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Perceptions and Practices of Families with Economic Disadvantages Regarding Giftedness and Family Involvement

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Themes emerged around each of the three research questions including themes for beliefs and experiences pertaining to giftedness: resiliency, creativity, overexcitability, divergent thinking, twice-exceptionality, intelligence, asynchronous development, and negative behaviors. Findings also point to involvement in education on all of Epstein's Six Types of Involvement with common supports and barriers among participants. The findings were analyzed through the lenses of Funds of Knowledge, underrepresentation of children with economic disadvantages in gifted education, and Epstein's Six Types of Involvement. The results of this study provide implications for policy and practice that could impact underrepresentation. School districts need to review their identification policies and ensure that they have plans in place that would increase identification for students with economic disadvantage. Schools and teachers could be including parents in referrals processes and improve communication about gifted identification and services.

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Perceptions and Practices of Families with Economic Disadvantages Regarding

Giftedness and Family Involvement

A Dissertation in Practice

Presented to

the Faculty of the Morgridge College of Education

University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Jennifer Lemoine

June 2022

Advisor: Dr. Norma Hafenstein

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|--------|
| Abstract | ii |
| Acknowledgments | |
| List of Tables | viii |
| List of Figures | ix |
| Chapter One: Introduction | 1 |
| Gifted Programming and Education | 1 |
| The Problem of Practice National Context | 3 |
| The Problem of Practice Local Context | 5 |
| Personal Context | 8 |
| Underrepresentation and Family Involvement..... | 10 |
| Purpose of the Study | 11 |
| Research Questions | 12 |
| Research Methodology | 12 |
| Summary | 14 |
| Chapter Two: Literature Review | 15 |
| Definition of Term | 16 |
| Definitions of Gifted | 19 |
| Family Identification of Giftedness | 21 |
| Gifted Identification in Colorado | 22 |
| Gifted Programming | 23 |
| Definitions of Poverty | 23 |
| Economic Disadvantage..... | 25 |
| Cognitive Development | 27 |
| Social Development | 28 |
| Language Development | 29 |
| Impact on Academic Achievement | 31 |
| Impact on Gifted Identification | 32 |
| Twice Exceptionality | 37 |
| Alternate Identification Practices | 38 |
| Referral for Gifted Identification | 39 |
| The Schools' Role in Supporting Economically Disadvantaged Families | 39 |

| | |
|--|--------|
| Theoretical Framework | 42 |
| Family Involvement | 43 |
| Economically Disadvantage Family Involvement Impact on Gifted Education | 44 |
| Barriers to Involvement | 47 |
| Supports for Involvement | 48 |
| Conceptual Framework: Six Types of Involvement | 50 |
| A Gap in the Research | 53 |
| Summary | 54 |
| Chapter 3: Methods | 55 |
| Statement of Purpose | 55 |
| Research Questions | 56 |
| Hermeneutic Phenomenology | 56 |
| Personal Context | 58 |
| Rationale | 59 |
| Setting and Participants..... | 60 |
| Research Design..... | 63 |
| Data Collection and Procedures | 64 |
| Data Analysis | 71 |
| Role of the Researcher | 76 |
| Summary | 77 |
| Chapter 4: Findings..... | 78 |
| Purpose..... | 78 |
| Research Questions | 79 |
| Summary of Participants..... | 79 |
| Participant A | 80 |
| Participant B..... | 81 |
| Participant C..... | 82 |
| Participant D | 83 |
| Participant E..... | 85 |
| Participant F | 86 |
| Summary | 87 |
| Identification of Initial Themes: Research Question One..... | 87 |
| Initial Theme: Resiliency | 88 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Initial Theme: Creativity | 89 |
| Initial Theme: Sensitivity..... | 89 |
| Initial Theme: Twice Exceptionality/Overexcitability | 90 |
| Identification of Themes: Research Question One | 91 |
| Resiliency..... | 92 |
| Creativity..... | 94 |
| Overexcitability..... | 96 |
| Twice Exceptionality | 98 |
| Intelligence and/or Academic Ability | 102 |
| Divergent Thinking | 105 |
| Opportunity for Gifted Programming | 106 |
| Asynchronous Development..... | 108 |
| Behavior Problems in School..... | 110 |
| Summary of Research Question One | 112 |
| Identification of Themes: Research Question Two | 113 |
| Parenting | 114 |
| Communication..... | 118 |
| Volunteering | 120 |
| Learning at Home | 122 |
| Decision Making..... | 126 |
| Collaborating with Community | 128 |
| Summary of Research Question Two | 129 |
| Identification of Themes: Research Question Three | 129 |
| Supports | 131 |
| Barriers..... | 136 |
| Alignment of School and Home Expectations | 141 |
| Summary of Research Question Three | 146 |
| Summary | 148 |
| Chapter 5: Discussion | 151 |
| Lens of Funds of Knowledge..... | 152 |
| Research Question One..... | 154 |
| Research Questions Two and Three | 157 |
| Lens of Underrepresentation..... | 159 |
| Research Question One..... | 160 |
| Research Question Two and Three | 162 |
| Epstein's Six Types of Involvement..... | 164 |
| Research Question Two | 164 |
| Research Question Three | 165 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Implications..... | 167 |
| Policy Implications | 167 |
| Practice Implications..... | 172 |
| Summary of Implication | 174 |
| Limitations | 174 |
| Future Research | 176 |
| Conclusion | 178 |
| References..... | 180 |
| Appendix A: Community Partner Agreement | 196 |
| Appendix B: Recruitment Email..... | 197 |
| Appendix C: Recruitment Flyer..... | 199 |
| Appendix D: Participant Consent Form..... | 200 |
| Signing the consent form | 202 |
| Appendix E: Interview Questions | 204 |

