. They [daughter's classmates] were all like, Wow! They told me you should do that every day. That's really cool. It was cool, Mom. I was like, so there's things that you can do with your hair that they can't do. So you don't be questioning anymore.

Imaging through role models. Another aspect of imaging that mothers used was that of role models. Mothers felt that it was very important to provide their daughters with role models

that reinforce a positive self-image for their daughters. Mothers were keenly aware of the lack of role models in their daughters' classrooms, schools, and after-school activities/organizations. For a majority of the mothers in this study, their daughters could go the entire school day and not interact with one individual who "looked like them." This reality was very disconcerting for many of the women in this study.

Mothers made efforts to involve their daughters in activities and organizations with predominantly black memberships in hopes of providing images of positive role models for their daughters. Lacy (2007) wrote that the black middle-class parents of the predominantly white suburb she chronicled "find that developing a strong racial identity in a white environment requires intervention; learning 'who you are' needs to be reinforced through participation in black social organizations" (p. 172). To this end, families who left the city for the suburb intentionally kept their membership in their church home, enrolled their daughters in dance troupes, Brownie troops, ice skating groups, and various clubs that were located in Detroit or another predominantly black city, and visited racially-/culturally-specific institutions. Valerie demonstrates the importance of such efforts when she stated:

People are still trying to figure out what their identity is out here [in her Oakland County suburb]. And I just have to throw this out there too, that if you don't find an outlet, and I do mean outlet, if you don't find connections outside of your [residential] community for your children the odds are really high that they're gonna struggle with their self identity as they get older if they only rely on the people in your [residential] community to befriend them.

Mothers also work hard to be a role model for their daughter, demonstrating how to balance normative and alternative gender role expectations. It was quite clear that these mothers

are aware of prevailing narratives surrounding what is considered appropriate femininity. Females (as exemplified by white, non-Hispanic, class-privileged, gender norms in the U.S.) are to be quiet, reserved, dainty, and deferential. To be female is to exemplify the cult of true womanhood (Welter, 1966); it is normative, even if the majority of white American females realistically do not fit this mold. However, for young African American girls to excel in predominantly white spaces they cannot be a shrinking violet; they must be strong, independent, self-assured, and self-protective. Such alternative gender role expectations lead to accusations of being loud, emasculating, domineering, bitchy, mummies and Sapphires. The black community is another space in which daughters need to learn how to balance seemingly contradictory gender role expectations. Taylor referred to her own upbringing and the lessons she learned which she hopes to recalibrate for her daughters.

Taylor remarked:

My mom, she was so independent and I have it [independent streak] so bad that sometimes I have to kinda watch myself even as being a married woman, oh yeah, you got that [referring to her husband]. Ok just let me back off, you have that. Ok, showing my daughter the balance of having an opportunity to work, and perfect submission, where you are aligned with God, husband, and then you...so I think I make those changes in my daughter where I'm just like ok, you can do all this, but you don't have to.

The independent streak that Taylor mentioned is what is sometimes referred to as the black woman's burden (Haldeman, 2010; Hayes, 2012) or strong black woman syndrome (Collins, 2000; Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2009). To be a caretaker of the family and community, black women must be strong, assertive, and independent and do it all. In this instance Taylor identified that she developed her strength and independence—qualities which are usually labeled as

masculine—prior to marriage, however, she actively seeks to background those qualities while foregrounding submission to and alignment with her husband, traits which are generally identified as feminine. She hopes to show her daughter that she can have/do it all as a woman, on her own, but that she does not have to. Her daughter can develop these qualities and has the option of foregrounding or backgrounding them at will; she does not have to be beholden to one set of gender expectations or another. Taylor was not the only mother who seemed to be fully aware of the multidimensionality of the black-female identity; an identity requiring a black woman to simultaneously and effortlessly maintain normative and alternative gender roles.

