Making Meaning of Everyday Practices: Parents' Attitudes toward Children's Extracurricular Activities in the United States and in Italy

TAMAR KREMER-SADLIK, CAROLINA IZQUIERDO, AND MARILENA FATIGANTE
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA); UCLA; and Università di Roma "La Sapienza"

This article focuses on children's engagement in extracurricular activities from the perspective of middle-class parents in Rome, Italy, and Los Angeles, California. Analysis of parents' accounts captured in interviews and ethnographic fieldwork reveals that both sets of parents perceive activities as important for children's success. Yet Roman parents consider activities as part of "children's world," downplaying intense involvement and performance. Conversely, L.A. parents view activities as preparing children for adult life, emphasizing competition and accomplishment.
[childhood, extracurricular activities, family, United States, Italy]

In recent years there has been a marked increase in children's extracurricular activities, such as organized sports activities, music and art classes, both in the United States (Dunn et al. 2003; Hofferth and Sandberg 2001) and in Italy (Istat 2005, 2007). Children's extracurricular activities have been linked to academic achievement and social adjustment (Eccles et al. 2003; Larson and Verma 1999; Mahoney et al. 2005). Further, with the rising rates of obesity among U.S. children, there is an increased emphasis on the benefit of children's involvement in athletic activities (Andersen et al. 1998). Italian studies have shown positive relations between children's participation in sports and a general perception of physical and psychological good health, as well as between adolescents' engagement in sports and higher levels of self-efficacy and motivational orientation (Guicciardi et al. 2006; Pietrantoni and Ria 2001).

In spite of the documented positive benefits of participation in extracurricular activities, in Italy and other countries in Europe there exists an explicit discourse critically portraying an extreme image of the "overworked" and "over-busy" child (Eurispes 2002). Belloni (2005) finds that an ever increasing "institutionalization" of children's time and activities invoke the adult workplace, leaves little time and space for creative self-determined exploration of the world and limits opportunities for engagement in informal friendships. Other Italian researchers stress the importance of "free," unplanned, "empty" time for children's development (Citati 2004; Maggioni and Baraldi 1997; Testu and Fontaine 2001; Tonucci 1996).

However, this debate has not received as much attention in U.S. academic discourse, which tends to emphasize the positive outcome of children's engagement in extracurricular activities (Eccles et al. 2003; Larson and Verma 1999; Mahoney et al. 2005) and views the organization of and control over children's time as securing a safe environment and preventing delinquent behavior (Bartko and Eccles 2003). Yet, a number of popular books, such as *Reclaiming Childhood: Letting Children be Children in Our Achieving-Oriented Society* (Crain 2003), call for parents to find a balance between their child-centered approach to parenting and the push for children's achievement. David Elkind, a U.S. developmental psychologist, has argued in his books *The Hurried Child: Growing too Fast too Soon* (2001) and *Ties that Stress: The New Family Imbalance* (1994) that in today's climate the increased pressure to participate in activities is a symptom of society's expectation for children to perform like adults and to grow up quickly. He calls for lessening stressors placed on children and for the return to imaginative play, rather than organized activities.

Anthropology & Education Quarterly, Vol. 41, Issue 1, pp.35–54, ISSN 0161-7761, online ISSN 1548-1492.

DOI:10.1111/j.1548-1492.2010.01066.x.

Although most research focuses its attention on the outcomes and concerns regarding children's participation in extracurricular activities, few studies have explored parents' accounts about reasons for which they engage their children in a multitude of activities and meanings that parents attach to such activities. Furthermore, often it is perceived that the preferred attitude toward "busyness" and children's structured time is a U.S. cultural construct (Darrah et al. 2007; Shore 2003), yet no studies have examined parents' attitudes toward their children's busy schedules cross-culturally. In this article, we hope to fill in this gap by drawing on two ethnographic studies of 32 families in Los Angeles, California, and eight families from Rome, Italy, to explore parents' perspectives on extracurricular activities and the role that they play in children's lives. As Feldman and Matjasko (2005:160) argue "Extracurricular activities are not isolated from other developmental contexts; rather, they are embedded in schools and communities and influenced by families and peers." In analyzing parental perception of the role extracurricular activities play in their children's lives, we hope to further understand the relations between these activities and other developmental contexts within which children are raised and prepared for adult life.

Framing Extracurricular Activities

The ecocultural perspective suggests that family routine activities reflect a local understanding of how one should raise a child (Harkness and Super 1996; Weisner 1998, 2002). Answers to questions, such as what would be considered good care and how one would prepare a child for adult life, are embedded in cultural beliefs that shape the way everyday activities are organized. Activities gain their meaning for participants as they map them onto communities' goals, expectations, and values. In this view, the engagement in meaningful activities enhances participants' sense of well-being. Thus, the construct of well-being is linked directly to families' organization of and engagement in routine practices and rituals, such as prayer and bedtime routines, as well as forms of work, sports activities, and music lessons (Weisner 2008).

Among these different activities, children's extracurricular activities have increasingly gained importance in middle-class communities. In her book, Lareau (2003) suggests that middle-class parents engage in a particular approach to childrearing, which she terms *concerted cultivation*. In such an approach, parents "deliberately try to stimulate their children's development and foster their cognitive and social skills" (Lareau 2003:5) by offering them environments that enhance children's verbal and reasoning competence, their sense of entitlement and individuation, as well as by organizing for them numerous extracurricular activities to build personal skills. In this view, parents engage in concerted cultivation in part so "to make sure that that their children are not excluded from any opportunity that might eventually contribute to their advancement" (Lareau 2003:5). Thus, parents, according to Lareau, perceive that their children's success as adults depends not only on resources their parents make available to them but also on children's ability to take advantage of and compete for the best opportunities to excel and stand out. Exploring parents' beliefs about preparing children for the future, other studies in the United States have found that parents view extracurricular activities as promoting the development of traits that help ensure children's well-being and future educational and personal success (Dunn et al. 2003; Gutiérrez et al. 2005; Kremer-Sadlik and Kim 2007).

Darrah and colleagues (2007) interpret families' motivation and involvement in multiple activities as a status marker of "busyness," which, he argues, characterizes middle-class families in the United States. Shore, in line with Darrah and colleagues, explains, "what was once a stress on work as a moral virtue has expanded into a kind of obsession with all activities as status markers, with being 'active' as a kind of ritual class act" (2003:8).

Shore (2003) offers a somewhat problematic explanation as to why families spend time, effort, and money on extracurricular activities. He equates these activities to consumer goods, which serve to increase or maintain family's social status, and goes further to suggest that parents' laments about children's increased busyness may be, at least partially, insincere concerns; this "busyness," although stressful at times, is in fact a preferred state of being.

Adopting Weisner's view (2008), which regards everyday routines as mirroring those values and practices that are perceived to benefit and to be meaningful for individuals and communities, in this ethnographic study we seek to understand whether and why parents in two diverse communities frame their children's engagement in extracurricular activities as valuable and meaningful for their children's development and well-being. Our U.S. and Italian studies afford an analysis of parents' discourses captured in formal interviews and in spontaneous conversations, exploring common themes and variations (Harkness and Super 1996) regarding children's participation in extracurricular activities and how these may reflect on local theories on parenting and childhood in the two different cultural contexts.