List of Tables

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| Table 1. 1 | 7 |
| Table 2. 1 | 24 |
| Table 2. 2 | 52 |
| Table 3. 1 | 65 |
| Table 3. 2 | 68 |
| Table 3. 3 | 69 |
| Table 4. 1 | 75 |
| Table 4. 2 | 92 |
| Table 4. 3 | 114 |
| Table 4. 4 | 130 |

List of Figures

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| Figure 1.1 | 3 |
| Figure 1.2 | 4 |
| Figure 1.3 | 6 |
| Figure 2.1 | 29 |
| Figure 3.1 | 71 |
| Figure 3.2 | 75 |
| Figure 4.1 | 147 |

Chapter One: Introduction

Identification is a constant struggle working with the gifted population because the current systems are not equitable to low-income students (Burney & Beilke, 2008; Plucker & Peters, 2017; Slocumb & Payne, 2011). To understand the scope of the underrepresentation of economically disadvantaged children in gifted education, it is essential to recognize the problem and review the literature related to the problem. This research study addressed the persistent problem of underrepresentation by exploring one possible reason, families with economic disadvantages, beliefs, experiences, and practices pertaining to giftedness and family involvement in education. Chapter one describes gifted programming and the problem of practice of underrepresentation at a national, local, and personal level. Additionally, it will provide information about the study's community partner, purpose, and research questions.

Gifted Programming and Education

Before the under-representation of children with economic disadvantages in gifted education can be outlined, an understanding of the purpose and importance of gifted education or programming must be explained. Gifted education aims to encourage and advance gifted learners' talents and abilities (Siegle et al., 2016). According to Callahan and Hertberg-Davis (2018), there are two belief systems about the purpose of gifted education and programming; the first is to give gifted children the opportunity to realize their potential and become happy and productive adults and the second reason is that

gifted children are a resource to our nation and for our future, if they meet their fullest potential. Beyond meeting a child's academic needs to ensure they meet their fullest potential, gifted children have social and emotional needs that are part of their giftedness (Wiley, 2018). Wiley (2018) stated that it is essential for gifted children to receive an affective curriculum specific to their social and emotional needs and that it supports overall student wellness. The National Association for Gifted Children (2019) developed national programming standards for Pre-K through grade twelve to assist schools in providing quality services and programming for gifted learners. The six standards cover learning and development, assessment, curriculum and instruction, learning environments, programming, and professional learning. Schools can use the standards as a basis for policies, rules, and procedures for systematic programs (National Association for Gifted Children, 2019).

According to Silverman (2020), when educators do not provide gifted services, we send a message that what gifted children need is unnecessary. When we do not meet children's needs, they learn to change who they are, work to lesser expectations and standards, and downplay their giftedness until it vanishes (Silverman, 2020). Eventually, this will impact the individual child and society because we have lost what that child may have been capable of contributing (Silverman, 2020). If we cannot identify gifted children from underserved populations, we are taking away access to gifted services and programming that they need to reach their fullest potential.