Imaging through home décor and outside activities. The last aspect of imaging which emerged in the focus groups was that of reinforcing reflections of their daughters through home décor (and other consumables) and culturally-specific activities. Mothers purchased clothing, book bags, school supplies, books, posters and other items that reflected the phenotypic features of their girls. Paris shared:

And like you said, I buy books, African American books. And if a television or movie or a show comes on, like *The Wiz* was on TV. I don't know if you've seen *The Wiz*. I wanted her to watch it. I ended up buying the DVD. I wanted her to see *The Wiz*.

One mother shared that she went so far as to alter Halloween costumes of Euro-American characters so that it reflected a more Afrocentric aesthetic when it adorned her daughter. Many mothers reported that whenever they could purchase goods or bring items into the home that reinforced their daughter's image, they did it. It appears that mothers believed this to be a key means of encouraging their daughters' positive self-image and racial-gender identity. Vicky stated that something as seemingly innocuous as watching a tennis match can even reinforce reflections of her daughter:

I think sometimes a picture's worth a thousand words. If you see Venus and Serena playing tennis there's no question in your mind that brown skin can play tennis.

For these mothers, showing "brown skin" being successful, and other phenotypic characteristics that reflect their daughters' image, is vital to their development of a positive racial-gender identity in a setting where these characteristics may be constantly disparaged.

Code-switching.

In sociolinguistic parlance code-switching refers to "the practice of selecting or altering linguistic elements so as to contextualize talk in interaction" (Nilep, 2006, p.1). For purposes of this study code-switching refers to one's ability to move between cultural milieux at will and with fluidity. It involves knowing the appropriate cultural rules, prescripts, vernacular, and behavior unique to each setting and how and when to use them. Code-switching is an exercise involving hypotheticals, role play, and practice. Taylor shared:

I teach [my daughter] purposely how to flip the script...So you know how to act in one setting & you know how to act in another setting...She can flip it in her conversations. I watch her dialogue at school...Every now and then she'll be like 'What up doe to her daddy'...but at the private club she'll 'yes, I would like to have a Shirley Temple, please'.

Kim S. called it "doing the Carlton" (as in the African American character raised in Bel Air on the television show *Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, starring Will Smith, attending a prestigious, private, white all-boys prep school in one of the most affluent communities in California). Kim stated that her husband often puts on a cadence and mannerism that mimics the Carlton character. At other times, her husband interacts with their children using the prescripts and vernacular of the

Ninth Ward of New Orleans, LA, his place of birth. The ability to “flip the script” or “do the Carlton” is a skill that has been transmitted generationally.

Mothers use code-switching to help their daughters navigate the dominant, minority status, & Afrocentric cultural terrains. The literature tells us that parental racial socialization occurs across these three distinct milieux of our sociopolitical structure. Boykin and Toms (1985) named this phenomenon the *triple quandary*. African American mothers must navigate these three terrains when socializing their children. The dominant culture reflects mainstream messages and expectations; the minority status experience is the milieu in which African American mothers must prepare their children to face an oppressive society, one predicated on subjugation and dominance; and the Afrocentric/cultural experience is the setting in which African American mothers educate their children about racial pride, traditions, and customs unique to being African American.

Quantitative Support for Motherwork Strategies

The survey data was examined to determine whether or not corroborating evidence existed for the three strategies uncovered during the focus group interviews. Cross tabulations were constructed to meet this objective. The Parent-CARES message transmission and reception frequencies were analyzed as well as frequencies for the CRIS and WIAS-R.

Presence.