Methodology

The data for this study were collected as part of a 32 dual-earner families research project conducted by the Center on the Everyday Lives of Families (CELF) at UCLA, and the eight dual-earner families research project conducted by the Italian Center on the Everyday Lives of Families (iCELF) at La Sapienza Università di Roma. CELF and iCELF were funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation with the goal of studying the everyday lives of middle-class, dual-earner families in two distinct urban settings. The methodologies and protocols used in this research were designed by CELF and adopted by iCELF. Teams from both centers met on a regular basis to explore possible collaborative cross-cultural studies. The authors of this study have collaborated on a number of such projects (e.g., Klein et al. 2005; Kremer-Sadlik et al. 2008) and found that, in addition to exploring similarities and differences in both sites, this cross-cultural research project offered us opportunities to identify and examine beliefs and practices that are unique to our own cultures.

Participants

The L.A. families elected to participate in the study by responding to newspaper ads and fliers distributed in schools and the Roman families learned about the study through schools. In both sites, families consisted of two parents and two–three children with at least one child between the ages of eight and ten. Both parents worked 30 hours or more per week outside the home to qualify as dual earners. In the process of designing the study it became apparent that the definition of middle class could be multifaceted, as this social category can denote an educational, economic, or political class affiliation. To resolve this issue, it was decided that our families will be considered middle class if they purchased their own home and depended on their income to pay a monthly mortgage. Participants self-reported their education levels, ranging from high school to graduate degrees with the majority holding a bachelor's degree, and they held a variety of professions from clerical and technical to high management and academic positions. Parents' ages varied with L.A. parents ranging from 28 to 52 and Roman parents from 34 to 55. The L.A. sample had 73 children, 35 girls and 38 boys, with ages ranging from one to 17 years, and the Roman sample had 16 children, 10 girls and six boys, with ages ranging from 1.5 to 13 years. The L.A. families came from diverse ethnic backgrounds and lived in different neighborhoods

within the Greater Los Angeles area. The Roman families lived in various neighborhoods in Rome. No recent immigrants participated in the study.

Data Sets

A number of data sets were used for analyses for this study. All data were collected during the school year to capture families' experiences as they juggled the demands of children's school and extracurricular activities. Parents were given blank weekly charts divided into seven weekdays and each day into morning, afternoon, and evening to complete for each family member listing the activities that took place in a typical week. We did not supply parents with lists of activities; therefore, the content of the charts reflects activities parents chose to note. Consequently, the categories of activities were not arbitrarily created, but emerged from the charts themselves. We examined the charts' content to list the type and number of activities each child in every family engaged in once they were outside the institutional schedule of school. In particular, we concentrated on extracurricular activities, which we define as activities children do by choice outside of the school system and that require payment.

Parents participated in a number of semistructured interviews in which they were asked to discuss their family's daily routines and their beliefs, goals, and practices related to issues of education and health. The interviews were audio and video recorded. These interviews provided numerous opportunities for parents to discuss their children's extracurricular activities and for us to learn about the meaning parents attached to activities and their reasoning for signing up their children for the different activities.

Most importantly, the richness of analysis would have not been possible without the authors' ethnographic knowledge. We were part of the team that conducted the video-recorded naturalistic observations of families' daily routines and interactions inside and outside the home over one week from the moment the family members woke up until the children went to bed at night. At times these observations captured parent–researcher and parent–child spontaneous conversations about extracurricular activities. We also analyzed these incidents, which offered further opportunity to learn about parents' attitudes toward these practices.

Data Analysis

Parent–child and parent–researcher interactions were analyzed within the framework of discourse analysis (Potter and Wetherell 1987), which views language as a form of social action and a resource for "making sense" of the world. According to this view speech is not the product or the mirror of the individual mind; rather, it is both a resource for and a product of social and cultural interaction (Duranti 1997; Garfinkel 1967). In this sense, parents' talk about and around children's activities offers insights into their socially and culturally informed ethnotheories (Harkness and Super 2006) regarding parenting, childhood, and well-being. Translation of the Roman parents' charts and interviews from Italian into English was done by one of the authors, who is a native Italian speaker, with the goal of capturing the exact meaning established through particular words and grammatical structures. Within excerpts, text was bolded to highlight points of analytical interest and to attend to parents' positioning vis-à-vis children's activities.

In What Activities Do the Roman and L.A. Children Engage after School?

Overall, the weekly charts revealed that similar activities were available to the children in the study and that most L.A. and Roman families organized one or more activities for

Table 1.
Number of Children Participating in Activity Type per Location

Activity Type	Number of L.A. Children ($N = 73$)	Number of Roman children ($N = 16$)
Sports	44	14
Music or Art	15	6
Religion	18	1
Education	16	1
Community	11	2
Other	4	0

their children after they returned home from school and after-school care. Overall, parents listed many activities that their children engaged in after school. These can be represented in the following eight categories: (1) education-related activities (e.g., private tutoring and test preparation courses); (2) sports (both team sports, e.g., soccer and basketball, as well as individual sports, such as tennis and ballet); (3) music and art lessons; (4) religious classes; (5) community organization activities (e.g., Scouts); and (6) other activities (e.g., therapy sessions, book clubs).

As Table 1 shows, we found that the prominence of certain activities was true across the families, regardless of locale.

When examining the charts for extracurricular activities, the dominance of sports activities was evident among most of our L.A. and Roman families; 44 of the 73 L.A. children and 14 of the 16 Roman children participated in sports activities. The prominence of sports among U.S. children is consistent with previous research (Hofferth and Sandberg 2001), which found that most families choose sports over other extracurricular activities. Sports have always been important in U.S. culture (Redekop 1984), and in the past two decades, there has been an increase in girls' participation in what used to be considered primarily boys' sports activities (Coakley 2006). Although it is less common to find girls playing boys' sports like soccer in Italy, sports are also the most frequent extracurricular activity reported in Italian statistics on children and adolescents' time use (Istat 2007).

Other types of extracurricular activities were less popular among families in both countries, for example only 15 L.A. children and six Roman children participated in music and art activities. In addition, some activities seemed more prominent among the L.A. children, such as religious, community, and educational activities. Although there could be a number of reasons to explain these differences, it is important to note that in comparison to the L.A. children's attendance of child-care services after school (only 24 of 73), most of the Roman children (14 out of 16) took advantage of a longer school-day option, called "tempo pieno," which offered additional educational and other activities for no additional pay. Thus, the Roman children had less time available to participate in as many extracurricular activities once they returned home.

To better understand the level of family commitment to children's extracurricular activities, we counted the number of activities for which each family chose to enroll their children. If in a family with two children one child played soccer and tennis and the other piano and basketball, the total activities per family was four. The results revealed great variability among families within each site; some selected to have their children participate in only one activity and some enrolled their children in a number of activities. In each of the samples there was one extreme case of a family with two children who participated in a total of 10 extracurricular activities. Further, in the L.A. but not in the Roman sample there was one family who did not sign their children up for any extracurricular activities. The median number of activities was three activities per week for the L.A. families and 2.5 activities per week for the Roman families.