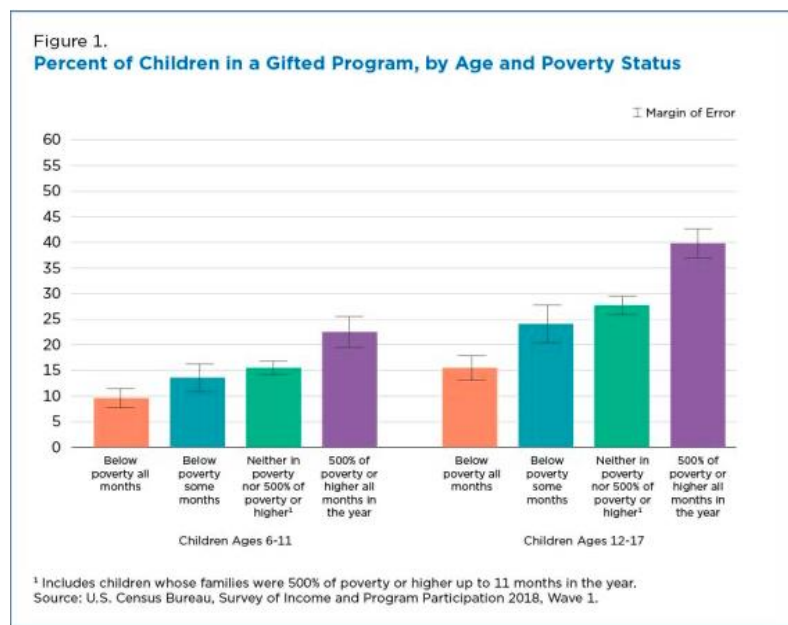
The Problem of Practice National Context

Students with economic disadvantages are consistently the most underrepresented population in gifted programming (Peters & Engerrand, 2016; Garn et al., 2010).

According to the United States Census Bureau (2020), children living in poverty only some months of the year were more likely to be in gifted programs than students living in poverty all months of the year. Children whose families were five times above the poverty level were more likely to be in gifted programs than all other poverty status groups of children ages six to seventeen (United States Census Bureau, 2020). Figure 1.1 shows the U.S. Census Bureau (2020) data from 2018 on the percent of students enrolled in gifted programs organized by age and poverty status. This demonstrates that students who live in poverty throughout the year have the smallest percentage in gifted programming.

Figure 1.1

Percent of Children in the United States in Gifted Programs by Poverty Status



A growing gap at the top of the achievement scale between students from middle to upper-class families and families with economic disadvantages perpetuates the underrepresentation of students with economic disadvantages in gifted programs (National Association for Gifted Children, n.d.). Figure 1.2 shows the percent of students scoring advanced on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in math and reading in grade four and eight across all states and in Colorado in 2013 (Plucker et al., 2015). “NAEP is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America’s students know and can do in various subject areas” (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2021, para 1).

Figure 1.2

Advanced Achievement and Low Income

| OUTCOMES | ALL STATES | | COLORADO | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|------------|
| | NOT LOW-INCOME | LOW-INCOME ¹ | NOT LOW-INCOME | LOW-INCOME |
| % Advanced G4 Math NAEP 2013 | 14 | 2 | 16 | 3 |
| % Advanced G8 Math NAEP 2013 | 14 | 3 | 18 | 4 |
| % Advanced G4 Reading NAEP 2013 | 14 | 3 | 16 | 3 |
| % Advanced G8 Reading NAEP 2013 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 1 |

¹ “Low-income” qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch

The gifted gap has not narrowed despite school districts and states making changes to the identification process to broaden participation in gifted programs (Burney & Beilke, 2008; Card & Giuliano, 2015; Hamilton et al., 2018; VanTassel-Baska et al., 2009). In the United States, 41 percent of children are from low-income families (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2018). The gaps Grissom et al. (2019) found in their research are extreme; students in the top 20 percent financially were more than seven times more

likely to receive gifted services than students in the lowest 20 percent. Their research suggests that "a student in the top SES quantile is about twice as likely to receive gifted services as a student in the lowest SES quantile in the same school who is achieving at similar levels in math and reading"(Grissom et al. para. 6).

Grissom et al. (2019) explain that low-income families have less access to schools and resources and are at a disadvantage when choosing gifted programs or securing outside testing for gifted identification. The lack of resources is not only financial resources; higher economic status also is connected with better relationships with teachers and the community and a greater understanding of influence and the school process for gifted referral (Grissom et al., 2019).

According to Slocumb and Payne (2011), identification processes that assume all students have the same opportunities when they come to school are not equitable and will result in extreme under-identification of an entire population segment. The lack of resources and opportunities that children living in poverty have access can manifest in lower standardized test scores, behaviors, lack of goals and planning skills, conflict resolution deficits, and lack of essential academic skills, which will impact gifted identification (Slocumb & Payne, 2011; Burney & Beilke, 2008).