A review of the survey data revealed that the only aspect of presence that may be reflected in the quantitative data was that of physical presence. Two survey items were examined because they seem to best convey the concept of physical presence and one of its operational features when mothers interact with the teachers and administrators at their daughters' school. Reception frequencies for the Parent-CARES items and CRIS frequencies

were examined. Table 3 is a cross tabulation that represents the numbers of mothers who agree that they take note of the racial make-up of people in a room and who also received the message that one should make themselves less threatening around whites. The cross tabulation demonstrates that 34% of mothers who take note of the racial make-up of occupants in a room were also told that they should make themselves less threatening around whites. Mothers who are aware of the racial make-up of their surroundings and who also received messages that they should make themselves less threatening (e.g., by altering vocal tones, gestures, etc.) when in the presence of whites, are likely to endorse and use the physical aspect of the presence strategy.

Table 3: Noticing Racial Make-up^x Make Self Less Threatening to Whites Crosstab

			CRIS: When I walk into a room, I always take note of the racial make-up of the people around me.			
			Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Parent-CARES: How often were YOU told this while you were growing up? Sometimes you have to make yourself less threatening to make White people around you comfortable.	Never	Count	8	19	11	38
		Row N %	21.1%	50.0%	28.9%	100.0%
		Column N %	44.4%	73.1%	78.6%	65.5%
	A few times	Count	8	7	3	18
		Row N %	44.4%	38.9%	16.7%	100.0%
		Column N %	44.4%	26.9%	21.4%	31.0%
	Lots of times	Count	2	0	0	2
		Row N %	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		Column N %	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%
	Total	Count	18	26	14	58
		Row N %	31.0%	44.8%	24.1%	100.0%
		Column N %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

N = 58

Imaging.

Review of each instrument identified various items which could be examined for support of the imaging strategy. Questions related to the three (hair, role models, reflections of self reinforced) aspects of imaging were found in the Parent-CARES, CRIS, and WIAS-R.

Hair. To examine whether the survey data reflects the imaging through hair strategy, select transmission and reception frequencies from the Parent-CARES were assessed. Table 4

demonstrates that of the 27 mothers who received the message that “Some Black people are just born with good hair” only 7 (26%) transmit this same message. Such a statistic supports that mothers who are sensitive to the issue, attempt to not pass this message to their daughters. Mothers are cognizant of the American standard of beauty which their daughters do not fit and seek to counter this image by valuing the phenotypic characteristics of their daughters, yet many continue to subscribe to belief that there is such a thing as “good hair” in the African American community. Good hair historically has signified a hair texture that is fine, soft, long, and similar to the locks of white females (Rockquemore, 2002). Consequently, “bad hair” is that which is extremely curly, coarse, and short and calls to mind negative images and the devaluation of the natural state of many African American females’ hair.

Table 4: Reception ^X Transmission of the Message “Some Black People are Just Born w/ Good Hair” Crosstab

		Parent-CARES: How often were YOU told this while you were growing up? Some Black people are just born with good hair.			
		A few times	Never	Total	
Parent-CARES: How often do you tell your daughter: Some Black people are just born with good hair?	Never	Count	20	43	63
		Row N %	31.7%	68.3%	100.0%
		Column N %	74.1%	100.0%	90.0%
	A few times	Count	7	0	7
		Row N %	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		Column N %	25.9%	0.0%	100.0%
	Lots of times	Count	0	0	0
		Row N %	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
		Column N %	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Total	Count	27	43	70
Row N %		38.6%	61.4%	100.0%	
Column N %		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

N = 70

To examine this issue further it was instructive to determine how many mothers who believed that their daughters had received the wrong message about their racial identity—as it relates to hair—also received and/or transmitted the message that “Some Black people are just born with good hair.” Table 5 is a cross tabulation that provides some insight.