Overall, our data showed strong similarities between the Roman and L.A. children in the number and type of activities they were engaged in. Because of the difference in sample size, we do not draw general conclusions about how children's lives are organized in the two cities. Yet we would like to note that our data suggest a similar preference among parents in both contexts for children's engagement in such activities. They also suggest that in both sites parents are willing to commit their time, effort, and resources (driving children to and from activities; paying fees and purchasing equipment; supervising practicing instruments, etc.) to facilitate children's participation in activities.

We now turn to parents' discourses to explore their motivation for enrolling their children in extracurricular activities, and how they account for their choices.

Why Do Parents in Los Angeles and Rome Choose to Sign Their Children up for Extracurricular Activities?

> There's a certain class of people to which we belong, I think, who don't value quite as much that sort of time to sort of hang around and do nothing. Everybody's in the same boat we are, you know, little kids, two parents, going crazy
>
> —L.A. father

What motivates parents, like the father in the quote, to have such hectic lifestyles? We found that parents in both locales consistently described activities as arenas where children can learn to master social and cognitive skills, as well as better their psychological well-being.

Excerpt 1 comes from a conversation the researcher had with an L.A. mother while sitting by the pool during her eight-year-old daughter's swimming practice. The mother explains that she first sent her daughter Hailey to swimming lessons at age six when another mother told her that the young girl had the body of a swimmer. The mother proudly recounts how Hailey immediately excelled in the sport and was accepted to the club swim team the first time she tried out (this mother's focus on Hailey's level of performance is analyzed in Excerpt 9). During the conversation with the researcher, the mother describes their hectic afternoon schedules trying to fit swimming four weekly practices and homework assignments between school and dinnertime, and then goes on to propose a relationship between Hailey's participation in swimming activity and her improved school performance.

Excerpt 1—(L.A. Family)

> Mother Her grades have really improved. Not just from swimming obviously, but **the discipline of having to be in a set schedule**. And she knows that she's got to do her homework at a certain time or that she won't have the time or the energy.

The mother suggests that being part of a swim team with its demanding schedule of practices and meets has taught Hailey discipline, which in turn has helped her manage schoolwork. The positive outcome of acquiring discipline is linked to her daughter's understanding of the negative consequence of poor time management, when one does not have the time or energy to attend to homework. For this mother, time management appears to be at the core of her daughter's success; it is not the amount of time available for activities that matters, but the ability to discipline oneself and manage whatever time one has that leads to success.

Excerpt 2 comes from an interview with a Roman mother with two children ages 12 and seven. Both mother and father in this family hold academic positions in universities far from Rome and often have to stay away from home for a few days at a time. These work schedules, not surprisingly, put a certain pressure on parents' time and availability. It is interesting then that this Roman family is the one with the largest number of extracurricular activities, four activities per child. The excerpt below reveals that the mother of this family, similarly to the L.A. mother in Excerpt 1, identifies specific benefits gained from her 12-year-old daughter's activities.

Excerpt 2—(Roman Family)

Researcher Is there anything you would like to add?
Mother Well, that they do sports. And in Livia's case, actually doing sports, in my opinion, has been very useful for her, because it **teaches her also a little bit how to lose**, when she competes. Also, it teaches her the ability **to optimize her schedule**. I mean, she does homework in a very **efficient** way, because she knows that this way she can go and play tennis, or participate in a sailing race, and other things. From this point of view, I consider sports to be very important. It gives her **discipline**. And also with music it's the same; music helps her build her **concentration**.

This mother defines her daughter's discipline as an ability to plan, be efficient, and adhere to time constraints imposed by the child's activities. Engaging in several activities appears to be a means to socialize children to extract the maximum benefit from activities within a limited time. Participation in one activity indirectly improves performance in another activity (participating in sports results in doing homework efficiently). The importance this mother gives to her daughter's ability to "optimize her schedule" may mirror her own and her husband's need to use their time efficiently and reflect constraints imposed by their professional careers.

In both Excerpts 1 and 2, the mothers express the idea of a learning "transfer" (Bruner 1966) of a skill developed and practiced in one domain, extracurricular activities, to other spheres of actions and to a general ability of planning and managing time one has at one's disposal. Yet, whereas the L.A. mother centers on the improvement of her daughter's grades, the Roman mother focuses on her daughter's increased cognitive abilities to optimize time and concentrate without a reference to a recognized, more "public" outcome, such as good grades. The preference for downplaying the social capital of such activities is also apparent in the mother's mention of how through sports activities her daughter learns to lose, thus de-emphasizing the importance of "achievement" and "success," which are inherently embedded in the suggested competitive activities ("participate in a sailing race").

Parents in both settings also recognize that their children's participation in certain extracurricular activities may help improve important personal traits, such as self-esteem, and self-confidence. The next excerpt is taken from an interview with the parents of two girls, ages ten and eight, who engage both in soccer and swimming. In response to the interviewer's question about why it is important for them that their daughters participate in sports, this L.A. mother and father state that soccer has given their nine-year-old daughter confidence.

Excerpt 3—(L.A. Family)

Mother Sonya's a little bit- she's **not as assertive**, and I think that **sports have given her more-** she's more-
Father Definitely. Yes.

Mother **-a bit on the passive side**. And she's been playing sports for a long time. The first year she played soccer and she cried. Every game she would stand on the field and cry . . . Second year she got around and she really liked it. And so for her, **I think it's been a great thing- it's given her confidence**.

In this example the mother suggests, and the father enthusiastically agrees, that soccer has been "a great thing" for their ten-year-old daughter because it transformed her from a person who is "not as assertive" and "a bit on the passive side" into a person with confidence. The mother illustrates the transition in her daughter's confidence by describing how in the first year Sonya really didn't enjoy playing soccer, and that it took her a year to like it. This narrative offers an opportunity to highlight Sonya's perseverance as well as the mother's insistence that her daughter engages in sports, even if the experience is not necessarily pleasant at first. During our ethnographic observations, we joined the family on a Saturday morning when they attended their daughters' soccer games. We observed the parents, and especially the mother, repeatedly complementing their girls about their contributions to the game and their team, reinforcing their sense of self-worth. Later on in the interview, the mother explain that she values confidence in particular because of her concern for gender differences in the socialization of girls to being competitive and assertive. In fact, during another conversation this mother revealed that she values these skills for herself as much as for her daughters, indicating that she is a member of a coed recreational ultimate disc team.

Building confidence appears to be important in the Roman parents' discourse as well. In the excerpt below the same mother from Excerpt 2 identifies the ability to confront and deal with one's own and others' performance as a positive value acquired through participation in extracurricular activities.

Excerpt 4—(Roman Family)

Researcher So both are two very positive things [sports and music]
Mother Well, both sports and music develop an ability to confront oneself in relation to others as well as in relation to oneself.

This mother emphasizes the value of participation in activities as a way of learning to realistically assess one's abilities vis-à-vis others' abilities, as well as to face and cope with one's limitations. This ability, acquired through practicing sports and music can be seen as part of a more general way of being self-aware and confident in dealing with one's own failings. Indeed this idea of a developing "comparative self" (Schaffer 1996) has been shown to occur as children openly discuss changes in their relative weaknesses and strengths during a baseball season, as well as when coaches guide these children in their observation and analysis of their performance (Heath 1991).