The Problem of Practice Local Context

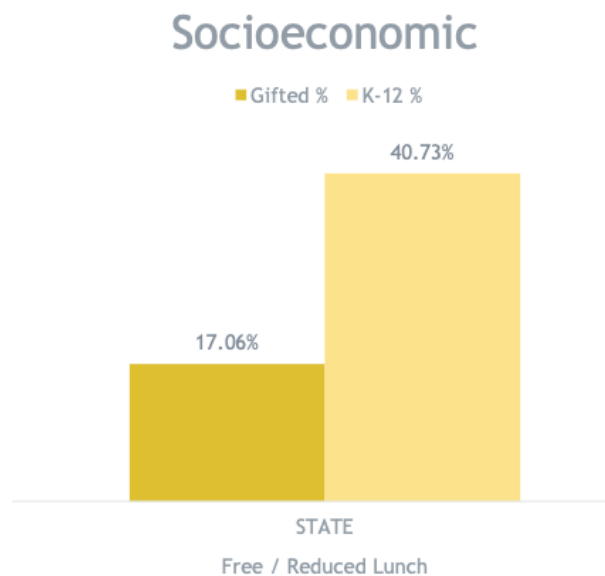
According to the Colorado Department of Education (2021),

“The Exceptional Children’s Educational Act (ECEA) requires all administrative units (AUs) in Colorado to identify and serve students between the ages of five and twenty-one, and age four in administrative units with Early Access. AUs include school districts, Charter School Institute (CSI), multi-district administrative units and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) (para 1)”.

Identification and programming for gifted children is required by law in the state of Colorado and each AU is responsible to provide a gifted education programming plan that meets the key requirements of ECEA (Colorado Department of Education, 2021); however, underrepresentation is still an issue in Colorado, 40.73% of students qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch; in comparison, only 17.06% of the students identified as gifted receive free and reduced lunch, see figure 1.3. (Colorado Department of Education, 2019).

Figure 1.3

Colorado Data on Free and Reduced Lunch and Gifted



Poverty is a growing concern in Colorado. Recruitment of participants was attempted from school districts in three counties and will be referred to as County A, County B, and County C. In 2019 County A reported a poverty rate of 5.9 percent, County B reported 2.6 percent, and County C reported 4.5 percent (CDPHE, 2019). The food bank run by Southeast Community Outreach (SECOR) serves all three counties, and

in 2020, they provided food for 60,000 people. Seven school districts find their home in County A. Table 1.1 shows the school district free and reduced lunch and gifted percentages in each district. Data on the percentage of gifted students who receive free and reduced lunch at each district could not be obtained and is not reported to the public.

Table 1. 1

School Districts in County A (Colorado Department of Education, 2021)

| District | Free and Reduced Lunch | Identified Gifted |
|------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| District 1 | 74.2% | 4.9% |
| District 2 | 30.7% | 1.7% |
| District 3 | 30.3% | 8.2% |
| District 4 | 43.8% | 0.9% |
| District 5 | 61.3% | 4.3% |
| District 6 | 18.5% | 11.2% |
| District 7 | 81.7% | 6.0% |

A large district in County B reported eleven percent of students received free and reduced lunch, and 9.9 percent are identified as gifted and County C reported 26.5 percent of students received free and reduced lunch, and 2.4 percent are identified as gifted (Colorado Department of Education, 2021). Despite Colorado state mandates for gifted identification and programming, students from economically disadvantaged families are not receiving services at the same rate as their more economically advantaged peers.

Personal Context

The underrepresentation of the economically disadvantaged in gifted programming is a topic of interest linked to my personal experiences. Growing up in a family with economic disadvantages and not being recognized as gifted by my school system has impacted my life. I felt like an outsider at school most of the time during my childhood. I lived in a small rural community where everyone knew my family and our economic status. My teachers made assumptions about my abilities based on my family's lacking income and education. There is evidence that the traditional referral-based system tends to overlook potential from disadvantaged families (Card & Giuliano, 2015; Woods & Achey, 1990).

At the beginning of first grade, I was placed in remedial groups and stayed there throughout elementary school. I was bored, and though an avid reader at home, I shut down and stopped doing schoolwork at school. I fulfilled the image that my teachers assumed for me. By middle school, I had completely given up and started acting up in classes to regularly get sent out of the classroom. My parents were young, uneducated, and did not have the financial resources or the influence to advocate for gifted testing or programming. My mother did not feel she had the right to question the school system or my teachers, which lead me to my interest in family perceptions of giftedness and family involvement. According to Kitano (2003), "Parents and families are among the most important influences on children's academic performance, particularly in families most at risk for school failure based on poverty" (p. 298).

My background as a student combined with a high school teacher who recognized my potential nudged me toward a career as an educator. My career naturally led me to a low-income school, and I have worked in schools serving economically challenged communities for more than twenty years. Sixteen of those years have been in the Denver, Colorado metro area. When I began working with gifted children, I felt like I found my place for the first time in education; the more I learned about gifted children the more I wanted to learn. Although I did not receive gifted programming as a child, learning about giftedness and possessing so many of the characteristics compelled me to fight for children who needed gifted services, so they had opportunities to realize their fullest potential. It also pushed me to reach my fullest potential through higher education.