Table 5: Identifying Daughter’s Behavior as Racially Incongruent^X Transmission of the Message “Some Black People are Just Born w/ Good Hair” Crosstab

Hair Issues			Parent-CARES: Has your daughter done or said anything that made you think she got the wrong message about her racial identity?
			Yes
Parent-CARES: How often do you tell your daughter: Some Black people are just born with good hair?	Never	Count	10
		Column N %	55.6%
	A few times	Count	6
		Column N %	33.3%
	Lots of Times	Count	2
		Column N %	11.1%
	Total	Count	18
Column N %		100.0%	

N = 18

Forty-four percent of mothers who responded affirmatively to the question whether or not their daughter has done/said something that made the mother believe her daughter had gotten the wrong message about her racial identity, as it relates to hair, also transmitted the message that some black people are just born with good hair. For the small number of mothers who believe their daughter has said/done something that demonstrates she got the wrong message about her racial identity relative to her hair, less than half attest to transmitting a message that could lead to daughters’ exhibiting language or behavior degrading her own phenotypic feature. Are these survey results a manifestation of the complexity of the nature of black women’s hair in America? Do such perplexities arise because hair is such a contested area historically, socially, and politically? Or is it an attempt by mothers to assuage daughters’ self-devaluation by suggesting that “the hair you get is just the hair you are born with,” reflecting the trope “this is how God made you...He made us all different” therefore you should just embrace the diversity—the skin you are in—and not let it harangue you?

Role models. This aspect of imaging is multifaceted. Imaging through role models takes into consideration three things: 1) lack of role models for daughters in their schools; 2) seeking

out appropriate role models through race- and culture-specific organizations/activities, and consumables and; 3) mother as role model. Transmission frequencies for the Parent-CARES items and CRIS frequencies were examined. The first item examined was that of how many mothers who look for race- or ethnic-themed articles/stories also believe that it is important to attend race- or culture-specific activities. Eighty-nine percent of mothers who look for race- or ethnic-specific articles and stories also tell their daughters that it is important to go to black festivals and African American History museums (Table 6). This imaging strategy was mentioned by several of the mothers in the focus groups.

Table 6: Looking for Race/Ethnic Issues in Print Media ^X Transmission of the Message It's Important to Attend Race-specific Events Crosstab

			CRIS: When I read the newspaper or a magazine, I always look for articles and stories that deal with race and ethnic issues.			
			Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Parent-CARES: How often do you tell your daughter: It is important to go to Black festivals and African American History Museums?	Never	Count	3	0	0	3
		Row N %	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		Column N %	17.6%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%
		Count	11	3	2	16
		Row N %	68.8%	18.8%	12.5%	100.0%
		Column N %	64.7%	75.0%	33.3%	59.3%
	Lots of times	Count	3	1	4	8
		Row N %	37.5%	12.5%	50.0%	100.0%
		Column N %	17.6%	25.0%	66.7%	59.3%
	Total	Count	17	4	6	27
		Row N %	63.0%	14.8%	22.2%	100.0%
		Column N %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

N = 27

Mothers who make a conscious effort to find articles and stories they deem relevant to them, from a racial/ethnic standpoint, also demonstrate to their daughters the importance of engaging in race- and/or culture-specific activities. These are activities which can provide a potential pool of role models for their daughters. Table 7 also provides some support for the imaging through role models strategy. Sixty-eight percent of mothers who think about racial and cultural issues many times during the week also tell their daughters that “Black people have to work together in order to get ahead.” A message of working together might indicate that

mothers believe that seeking out African American role models for their daughters is a way to help young black girls get ahead. Mothers did state in the focus groups that they actively sought out potential role models for daughters at church and through various other places with large black memberships.

Table 7: Frequently Think about Race/Cultural Issues ^X Transmission of the Message “Black People have to Work Together in Order to Get Ahead” Crosstab

			CRIS: During a typical week in my life, I think about racial and cultural issues many, many times.			
			Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Parent-CARES: How often do you tell your daughter: Black people have to work together in order to get ahead	Never	Count	8	8	0	16
		Row N %	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		Column N %	53.3%	27.6%	0.0%	32.0%
	A few times	Count	5	13	1	19
		Row N %	26.3%	68.4%	5.3%	100.0%
		Column N %	33.3%	44.8%	16.7%	38.0%
	Lots of times	Count	2	8	5	15
		Row N %	13.3%	53.3%	33.3%	100.0%
		Column N %	13.3%	27.6%	83.3%	30.0%
	Total	Count	15	29	6	50
		Row N %	30.0%	58.0%	12.0%	100.0%
		Column N %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