Parents also express a desire that their children acquire skills and traits that can better their lives through good habits, particularly habits pertaining to one's health. Many parents talked about the need to be active as a way of being healthy. Some even expressed the hope that participation in sports activities during childhood will become engrained into their children's perception of themselves as athletes so as to guarantee that they will remain active for the rest of their lives. For example, an L.A. mother whose eight-year-old girl and seven-year-old boy participated in five different sports explained "Our kids are extremely active and learning that exercise is a way of life . . . And I think they will take that with them for the rest of their lives," suggesting that it is also a matter of life style.

However, at times parents were met with resistance from their not-so athletic children. In Excerpt 5 below, we learn from an L.A. mother that some parents do not only sign up

their children to an activity but also have to continuously push them. This conversation takes place in the ice rink where nine-year-old Linda takes private lessons every Saturday morning. The mother tells the researcher that Linda began ice skating in group lessons, but because she did not like them so much, the parents decided to enroll her in private lessons to encourage her to continue with the sport. Then she continues:

Excerpt 5—(L.A. Family)

Mother Well, we were trying to find something- she's not into competitive sports. We were trying to find **some exercise, something for her to do . . . We'd like them to have some kind of physical activity, un, extra-curricular, you know, going on**. But with her, **we really have to push her**.

This mother explicitly expresses an ideology that she and her husband (whom she includes in the plural pronoun *we*) espouse: the importance of their children's engagement in physical activity. The mother recognizes that this ideology is in conflict with her daughter's personal tendencies and preferences. The repeated disclosure that the parents are "trying to find" an activity that will suit their daughter and that this could be anything ("something"), illustrates the effort that it takes to have their daughter engage in such activities. The parents' effort is amplified when the mother admits that they have to regularly stay involved and "push" their daughter to remain engaged in sports. The need to push Linda becomes apparent when in the middle of the lesson she comes off the ice and starts a conversation with her mom and asks to drink some cocoa. The mother tells her to go back to the ice and after Linda leaves the mother turns to the researcher and says, "that means 'I don't want to be out there' and 'I want to take a break,' but you just have to keep pushing her back."

This family's experience brings to light the issue of competing desires and the possible conflicts between parents and children around participation in activities. In another L.A. family we found that a child would have preferred to participate in an activity his parents did not support, and in yet another L.A. family the children revealed that they no longer participated in team sports because the father was too demanding and competitive. These examples remind us that children's participation in activities is not always fun and harmonious.

The desire for children to be active is also expressed in Roman parents' interviews. The mother in the excerpt below has just told the researcher that each of her children has three activities. The interviewer equates the number of activities with busyness, to which the mother responds expressing her belief that the children needed to keep busy.

Excerpt 6—(Roman Family)

Researcher So I can see that they are very busy.
Mother Yes. **I believe that they have to keep busy. I have debated** with many teachers whether children are too over-stimulated. Also **I realized** that I am not home. Therefore, if I were home, if they would have had the opportunity-. But also to know how to get bored or know how to-. **I don't think** it's true that one needs to know how to be bored. **I don't see why**.

The mother's response to the interviewer's assessment that her children are very busy is complex. She first clarifies that this busyness is neither a byproduct nor a pitfall of everyday life. Rather, it is an intended practice reflecting this mother's values and beliefs about children's needs. By mentioning having a debate with teachers over this issue and re-enacting it in front of the researcher, this mother presents herself as objectively weigh-

ing the arguments against and in favor of busyness, reinforcing that what she believes is right. This excerpt reveals the interplay between different and often contrasting positions that influence parents' attitudes toward children's engagements in extracurricular activities. It also highlights an existing concern: the degree to which parents should push their children toward busyness. During ethnographic observations we noted that this mother often supervised both children's homework and piano practices, which suggests that children's busyness also means parental engagement and effort.

Following the statement in Excerpt 6, however, the same mother declares that she does not consider participation in activities as a must.

Excerpt 7—(Roman Family)

Mother And **anyway** it's not mandatory. I mean, nobody said that once they say "I don't want to go anymore," and "I'm tired," "I don't want to"
Researcher They are (not) forced to go.
Mother You **can stay home**. They're forced to do **absolutely nothing**.
Researcher Sure.
Mother They changed their activities. They **don't have a specific one- one competitive thing**, that can involve them in an exaggerated way. They did swimming. They did (••). Now they do diving, canoeing. I mean they change . . .

The mother first modifies and downgrades (using the concessive conjunction "anyway") the relevance of her previous emphatic statement that children need to be busy, possibly in an attempt to reduce the impression that the previous statement may have left on her interlocutor (Goffman 1959). This act may prevent the researcher from judging her as a mother who puts too much pressure on her children and their performance. Further, in contrast to the previous excerpt, in this excerpt this mother expresses suspicion of any "exaggerated" involvement in any activity. Activities are emphasized as not mandatory; rather, they are framed as leisure activities, something that children can modify according to their changing preferences. In this sense, the mother expresses a cultural dispreference (possibly embodied by the researcher's earlier assessment of busyness) of putting pressure on the children and having them "submit" to parental will. Thus, the idea expressed here, in which children are allowed to get tired of activities and have the power to decide to no longer participate in activities or change them according to their own desires and interests, stands in clear contrast with Excerpt 5, in which the L.A. mother discloses that they really need to push their daughter to engage in sports.

Finally, in some of the L.A. parents' interviews there is a tendency to view activities as a form of "children's work" in that participation and high quality performance in particular appear to be directly linked to the accumulation of social and cultural capital (Levey 2009; Miller 2005; Qvortrup 2005; Zelizer 2005). The example below was taken from an interview with a mother who spent her afternoons driving her children from one activity to the next. To facilitate this she had a special "school kit" in the car so that the children could do homework while commuting to the various lessons. The mother admitted that her children were very busy and that they "did plenty of competing." The excerpt below illustrates her view that successful performance is rewarded in the future.

Excerpt 8—(L.A. Family)

Mother She could go pretty far with fencing. She's 8 years old. She regularly beats 14 15 16 year old kids, you know. She competes very well and, if she sticks with it she could- she could go to the

Junior Olympics or nationals type level. You never know. **We're talking Ivy League scholarship material for sure**. You know, if she continues with it, this could be her ticket, you know. Who knows.

This mother suggests that her eight-year-old daughter's high performance in fencing, especially in comparison to older children, is evidence of her potential not only for competing on a national level but also for wining scholarships to Ivy League universities. The relationship between sports performance and college admission and scholarships is common in the United States as many colleges have sports teams and regularly lure athletes with offers for full scholarships. A few of our parents expressed hopes that their children receive such offers. It is valuable to note that we did not find similar benefits of extracurricular activities highlighted in the Roman parents' talk as there is no relation between high performance in sports and music and educational opportunities in the higher education system in Italy.

The perception that excellence in extracurricular activities, and sports in particular, is a means for accumulating future capital results at times in parents putting pressure on children to work hard and perform to the best of their abilities. The next excerpt was video-recorded in the car as the mother who was featured in Excerpt 1 was driving her eight-year-old daughter, Hailey, to her swimming practice. The mother asks Hailey "How are you going to swim today?" and then continues:

Excerpt 9—(L.A. Family)

Mother You need to **really** focus on what you're doing. **I don't want to see you putting yourself** in the last lanes; those are for brand new swimmers. **You shouldn't** swim in four or five, Hailey . . . You **really** need to be putting your mind and focus and trying to build yourself up to two and one . . . So I **really** expect to see you swimming in lane three and lane two, not in lanes four and five.