Over the last twenty years, I have witnessed first-hand the inequity in resources, curriculum, opportunities, and programming for gifted students in low-income schools and communities. Many families lack basic needs, such as food and school supplies. The need for these essentials led me to SouthEast Community OutReach (SECOR) ten years ago to partner with their food bank in the creation of Food for Thought, a program that provides weekend food bags and yearly school supplies to families at the school where I work and now more than thirty others. Even with the addition of food and supplies to support families with resources, students are still not identified as gifted at the same rate as more affluent schools in the school district where I am employed. The gifted identification process has become solely based on quantitative measures, and fewer and fewer students are making the cut scores each year. Over the past three years, gifted identification numbers have decreased almost 50 percent at the school I work at, creating

an even more significant gap. Gifted identification numbers are dwindling, which will eventually impact the amount of funding and programming offered. This growing problem led me to want to understand more about the contributing factors of underrepresentation.

Over my twenty-year career, I have noticed that my school's families are not as involved in school activities and programs as parents at more affluent schools in our district. The parent, teacher, and community organization (PTCO) currently have three active members and provide no outside of school experiences or activities beyond a yearly fundraiser. I have also noticed that the school where I am employed provides limited opportunities throughout the year to bring families into the school. Excuses are made each year to justify the lack of activities, experiences, and opportunities planned for families and often the blame is put back on the family. The lack of the schools attempts to build relationships paired with my own personal families' inability to become involved sparked a fire to understand economically disadvantaged family beliefs, experiences, and practices with giftedness and involvement in their child's education. I am curious about what supports family involvement, what creates barriers for involvement pertaining to education and giftedness, and how involvement can connect to underrepresentation.

Underrepresentation and Family Involvement

Card and Giuliano (2015) point out that economically disadvantaged and minority students are underrepresented in gifted programs. While some of the underrepresentation or gap in identification can be due to differences in cognitive development, there is also evidence that the traditional referral-based system tends to overlook potential from

disadvantaged families. The conventional referral system relies mainly on parent and teacher referrals, and students from low-income and culturally diverse groups are often overlooked (Card & Giuliano, 2015; Jolly & Matthews, 2012). Parent referrals and nominations to gifted programs are essential in identifying gifted learners from underserved populations; however, more parents of white students among middle and higher class refer their children for gifted programming (McBee, 2006). According to Jolly and Matthews (2012), schools need to support parents in understanding the gifted label and provide academic and social and emotional resources because many parents are hesitant to label their children as gifted. Further research needs to focus on understanding low-income parent's perceptions, attitudes, values, and expectations of giftedness and gifted programs (Jolly & Matthews, 2012).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the beliefs, experiences, and practices of families with economic disadvantages pertaining to giftedness and family involvement in education.

To accomplish this, SECOR has been secured as a community partner to recruit food bank and Food for Thought food bag recipients as participants in the study. SECOR is interested in supporting families with economic disadvantages and providing resources and building blocks to create new opportunities within the community. This study provides information to SECOR about the lived experiences of families with economic disadvantages they can use to develop programs for community support through their

Community of Hope Program. Three research questions that support the purpose of the study will guide the research.

Research Questions

1. What are the beliefs and experiences of families with economic disadvantages pertaining to giftedness?
2. What are the beliefs of families with economic disadvantages pertaining to family involvement with their children's education?
3. What are the supports for and barriers to families with economic disadvantages involvement in their children's education?

Research Methodology

As a qualitative researcher, my own lived experience, will impact the research, and my interpretation of others' lived experiences is inevitable (Friesen et al., 2012). Reflections on my lived experiences and a desire to understand others' experiences with economic disadvantage and giftedness naturally fit with the research methodology, phenomenology. Phenomenology is a popular method in social and health sciences, psychology, and education (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), "a phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon" (p. 75). The researcher finds common meaning in how the individuals experience a phenomenon and describes the what and the how of the experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Moustakas (1994) state that phenomenology aims to uncover universal meanings derived from comprehensive descriptions of experiences and their meaning to the person who had the

experience. This study seeks to uncover the universal essence of economically disadvantaged families of gifted students and their beliefs, practices, and experiences pertaining to giftedness and family involvement. Understanding the shared beliefs, experiences, and practices of economically disadvantaged families could lead to a better understanding of the underrepresentation of economically disadvantaged students in gifted programming. Lockhart and Mun (2020) state that little attention has been given to the family's role in gifted and talented students' education which could be a missing piece to understanding underrepresentation. This focus is important, as economically disadvantaged students are historically underrepresented in gifted education (Garn et al., 2010), and little is known about the impact of family beliefs and practices on gifted identification (Jolly & Matthews, 2012). The importance of understanding the experiences of families with economic disadvantages can shed new light on possible causes of underrepresentation and help inform changes to gifted identification policies and procedures.