N= 50

Mothers also use themselves as role models for their daughters. The WIAS-R and Parent-CARES were examined to determine if there were any questions which might lend support to this imaging strategy. Table 8 demonstrates that 42% of mothers who tell their daughters that “Black women keep the family strong” are uncertain as to whether or not their most important goal in life is to fight the oppression of women and 43% of respondents disagree with the statement outright. From the focus groups it was apparent that the majority of mothers possessed and transmitted an intersecting black-female identity, thus it may be difficult to parse out one over the other. Perhaps they see fighting racial and gender oppression as equally important and thus are hesitant to identify gender oppression as their primary fight as this requires separating out race from gender and vice versa (which would be counter to the holistic way mothers report experiencing their identity). As Settles (2006) writes, “[p]olitically, there has sometimes been a tension between the goals of black people and women as groups, which

leads to the possibility that individual black women will feel torn between the potentially conflicting ideas, beliefs, and aims of the social and political groups that claim to represent women and those that claim to represent blacks... As a result, this combined black-woman identity may take precedence in their self-concept over the individual identities of black person and woman.” (p. 590).

Table 8: Transmission of the Message “Black Women Keep the Family Strong” X Fighting Oppression of Women Being Most Important Goal Crosstab

			Parent-CARES: How often do you tell your daughter: Black women keep the family strong?		
			A few times	Lots of times	Total
WIAS-R: My most important goal in life is to fight the oppression of women.	Strongly Disagree	Count	3	2	5
		Row N %	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
		Column N %	8.6%	11.1%	9.4%
	Disagree	Count	11	7	18
		Row N %	61.1%	38.9%	100.0%
		Column N %	31.4%	38.9%	34.0%
	Uncertain	Count	17	5	22
		Row N %	77.3%	22.7%	100.0%
		Column N %	48.6%	27.8%	41.5%
	Agree	Count	4	4	8
		Row N %	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
		Column N %	11.4%	22.2%	15.1%
	Strongly Agree	Count	0	0	0
		Row N %	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
		Column N %	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	Count	35	18	53	
	Row N %	66.0%	34.0%	100.0%	
	Column N %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

N = 53

Imaging, reinforced through home décor & outside activities. This last aspect of imaging looks at reinforcing reflections of daughters through home décor (consumables) and culture-specific activities. Transmission frequencies from the Parent-CARES items and WIAS-R frequencies were examined. Table 9 demonstrates that 64% of mothers who purposely decorate rooms with racial-cultural themes also transmit the message that children need black art and music in their home. The survey data supports mothers’ focus group conversations around purchasing items and decorating the home to reflect the daughter’s racial-gender identity.

Table 9: Home Décor w/ Racial-Cultural Themes ^X Transmission of the Message Black Children Need Black Art & Music in the Home Crosstab

			CRIS: When I have a chance to decorate a room, I tend to select pictures, posters, or works of art that express strong racial-cultural themes.			
			Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Parent-CARES: How often do you tell your daughter: Children need signs of Black art and music in their home to feel good about themselves?	Never	Count	11	6	2	19
		Row N %	57.9%	31.6%	10.5%	100.0%
		Column N %	57.9%	26.1%	20.0%	36.5%
	A few times	Count	6	9	2	17
		Row N %	35.3%	52.9%	11.8%	100.0%
		Column N %	31.6%	39.1%	20.0%	32.7%
	Lots of times	Count	2	8	6	16
		Row N %	12.5%	50.0%	37.5%	100.0%
		Column N %	10.5%	34.8%	60.0%	30.8%
	Total	Count	19	23	10	52
		Row N %	36.5%	44.2%	19.2%	100.0%
		Column N %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

N= 52

Code-switching.