This mother formulates a very clear expectation; Hailey should swim hard. She begins with a general assertion that Hailey focus on the activity. Note the repeated use of the adverb *really* that acts as an intensifier to upgrade the degree of involvement the mother expects from Hailey. The mother is not only quite specific about what she is looking for in Hailey's swimming, that she swims in lanes two or three, but she also suggests that if Hailey is found in lanes four or five it is not because she belongs there, but, rather, because she selected to "put herself" there. Thus, the mother is creating a hypothetical scenario implicating Hailey in advance for not working hard enough. The pressure on Hailey to swim hard is further increased when the mother indicates that the last lanes are for new swimmers, suggesting that swimming in those lanes will imply that Hailey is not a very good swimmer. The mother's desire to have Hailey excel in her swimming activity was further apparent when during the practice the mother asked the coach whether it would be possible to have Hailey train for a 500-meter event, in which older swimmers usually participate.

In discussing with Hailey her expectations, this mother seems to have adopted the role of a coach. She knows the significance of the different lanes, she assesses Hailey's swimming skills, and accordingly she expects a certain level of performance from her. Finally, she suggests to Hailey's real coach that Hailey train for a particular swimming event. All this reveals this mother's interpretation of her role in Hailey's swimming activity; she has to motivate and socialize her to perform at highest level she can.

We also observed Roman parents interacting with their children during their extracurricular activities. In Excerpt 10 a Roman mother cajoles her seven-year-old son, Carlo, to

practice his piano. Just as he is about to begin, he questions what he needs to do and the mother provides a detailed response, revealing that she knows exactly which exercises he needs to practice. During the whole practice she stands by the piano supervising and commenting.

Excerpt 10—(Roman family)

> Mother For exercises twelve and thirteen you have to do just the first line. You have to do line by line and in order to keep the tempo you have to say "can-ce-lle-tto" for the first and "ta-vo-lo" for the second.
> Carlo Can I not say that?
> Mother Well, what is important is that you do the exercises. The twelve is the first one. These are quite complicated.

This mother not only prompts her child to practice his piano exercises but she also further displays her commitment by supervising and assisting Carlo throughout the activity. Like the L.A. mother in Excerpt 9, this mother exhibits knowledge of what Carlo should accomplish during the practice. For example, she draws the child's attention to the correct way of performing the exercises by keeping tempo out loud ("can-ce-lle-tto" and "ta-vo-la").

Although the mother provides strict instructions for her son to follow, at the same time she acknowledges in an affective tone that the exercises 12 and 13 might be quite challenging for him—she uses the Italian diminutive "complicatini" to describe the exercises as "quite complicated. "The mention of this challenge is not accompanied by a pressure to meet it with success as much as by the acknowledgment of the effort implied in completing the task. As soon as the child finishes his practice, his mother empathically recognizes his effort, and she asks him if he is tired and hugs him.

Rather than adopting the role of coach focusing on the child's level of performance (as the mother in Excerpt 9 does), the mother in Excerpt 10 views her engagement in Carlo's extracurricular activity as an assistant and facilitator. It should be noted that one might expect parents' discourses to reflect a coachlike approach to their children's performance more commonly when they engage in sports (Excerpt 9), rather than in music (Excerpt 10), however, we did not find any evidence of such tendency in our Roman parent–child interactions.

The analysis presented here reveals an interesting difference between the L.A. and Roman data. Whereas the L.A. parents perceive an association between participation in extracurricular activities and achievement, this is not the case for the Roman parents. There is no evidence in the Roman corpus of pressure being put on children to work hard, compete, and achieve certain levels of performance. Even for those Roman parents who enroll their children in more competitive activities (e.g., sailboat racing), when competition is evoked in conversation, its importance is weakened through the emphasis on other values (see Excerpts 7, above, and 13a and 13b, below). Overall, Roman parents tend to de-emphasize achievement, and characterize activities as primarily belonging to the field of leisure and play.

Parental Concerns Regarding Participation in Extracurricular Activities

Although L.A. and Roman parents' interviews reveal a consistent belief that extracurricular activities offer important benefits for their children, at times parents also express some concerns regarding the commitment to such activities. However, these concerns were not similar in both sites. In our L.A. sample, when parents expressed discontent it

was related to the imposition these commitments had on their own time, as seen in the excerpt below. When asked about what keeps them from exercising more frequently, one mother explains:

Excerpt 11—(L.A. Family)

Mother The kids. **All their activities, all their running, all their studying**. I run with them more. Tommy does some on weekends. **During the week I'm running**.

This mother suggests a causal relationship between her inability to take care of herself and the need to attend to her children's activities. The repeated use of the quantifier *all* (as in "all their activities, all their running, all their studying"), which is all-inclusive and therefore denotes a large number of needs, further emphasizes the mother's feeling of burden and hurriedness as she attempts to care for someone else's needs, rather than her own.

The obligation to attend to their children's needs seems to also burden the father in the excerpt below. Elaborating on his wife's comment about feeling stressed with the responsibilities at home, the father suggests that as the children grow he and his wife feel an additional burden.

Excerpt 12—(L.A. Family)

Father They're more independent but **they have more needs now** . . . But now they're **older**, they're involved in **more** activities than they were when they were **younger**. So there's that additional responsibility.

This father reiterates the idea that children's activities increase parents' responsibilities and therefore their load. The comparison of the present to the past ("when they were younger"), and the use of the comparatives *younger*, *more*, and *older* intensify the depiction of a more demanding reality for this father.

The Roman corpus reveals a different parental concern. In Excerpts 13a and 13b, a Roman father is torn between his satisfaction with his daughter's participation in swimming activities, which offers her fun social opportunities, and his worry that the competitive experience of swimming results in stress and anxiety. Earlier in the interview, he reported that during the previous year his daughter complained about swimming because of the big distance between home and the pool where she practiced (since then they moved to a closer pool). In recounting this, the father sided with his child and expressed support for the reasons the girl did not want to go to practice. Once again, we see a Roman parent adopting the child's perspective, instead of highlighting the ethos of competitiveness and performance that seemingly holds a place in the L.A. parents' discourses.

Excerpt 13a—(Roman Family)

Father I am really happy that she does swimming. I'm fine if **she competes just for fun**, and **plays with other children**. But if she competes **getting stressed** that she has to win, **getting anxious** that she cannot lose, **crying** if she doesn't qualify, or if she doesn't win a medal, then I think it's damaging and that **at seven years of age, one should avoid it**.

This father marks a clear line between what he considers the good aspects of engaging in sports, supporting the idea that swimming is an opportunity for having fun and social-

izing and the unacceptable aspect, objecting to the competitive aspect that accompanies his daughter's swimming and suggesting that at his daughter's young age the stress of competition is damaging. A little while later in the interview the same father empathizes with his daughter's grueling schedule.

Excerpt 13b—(Roman Family)

> Father She was **tired**. I mean when someone spends all those hours at school and then comes home at 5 o'clock to get the bag and go swimming . . . **it's not easy**. On Saturdays when one would like to relax, she has to go swimming at eleven for two hours.