For the purpose of this study, a gifted person or child refers to any person who has been identified by a family member or has been formally identified by a professional. The term economic disadvantages include any person who is in need of resources to meet their basic needs such as a food bank. The term economic disadvantage is used interchangeably with low-income and poverty throughout the chapters. The decision to make the criteria of the study economic disadvantage and not Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) or specific income was made for several reasons. According to the Code of Federal Regulations (2020), FRL is confidential at schools and would make recruitment

of participants difficult because FRL status is not shared with school staff. The researcher did not want to put possible participants or recruiters in an uncomfortable situation that may cause offense by requiring FRL or a specific household income. It is important when conducting qualitative research for participants to feel comfortable sharing and the researcher did not want to create a situation that would hinder participants comfort level sharing their lived experiences (Peoples, 2019).

Summary

Understanding parent and guardian with economic disadvantages perceptions of giftedness and how parents perceive schools using their knowledge about their children could offer insights into possible causes of the underrepresentation of children with economic disadvantages in gifted programs (Jolly & Matthews, 2012). The persistent problem of underrepresentation of students with economic disadvantages in gifted programs along with the researcher's personal experiences led to this study which will explore the beliefs, experiences, and practices of families with economic disadvantages as they pertain to giftedness and involvement in their child's education, with the goal of a better understanding of the phenomenon. In chapter two, the researcher will review the current literature pertaining to underrepresentation, economic disadvantage, and family involvement, revealing a gap in the literature

Chapter Two: Literature Review

To research the phenomenon of underrepresentation of students with economic disadvantages in gifted education, families with economic disadvantages beliefs, experiences, and practices about giftedness and family involvement must be considered. First, there must be an understanding of the current literature and definitions of giftedness and poverty. This literature review begins by defining both gifted and poverty and other terms used in the study. Covering literature on economic disadvantage and its impact on development, achievement, and identification helps the reader understand the implications poverty can have on students, leading to underrepresentation and misconceptions about family involvement. Next, the literature review addresses the theoretical framework, Funds of Knowledge (Moll et al., 1992), which will provide the overall structure for the research with an asset approach and the belief that all families have knowledge gained through their experiences. The literature will also be presented on the Six Types of Family Involvement (Epstein et al., 2019) which will serve as the conceptual framework and guide data collection and analysis. The literature will also be examined for the impacts, practices, supports, and barriers of family involvement on a child's education through the lens of economic disadvantage and giftedness. Finally, the gaps and areas for further research that emerge through the review of current literature will be explained to point to the need for this research study on practices and perceptions

of economically disadvantaged families as they pertain to giftedness and family involvement in education.

Definition of Term

To better understand the terms used throughout the literature review and the study and to maintain continuity for the reader, there is a need to define critical terms presented in this document.

Underrepresentation

Merriam-Webster (n.d.) defines underrepresentation as inadequately represented. In gifted education, culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse students are not represented in gifted education at the same proportionality as their White and middle/upper-class peers (Goings & Ford, 2018).

National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC)

NAGC's mission is to support those who enhance gifted and talented children's growth and development through education, advocacy, community building, and research.

They aim to help parents and families, K-12 education professionals, including support service personnel, and members of the research and higher education community who work to help gifted and talented children as they strive to achieve their personal best and contribute to their communities (National Association for Gifted Children, 2019, para. 1).

Affective Needs

“Affective needs typically target awareness and growth in attitudes, emotions, and feelings. The affective domain describes the way people react emotionally and their ability to feel another’s pain or joy (Colorado Department of Education, 2021, para 1).”

Social and Emotional Learning

The process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Colorado Department of Education, 2021, para 1).

Marland Report

A report to the Congress of the United States, titled *Education of Gifted and Talented*. It is known as the Marland report because the U.S. commissioner of education, S. P. Marland, developed the report. This report brought gifted education to national attention. The report included the first definition of gifted and pointed out the gifted children's needs were not met. Not meeting gifted children's needs could lead to psychological damage and impair their talents (Colangelo & Davis, 2003).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

The No Child Left Behind law is the 2002 update to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to increase the federal role in holding the school accountable for student achievement. NCLB was the product of a collaboration between civil rights and business groups and both Democrats and Republicans on Capitol Hill and the Bush administration, which sought to advance American competitiveness and close the achievement gap between poor and minority students and their more advantaged peers. NCLB has become increasingly controversial with educators and the public since 2002 (Klein, 2015, para. 4).

The Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA)

ECEA is the law that delineates requirements for implementing program plans for gifted students' education (Colorado Department of Education, 2021)

Achievement Gap

Achievement gap is a term closely related to both the learning gap and opportunity gap and refers to the disparity in academic performance between different groups of students, such as between students from higher-income households and lower-income households (Barton & Coley, 2009).

Excellence Gap

Excellence gap is a term that refers to the disparity between high-income and low-income students who reach advanced levels of academic performance (Plucker et al., 2015).