Navigating the dominant, minority-status, and Afrocentric domains. To examine if the quantitative data reflects the Code-switching theme, the navigating the dominant, minority-status, and Afrocentric domains aspect was examined. Transmission frequencies from the Parent-CARES items and CRIS frequencies were examined. Table 10 is a cross tabulation that demonstrates 37% of mothers who believe that it is important to have a black identity and multicultural perspective also transmit the message that daughters need to learn how to live in a black and white world. Several of the mothers in the focus groups spoke to the Code-switching strategy and the survey data does appear to moderately support this notion.

Table 10: Multiculturalist Inclusive Sentiment^X Transmission of the Message to be Biculturally Fluent

			CRIS: I believe it is important to have both a Black identity and a multicultural perspective, which is inclusive of everyone.			
			Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Parent-CARES: How often do you tell your daughter: You need to learn how to live in a White world and a Black world?	Never	Count	13	23	9	45
		Row N %	28.9%	51.1%	20.0%	100.0%
		Column N %	50.0%	88.5%	47.4%	63.4%
	A few times	Count	5	1	5	11
		Row N %	45.5%	9.1%	45.5%	100.0%
		Column N %	19.2%	3.8%	26.3%	15.5%
	Lots of times	Count	8	2	5	15
		Row N %	53.3%	13.3%	33.3%	100.0%
		Column N %	30.8%	7.7%	26.3%	21.1%
	Total	Count	26	26	19	71
		Row N %	36.6%	36.6%	26.8%	100.0%
		Column N %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

N = 71

Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to identify the strategies that suburban Detroit, middle-class African American mothers use to promote a positive racial identity in their elementary-age daughters attending predominantly white schools. Three motherwork strategies emerged: Presence, Imaging, and Code-switching. These strategies are important techniques that appear to foster the academic achievement of these young girls. Over 80% of the mothers participating in this study report their daughter’s GPA as a 3.5 or higher (Table 1). These high-achieving girls have mothers who actively counter the negative and pejorative messages and images a young girl attending a predominantly white school might receive. Mothers do this by working hard to instill a positive racial-gender identity. Mother’s racial-gender identity, the gendered racial socialization messages that she transmits, and her support provides a strong foundation which appears to contribute to the daughter’s academic success (Anglin & Wade, 2007; Baber, 2012; Chavous & Cogburn, 2007; Lipford Sanders & Bradley, 2005; and Thomas et al., 2013).

The motherwork that these women engage in is embedded in the racial socialization process. It is work that is multilayered, emotional, stressful, and race-gender based in the

context of white spaces. It is racial/gender socialization that is deliberate, purposeful and consuming. In particular, the activation of the Presence strategy is fundamentally different than reported elsewhere. For instance, Lareau (2002) found that higher-income parents, irrespective of race, engage in behavior mimicking the Presence-visibility and Presence-deliberate interactions strategies uncovered in this study. Lareau writes that “[t]he role of race in children's daily lives was less powerful than I had expected . . . in terms of...the strategies used for intervening in institutions [e.g., education/schools] *white and black middle-class parents engaged in very similar, often identical, practices with their children*” [emphasis added] (2002, p. 773). This study's findings challenge Lareau's race-neutral conclusion. For the mothers in this study race-gender identity is quite salient and it underpins the motherwork strategies they use. Mothers in this study do socialization work white mothers in the same setting do not do; motherwork is diametrically opposed to white privilege. The impetus for activation of these strategies is race-based not class-based.