This father is worried that it is not easy for his daughter to go swimming after a full day at school. By using the generic pronoun, "one would like to relax," he is suggesting that wanting to rest on Saturday is the normal thing to do, but that his daughter is unable to do so because she has a two-hour swimming practice. According to this father, competition, pressure, and exhaustion are the undesirable consequences of his child's participation in extracurricular activities.

This Roman parent raises a dilemma that he must face; although he recognizes the positive benefits of children's engagement in extracurricular activities, the socialization to valuable traits and skills and the experience of fun in social activities, at the same time he is concerned that these same activities impede on his child's time and compromise her well-being. The L.A. parents in our sample did not express concerns that participation in sports, music, and other activities could entail negative ramifications for their children. If they were dissatisfied, and this was rarely expressed, it was because of the burden that they themselves felt from the need to accommodate their children's busy schedules.

Discussion

Weisner (2002, 2008) suggests that parents, in raising a family, are engaged in a "project" in which they attempt to achieve a balance between their goals and desires for their family and what is possible given their circumstances. What parents want for their family reflects their local community's goals and values, but these beliefs don't just somehow get enacted in motivated actions. Rather, through sustaining routine activities balance is achieved and meaning is created and maintained.

The study of our L.A. and Roman families' daily practices reveals that the children in both contexts engaged in similar after school routine activities; parents in both sites arranged their children's lives in very similar ways in terms of type and number of extracurricular activities. Furthermore, interviews, spontaneous conversations, and interactions between parents and children show that the L.A. and Roman parents' attitudes toward these activities were often similar, perceiving extracurricular activities as a means for acquiring important skills and traits that will ensure their children's future professional and personal success. These findings suggest that, parents' "projects" in the two sites share some goals, beliefs, and routines with regard to what valuable practices parents should provide for children and children should engage in.

Following Lareau's argument (2003) that middle class families purposefully provide an environment that enhances their children's growth, for example by enrolling them in many activities as part of "concerted cultivation" parenting style, we suggest that the analysis presented here illustrates that "concerted cultivation" is not a U.S.-exclusive preference of middle-class families; rather, it reflects an increasingly shared middle-class values and ideologies pertaining to parenting and the perception of childhood in other

parts of the Western world. Yet, at the same time we found that parents emphasized different things when describing the environment within which their children could develop, as shown below.

Weisner (2008) explains that sustaining routine activities may be at times difficult as it requires juggling conflicts of interest and the pushes and pulls of life, and that everyday accommodations help keep parents' commitment to the "project." This may explain why parents in both contexts rarely complained about their children's heavy activity schedules. When they did, however, the L.A. parents brought up the conflict between the high value they attach to these activities and their investment of time and effort in the numerous activities (e.g., Excerpts 11–12). The Roman parents, in contrast, appeared torn between the benefits of participating in activities and the possible negative side effects of busy schedules and high expectations on children's well-being (e.g., Excerpts 4, 13).

The negative evaluation of the heightened busyness of children and the pressure put on them to excel, as been seen clearly in the Roman parents' discourse, is only at times discussed in U.S. popular literature and newspapers. Yet, at the core of academic literature on contemporary U.S. childhood is the idea that the perception of childhood has changed: instead of parents protecting children from life's dangers, parents are preparing them to deal with adult life (Mintz 2004). In line with this approach is a new understanding of what constitutes children's work; rather than children's contribution to the household economy, children's engagement in school and extracurricular activities is viewed as the new children's work. Investment in school-related and other activities is understood as a contemporary way of accumulating social and cultural capital (Miller 2005; Qvortrup 2005; Zelizer 2005).

A further element emerging from the comparison of the Roman and L.A. parents' discourses has to do with parental involvement and support (for discussion of parent involvement in homework activities see Forsberg 2009, and Wingard and Forsberg 2008). The topic of parental involvement surfaces in a number of L.A. excerpts. In Excerpt 6, the mother admits that she and her husband need to push their daughter to stay committed to her ice-skating activity, and the parents in Excerpts 11 and 12 recognize that their children's activities require their time and effort. Most notable, in Excerpt 9 as the mother expresses her expectations from her daughter's performance in the swimming pool, she reveals her roles as a motivator and socializing agent to competitiveness. Parental involvement is often viewed in the United States as essential to children's participation in extracurricular activities, as many sports recreational organizations, such as the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO), Little League Baseball Organization, and National Junior Basketball (NJB), rely completely on parents volunteering for the essential roles of coaches, assistant coaches, and referees, as well as the less critical roles of "team parent," "snack bar duties," and more. Seven of the L.A. parents volunteered regularly for these assignments. Further, our L.A. parents almost always attended practices and games to supervise their children's performance and cheer from the sideline. Indeed, our Roman parents' involvement was made explicit less frequently and did not suggest that parents may act like coaches pushing children to perform and achieve. The little evidence we did find in our data suggest that parents perceived their role more as assisting their children (Excerpt 10) or as protecting them from possible negative consequences (Excerpt 13). It is important to note that the extracurricular sports activities were organized very differently in Italy. All organizations that offered children's activities are private institutions that hire their own coaches and pay their referees and therefore parents were not expected to be involved in the actual execution of the activity itself. Thus, in the Italian context parents are not required to volunteer and rarely enter the sport realm of their children, but as spectators.

These two manifestations of parental involvement further refine the proposal that parents' in both sites engage in concerted cultivation. Although both sets of parents

purposely enroll their children' into activities that can facilitate their development and better their skills, the parents' interpretations of the role that they have to play in their children's activities and the degree of their own involvement differ. Thus, concerted cultivation may be viewed not only from a teleological perspective, that such parenting approach is designed to better a child's life, but it also reflects a belief that parents should share and experience activities with their children, although in varying ways, as the analysis of L.A. and the Roman parents' discourses reveals.

Analysis of parents' talk also indicates that the L.A. parents tended to put an emphasis on children's performance (e.g., Excerpt 1—improving grades, Excerpt 8—going to the Olympics and receiving Ivy League scholarships, and Excerpt 9—putting great effort into swimming hard), whereas the Roman parents did not raise the issue at all. This tendency was also apparent in our observations of numerous trophies, medals, certificates of recognition and other documents that were displayed in the L.A. homes, and the almost complete absence of such objects in the Roman homes.

The increased emphasis on performance is also observed by Elkind (1994, 2001), who notes that the orientation of schools has changed and that children are often tested and are pressured to compete and excel. These types of expectations underscore the changed perception that children are able to sustain adultlike demands and pressures. Elkind argues that the shift in society's attitude toward children, particularly in the middle class, is related to the postmodern experience of a rapidly changing world, which increases parental stress. He continues, "Parents need the support, the companionship, and the symbolic achievements of their children to relieve their stress" (Elkind 2001:48), suggesting that parents may treat their children as adults, expecting competence and self-reliance beyond their cognitive and emotional developmental abilities. In this line with Elkind's (2001) and Mintz (2004) views, it may not be surprising that our L.A. parents select, prioritize and invest in extracurricular and educational activities that they believe will prepare their children for survival in the world, and that they perceive the need to regularly assess their children's performance and to reward achievement, as it helps determine the level of preparedness of a child.