Gifted Gap

The gifted gap is the disparity between high achieving students in high poverty school's participation in gifted programs compared to students in low poverty school's participation in gifted programs (Yaluma, 2020).

Administrative Unit (AU)

AU refers to School districts, Charter School Institute, multi-district administrative units and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (Colorado Department of Education, 2021).

SECOR cares

SouthEast Community OutReach (SECOR) is a local non-profit organization that supports families with economic disadvantages in need of resources such as food, clothing, life coaching, and holiday gifts (SECORcares, n.d.). SECOR provides a food market for families to access food and household goods. The Food for Thought Program

that provides weekly food bags, snacks, and yearly school supplies to area school children, the Mobile Market the provides food to the community on a food truck, the Community of Hope program providing life-coaching support, the Cars for Charity program that provides donated cars to families in need, and the Christmas Outreach program that provides holiday gifts to area children (SECORcares, n.d.). SECOR will also be the community partner involved in the study and will recruit participants from the many recipients of their various programs.

Socioeconomic Status

The American Psychological Association (2021) defines Socio economic status as “the social standing or call of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation” (para, 1)

High(er) Income

Households at the top half of the income distribution in the United States when adjusted for family size (Wyner, et al., 2009).

Low Income

Low income is defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (1998) as 80 percent of the median family income for the area, adjusted for areas with unusually high or low incomes or housing costs.

Definitions of Gifted

The first federal definition for gifted appeared in the Marland Report in 1972 (Jolly & Robins, 2016). The definition from the Marland Report (1972) is as follows:

Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who are capable of high performance by virtue of outstanding abilities.

These are children who require differentiated educational programs and services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program to realize their contribution to self and society. Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/ or potential ability in any of the following areas, singly or in combination:

1. general intellectual ability
2. specific academic aptitude
3. creative or productive thinking
4. leadership ability
5. visual and performing arts
6. psychomotor ability (p.2)

Since the Marland Report, there have been no federal mandates for gifted education put into place, so many states and districts have adopted their definitions of gifted (NAGC, 2000). The lack of a definition mandated federally creates inconsistency in services and programming across states, districts, and even schools (NAGC, 2000).

The state of Colorado adopted the following definition from the Exceptional Child's Education Act (2013):

Those persons between the ages of four and twenty-one whose aptitude or competence in abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment in one or more domains are so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs. Gifted children are hereafter referred to as gifted students. Children under five who are gifted may also be provided with early childhood special educational services. Gifted students include gifted students with disabilities (i.e., twice exceptional) and students with exceptional abilities or potential from all socio-economic, ethnic, and cultural populations. Gifted students are capable of high performance, exceptional production, or exceptional learning behavior by virtue of any or a combination of these areas of giftedness:

General or specific intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking, leadership abilities, visual arts, performing arts, musical or psychomotor ability (p.104).

The definition of giftedness used for this study is from the Columbus Group (1991):

Giftedness is *asynchronous development* in which advanced cognitive abilities and heightened intensity combine to create inner experiences and awareness that are qualitatively different from the norm. This asynchrony increases with higher intellectual capacity. The uniqueness of the gifted renders them particularly vulnerable and requires modifications in parenting, teaching, and counseling in order for them to develop optimally.

The Columbus Group definition fits best with this study's purpose because it does not include formal identification from a qualified professional in the definition. Their definition highlights a need for modifications in parenting as part of the definition of giftedness. Giftedness for the purpose of this study may be identified by a professional, by the family, or by the student. When working with families to explore their beliefs, experiences, and practices concerning giftedness, it is important for the definition to include a relationship between giftedness and the impact on parenting. It is essential to adopt a gifted definition that does not require a school or professional identification because underrepresentation of economic disadvantaged students excludes many gifted students from formal identification. To capture those underserved student's families, this study will use both formally identified children and family identified children.

Family Identification of Giftedness

In contrast with popular myths that all parents think their child is gifted, research shows that parents are good identifiers of giftedness (Ciha, et al., 1974; Silverman et al., 1986). Ciha et al. (1974) conducted a study with 465 kindergarten students and found that parents were more capable of assessing their child's abilities than teachers. The study

found that parents had a 67 percent effective rating while teachers only had a 22 percent effective rating for gifted nominations (Ciha et al., 1974). Silverman et al. (1986) had similar results with their study in which they provided a checklist of gifted characteristics for parent use and over 90 percent of the children brought for testing based on the parent's checklists were identified as gifted.