The strategies emerging from the focus groups were corroborated by the survey data. There is moderate support for the physical presence strategy as 34% of mothers who are aware of the racial composition of a room reported being socialized to make themselves less threatening around whites. These same mothers are more likely to be fully aware of their disposition and physicality when interacting with their daughters' white teachers and administrators. Support was also found for the imaging strategy. Mothers are fully aware of the stigma associated with black hair and over 70% of mothers make a conscious effort to not socialize their daughters with this stigma. Therefore, these are likely to be the same women who make sure that they highlight and praise their daughters' phenotypic characteristics. A majority of mothers surveyed also seem to endorse the idea that it is important for daughters to interact with African American role

models in and outside of their communities. Mothers also try to influence their daughters' racial-gender identity by modeling for their daughters a black-female ideal and by using home décor and other consumables to reinforce a positive self-concept for the girls. Quantitative support has also been found for the code-switching strategy. There seems to be a moderate indication that mothers foster a code-switching sensibility in their daughters.

Limitations and Future Research

One limitation to this study is that mothers who volunteered to participate in this investigation may have done so because they were more interested in racial issues and therefore this study may be impacted by selection bias. Mothers' responses may also have been affected by social desirability as they listened to comments shared by other participants. Additionally, further analysis of the skipped survey responses needs to occur in order to ascertain whether or not substantive patterns exist. Lastly, this study was constructed to look at mothers only and therefore is narrow in scope. The assertions made about daughters, predominantly white schools, and predominantly white communities are predicated upon mothers' survey responses and the conversations that occurred during the focus groups.

Future research should investigate class effects by looking at the strategies used by lower-income, suburban African American mothers with children attending predominantly white schools. In this study, mothers' abilities to exercise agency and resistance were aided by resources and skill sets they had acquired as a result of their educational attainment, career/vocational experiences, and social networks. Although the impetus for employing the motherwork strategies was racial-gender, it is apparent that efficacy was enhanced by various elements of social and/or cultural capital. Therefore, to more fully appreciate within-group differences in motherwork practices, the class construct has to be examined further.

Conclusions

As predominantly white school districts increase their African American populations this study and its findings regarding motherwork are critically important. Especially as we exist during a period that many Americans would label “post-racial” or “colorblind.” Nevertheless, such labels are far from truly capturing the lived experiences of many persons of color. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2011) informs us that these labels reflect color-blind racism; racism that is subtle, negating institutional and structural racial inequality while advancing cultural deficiency and market-force explanations for the existing racial disparities. These colorblind ideologies are at work in public school systems across this country. According to Camille Cooper, these ideologies “compel educators to avoid understanding white privilege, remain unaware to the prevalence and/or effects of discriminatory practices, and perpetuate inequities that directly harm African American families and others” (2010, p. 343).

Motherwork encourages the development of a positive racial-gender identity which aids daughters’ resilience and helps protect against real, perceived, and invisible racist threats. The protective features of a positive racial-gender identity induce higher self-esteem and enhance self-concept while propelling girls to excel in school environments that may undermine their achievement. African American motherwork is a phenomenon which augments academic success; more effort is needed to fully understand its effect on high-achieving, young black girls attending predominantly white schools. It is my hope that this study serves as a clarion call to parents, educators, and researchers to engage this topic more in-depth so that we might foster and support the academic achievement of young black women attending historically white colleges and universities.

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² Parent-CARES is the Cultural and Racial Experiences of Socialization (CARES) for parents and caregivers which measures the transmission and receptions of racial socialization beliefs and experiences. The CARES was developed by Stevenson and Bentley (2007).

³ The Cross Racial Identity Scale measures black racial identity attitudes along six identities. The CRIS was developed by Vandiver, Cross, Fhagen-Smith, Worrell, Swim, & Caldwell (2000).

⁴ WIAS-R was developed by Ossana and Helms (1992). It measures womanist identity attitudes along 4 stages.

⁵ A phone interview was conducted for a mother who wanted to participate but could not make it to any of the scheduled focus groups.

⁶ A few mothers choose the name Lola as a result of various trade books and resources that were set-up on a table in the conference room. The book “Lola at the Library” by Anna McQuinn & Rosalind Beardshaw was one such book which many mothers stated they had read with their daughters as they perused the items on the resource table.