The strong presence of a preference for viewing children's extracurricular activities as opportunities for fostering their talents, enhancing their performance found in the L.A. data allows for a more subtle interpretation of Lareau's "concerted cultivation" (2003) parenting style among the parents in both sites. We suggest that there are variations across sites regarding the motivation propelling this parenting strategy. Whereas both sets of parents view this approach to childrearing as benefiting their children in the long run, only in our L.A. parents' discourses (although not all parents brought it up) did we find the perception that in addition to acquiring skills and values important for adulthood, children also needed to push themselves and excel in the activities that they participate in, thus linking this parenting style to a form of parental involvement, coaching children for competition and success. When the topic of competition was raised in the Roman interviews, parents appeared conflicted, hinting that competition should not enter the realm of children's activities, as if it contrasts with the perception of children's world as free, untouched by values prevalent in the adult world. In addition, our Roman parents often raised the dilemma of leaving a child's time unstructured versus having it "ruled" by schedules. In these discourses, they implicitly presented their role as protecting their children's time (Excerpt 7 "They're forced to do absolutely nothing") and well-being (Excerpt 13 "I think it's damaging and that at seven years of age, one should avoid it"). Thus, although we offer evidence that the parenting notion of concerted cultivation is present in both our Roman and L.A. parents, we call attention to different reasons, specifically the pressure to excel and assess performance present in the L.A. sample, that

cause parents to engage in such child-rearing practices, and to different manifestations of this parenting approach, that is, the differing parental involvement.

Whether these differences may be related to an overall differing cultural beliefs or social class is not always easy to assess. Yet, it is relevant to note that the Roman parents who presented themselves in interviews as passive or tolerant of their children's lack of motivation or interest in engaging in activities have similar education and hold comparable jobs to their counterpart in L.A. parents who actively pushed their children to participate and excel in activities.

Further evidence that different cultural forces are at play is provided in certain academic and pubic discourses in Italy where a growing critique of extracurricular "structured" activities argue that children's time is often colonized by adult "models," and that these models shape children's time both in quantity, making it busier, and in quality, structuring children's lives according to schedules and goals that match those of the workplace (Belloni 2005; Bertolini and Frabboni 1989; Maggioni and Baraldi 1997; Toffano 1993). Overall, there is a sustained cultural preference for children to have a "child's life," and not to be burdened by obligations and pressures. Indeed, we have found in the Roman parents' discourse the echo of these public messages (Excerpts 7, 11a, and 11b).

Other European researchers (Baraldi et al. 2003; Maggioni and Baraldi 1997; Qvortrup et al. 1994; see James et al. 1998 for a review) strongly argue in favor of giving children the opportunity to choose and self-manage their own time and experiences. In a world that is materially and symbolically adult sized, urban spaces allow fewer opportunities for children to meet in informal ways and freely explore the world around them. These authors argue in favor of initiatives run and sustained by children, according to their interests and competences (Corsaro 1997). One such project is the Città dei Bambini (the City of Children; see Tonucci 1996; Tonucci and Rissotto 2001) in which a children's "council" is given power to propose and apply changes and innovations to the city's spatial and temporal structure (i.e., safe streets, parks, buildings, but also hours of school, play, and commute) to better suit children's needs. This orientation, which criticizes the overorganization of children's time and attempts to maintain a clear separation between children's and adults' worlds, suggests a different approach to childhood, one in which, rather than needing preparation, children are in need of protection so that they can experience the highly valued play time, friendship, and a sense of community.

We have seen that both L.A. and Roman parents engage and sustain routine activities, which, they believe, are important for their families. Both sets of parents align with each other over the long-term educational values embedded in participation in extracurricular activities. Yet, as Weisner points out (2008), engaging in activities alone is not sufficient for understanding the meaning that families attach to these activities, rather, one needs to take into account the constellation of goals and local constraints. The parents in our study expressed differing views regarding the role these activities play in their children's lives. Considering them as being part of "children's world," Roman parents seem to emphasize the leisure and nonmandatory character of activities, distancing themselves from the possible intense involvement in activities and their children's performance. Perceiving activities as tools for teaching and preparing their children for adults' life, L.A. parents seem to emphasize, instead, the need for children to feel committed and to orient their efforts toward accomplished and successful performance.

Through the examination of parents' attitudes toward children's extracurricular activities and the meanings they attach to the engagement in such activities in two different locales, we hope to have contributed to the understanding of how local perspectives on childhood and children's worlds may influence the daily life of children and families. In the future we hope to explore how local constraints, such as work and school schedules, economic limitations, and accessibility to extracurricular activities, may influence both the

practice of children's and parents' engagement in such activities as well as parents' and other educators' attitudes toward these activities as socializing tools for adulthood. Future research on children's perspectives on their own participation in extracurricular activities as well as on the long-term effect of engagement in activities will further our knowledge of the transfer of cultural values and the impact of such routines activities on children's well-being.

References Cited

Andersen, Ross E., Carlos J. Crespo, Susan J. Bartlett, Lawrence J. Cheskin, and Michael Pratt
1998 Relationship of Physical Activity and Television Watching with Body Weight and Level of Fatness among Children. JAMA 279:938–942.
Baraldi, Claudio, Maggioni Guido, and Fabrizio Pappalardo, eds.
2003 I Diritti di Cittadinanza dei Minori tra Partecipazione e Controllo Trieste: Edizioni Goliardiche.
Bartko, Todd W., and Jacquelynne S. Eccles
2003 Adolescent Participation in Structured and Unstructured Activities: A Person-Oriented Analysis. Journal of Youth and Adolescence 32(4):233–241.
Belloni, Carmen
2005 Vite da Bambini: La Quotidianità dai 5 ai 13 Anni, ed. Archivio Storico della città di Torino, Torino.
Bertolini, Piero, and Franco Frabboni
1989 Progetto Infanzia. Firenze: La Nuova Italia.
Bruner, Jerome
1966 Toward a Theory of Instruction. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Citati, Piero
2004 Elogio del Tempo Vuoto. La Repubblica, 12 Febbraio: 1.
Coakley, Jay
2006 The Good Father: Parental Expectations and Youth Sports. Leisure Studies 25(2):153–163.
Corsaro, William
1997 The Sociology of Childhood. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge.
Crain, William
2003 Reclaiming Childhood: Letting Children be Children in our Achievement-Oriented Society. New York: Henry Holt.
Darrah, Charles N., James M. Freeman, and J. A. English-Lueck
2007 Busier Than Ever: Why American Families Can't Slow Down. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Dunn, Janet S., David A. Kinney, and Sandra L. Hofferth
2003 Parental Ideologies and Children's After-School Activities. American Behavioral Scientist 46(10):1359–1386.
Duranti, Alessandro
1997 Linguistic Anthropology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Eccles, Jacquelynne S., Bonnie L. Barber, Margaret Stone, and James Hunt
2003 Extracurricular Activities and Adolescent Development. Journal of Social Issues 59(4):865–889.
Elkind, David
1994 Ties That Stress: The New Family Imbalance. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
2001 The Hurried Child: Growing up too Fast too Soon. Cambridge, MA: Perseus.
Eurispes
2002 3° Rapporto Nazionale sulla Condizione dell'Infanzia e dell'Adolescenza. Roma: Edizioni Eurispes.
Feldman, Amy F., and Jennifer L. Matjasko
2005 The Role of School-Based Extracurricular Activities in Adolescent Development: A Comprehensive Review and Future Directions. Review of Educational Research 75(2):159–210.
Forsberg, Lucas
2009 Involved Parenthood: Everyday Lives of Swedish Middle-Class Families. Linköping, Sweden: Linköping University Press.
Garfinkel, Harold
1967 Studies in Ethnomethodology. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Goffman, Erving
1959 The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. New York: Anchor.
Guicciardi, Marco, Saracino Alice, and Ricci Ombretta
2006 Attività Sportive, Esperienza Scolastica e Life Skills in Adolescenza. Psicologia dell'Educazione e della Formazione 8(3):335–352.
Gutiérrez, Kris, Carolina Izquierdo, and Tamar Kremer-Sadlik
2005 Middle-Class Working Families' Ideologies and Engagement in Children's Extra-Curricular Activities. Paper presented at the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Annual Conference on Working Families, Chicago, Illinois.
Harkness, Sara, and Charles Super
1996 Parents' Cultural Belief Systems: Their Origins, Expressions, and Consequences. New York: Guilford.
2006 Themes and Variations: Parental Ethnotheories in Western Cultures. *In* Parental Beliefs, Behaviors, and Parent–Child Relations: A Cross-Cultural Perspective. Kenneth H. Rubin and Ock Boon Chung, eds. Pp. 61–79. New York: Psychology.
Heath, Shirley Brice
1991 "It's about Winning!": The Language of Knowledge in Baseball. *In* Monograph Perspectives on Socially Shared Cognition. Lauren B. Resnick, John M. Levine, and Stephanie D. Teasley, eds. Pp. 101–124. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
Hofferth, Sandra L., and John F. Sandberg
2001 How American Children Spend their Time. Journal of Marriage and the Family 63(2):295–308.
Istat
2005 La Vita Quotidiana dei Bambini. Roma: Istituto Nazionale di Statistica. Electronic document, http://www.istat.it/salastampa/comunicati/non_calendario/20051117_00/testointegrale.pdf, accessed November 17, 2007.
2007 Indagine Multiscopo sulle famiglie "Uso del tempo"—Anni 2002–2003. Roma: Istituto Nazionale di Statistica.
James, Allison, Chris Jenks, and Alan Prout
1998 Theorizing Childhood. Cambridge: Polity.
Klein, Wendy, Carolina Izquierdo, Thomas Bradbury, and Francesco Arcidiacono
2005 Collaboration and Conflict: Insights into the Division of Household Labor among Working Couples in the United States and Italy. Paper presented at the 104th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington, DC, November 30–December 4, 2005.
Kremer-Sadlik, Tamar, Marilena Fatigante, and Alessandra Fasulo
2008 Discourse on Family Time: The Cultural Interpretation of Family Togetherness in Los Angeles and Rome. Ethos 36(3):283–309.
Kremer-Sadlik, Tamar, and Jee Lydia Kim
2007 Lessons from Sports: Children's Socialization to Values through Family Interaction during Sports Activities. Discourse and Society 18(1):35–52.
Lareau, Annette
2003 Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Larson, Reed, and Suman Verma
1999 How Children and Adolescents around the World Spend Time: Work, Play, and Developmental Opportunities, Psychological Bulletin 125(6):701–736.
Levey, Hilary
2009 Pageant Princesses and Math Whizzes: Understanding Children's Activities as a Form of Children's Work. Childhood 16(2):195–212.
Maggioni, Guido, and Claudio Baraldi, eds.
1997 Cittadinanza dei Bambini e Costruzione Sociale dellIinfanzia. Urbino: Quattroventi.
Mahoney, Joseph L., Reed W. Larson, Jacquelynne S. Eccles, and Heather Lord
2005 Organized Activities as Development Contexts for Children and Adolescents. *In* Organized Activities as Contexts for Development: Extracurricular Activities, After-School and Community Programs. Joseph L. Mahoney, Reed W. Larson, and Jacquelynne S. Eccles, eds. Pp. 3–22. New York: Routledge.
Miller, Pavla
2005 Useful and Priceless Children in Contemporary Welfare States. Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society 12:(1):3–41.
Mintz, Steven
2004 Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Pietrantoni, Luca, and Mina Ria
2001 Attività Fisica e Sportiva Negli Adolescenti e Salute Biopsicosociale. Psicologia della Salute 3:9–20.
Potter, Jonathan, and Margaret Wetherell
1987 Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour. London: Sage.
Qvortrup, Jens
2005 Varieties of Childhood. *In* Studies in Modern Childhood: Society, Agency, and Culture. Jens Qvortrup, ed. Pp. 1–20. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Qvortrup, Jens, Marjatta Bardy, Giovanni B. Sgritta, and Helmut Winterberger
1994 Childhood Matters. Social Theory, Practice and Politics. Avebury: European Center of Vienna.
Redekop, Paul
1984 Sport and the Masculine Ethos: Some Implications for Family Interaction. International Journal of Comparative Sociology 25(3–4):262–269.
Schaffer, H. Rudolph
1996 Social Development. Oxford: Blackwell.
Shore, Bradd
2003 Class Acts: Activity Fetishism and Busyness as Usual. Paper presented at Revisiting the American Dream: How U.S. Families Cope with Work and Family Life panel of the 102nd Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Chicago, IL, November 19–23.
Testu, François, and Roger Fontaine
2001 L'Enfant et ses Rythmes: Pourquoi il faut Changer L'école. Paris: Calmann-Lévy.
Toffano, Martini E.
1993 Tre Spazi Educativi per il Bambino. Scuola dell'Infanzia e Scuola Elementare in Rapporto a Famiglia Edextrascuola. *In* Il Bambino Protagonista. Quale Educazione. O. Cian, ed. Pp. 171–210. Milano: Unicopli.
Tonucci, Francesco
1996 La Città dei Bambini. Milano: Franco Angeli.
Tonucci, Francesco, and Antonella Rissotto
2001 Why Do We Need Children's Participation? The Importance of Children's Participation in Changing the City. Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology 11:407–419.
Weisner, Thomas
1998 Human Development, Child Well-Being, and the Cultural Project of Development. *In* Socioemotional Development across Cultures. Sharma Dinesh and Kurt W. Fischer, eds. Pp. 69–85. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
2002 Ecocultural Understanding of Children's Development Pathways. Human Development 45:275–281.
2008 Well-Being and Sustainability of Daily Routines: Families with Children with Disabilities in the United States. *In* Pursuits of Happiness: Well-Being in Anthropological Perspective. Gordon Mathews and Carolina Izquierdo, eds. Pp. 228–247. Oxford: Berghann.
Wingard, Leah, and Lucas Forsberg
2008 Parent Involvement in Children's Homework in American and Swedish Dual-Earner Families. Journal of Pragmatics 41:1576–1595.
Zelizer, Viviana A.
2005 The Priceless Child revisited. *In* Studies in Modern Childhood: Society, Agency, and Culture. Jens Qvortrup, ed. Pp. 184–200. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Toppan Best-set Premedia Limited	
Journal Code: AEQ	Proofreader: Emily
Article No: 1066	Delivery date: 2 March 2010
Page Extent: 20	