Gifted Identification in Colorado

In the state of Colorado gifted identification is mandated by the Exceptional Children's Education Act (ECEA). The ECEA requires all Administrative Units (AUs) to identify and serve gifted students. The ECEA sets rules to be followed by all AUs when identifying students as gifted. A body of evidence must be collected for students and should include assessment results from multiple sources and types of data, qualitative and quantitative data about achievement, cognitive ability, performance, teacher and parent input, and observations of gifted characteristics (Department of Education, 2015). For each of the categories for identification a 95 percentile or above standardized nationally normed test or observation tool, or a rating on a performance assessment that indicated exceptionality compared to peers is required in Colorado for gifted identification (Department of Education, 2015). The Department of Education, ECEA (2015) also required that AU's have in place an identification review team with at least one person trained or endorsed in gifted identification and programming to make decisions about gifted identification or talent pool designation and to develop advanced learning plans.

Based on ECEA's rules the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) created a guidance handbook that can be adopted by AUs for their identification practices. The CDE Gifted Identification Guidance Handbook (2020) states

Specific academic and talent aptitude is demonstrated by a student scoring at the advanced/distinguished level on criterion-referenced assessments and/or 95th percentile or above on norm-referenced achievement tests. Districts may use alternative achievement tests to determine advanced academic competence.

Gifted Programming

Services and programming are provided for children who are identified gifted to meet their unique learning and affective needs (Cotabish et al., 2020). These services may include gifted identification procedures, differentiated curriculum and instruction, acceleration, cluster grouping, resource rooms, special classes, special schools, independent studies, mentorships, online courses, and internships (National Association for Gifted Children, n.d.). The National Association of Gifted Children (n.d.) states that collaboration between gifted educators, special educators, general educators, parents, and any related services is crucial in working to develop programs to meet gifted learners needs.

Definitions of Poverty

The United States Census Bureau (2020) used 48 income thresholds that are based on family size and age to determine poverty. If a family's threshold is more significant than their total income, they are considered to live in poverty. Poverty thresholds are nationwide and do not change based on geographic location; however, they change with inflation (United States Census Bureau, 2020). In 2019 the United States Census Bureau

(2020) provided poverty data stating the median estimated poverty rate for school-age children was 13.9 percent.

According to Olszewski-Kubilius et al. (2020), 43 percent of children under twelve live in low-income households. In the United States, more children are living in poverty than adults. In educational research, poverty is typically defined by whether a student receives free and reduced lunch (Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2020). In other research, poverty definitions include factors such as parent education, parent occupation, and educational resources within the home and community, which provides a more accurate reflection of the chances for students' academic and economic success (Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2020).

Payne (2005) defined poverty as “the extent to which an individual does without resources” (p. 7). For this study, Payne's definition is used to define families with economic disadvantages. This study will recruit participants who are using a community-based support organization. Therefore, the criteria to be considered a family with economic disadvantages will include families who need support from an outside organization to provide food for their family.

Jensen (2009) defined poverty “as a chronic and debilitating condition that results from multiple adverse synergistic risk factors and affects the mind, body, and soul” (p. 6). In table 2.1, Jensen (2009) identified the six types of poverty.

Table 2. 1

Jensen's (2009) Six Types of Poverty

| Type of Poverty | Definition and Examples |
|----------------------|--|
| Situational poverty | Caused by a crisis or loss and is often temporary. Include, environmental disasters, divorce, and health problems. |
| Generational poverty | At least two generations have been born in poverty. |
| Absolute poverty | Involves the scarcity of shelter, running water, and food. This is uncommon in the United States. Focus on day-to-day survival. |
| Relative poverty | When a family's income does not meet society's average standard of living. |
| Urban poverty | It occurs in areas with populations over 50,000 people. Urban poor deal with stressors including violence, crowding, and noise. |
| Rural poverty | Occurs in areas with populations of less than 50,000 people. Rural poor deal with stressors such as less access to services, less support for disabilities, and lack of quality education. |

Economic Disadvantage

Numerous studies exist about the lack of resources and opportunities available to economically disadvantaged families; studies have been conducted to show the cognitive, social, and language skills that are impacted by poverty; however, we cannot assume anything about a person's values, dispositions or behaviors based on one factor (Gorski,

2008). The lack of resources, educational opportunities, and services that most low-income students face impacts their physical, cognitive, and emotional health (Burney & Beilke, 2008; Plucker & Peters, 2017; Swanson, 2010). Living wage jobs with benefits, health care, adequate and healthy food, affordable and stable quality housing, healthy living and working environments, recreation and fitness options, community and social services, quality child-care, cognitive enrichment resources, and a validating and bias-free society as some of the resources low-income families are lacking (Gorski, 2018; Turnbull et al., 2015). In the United States, students living in poverty attend underfunded schools, have larger class sizes, less experienced teachers, less extra-curricular activities, and less experiences in school than higher-income students (Gorski, 2018). Beyond the lack of resources and equitable education available to families in poverty, executive functioning skills, vocabulary, knowledge base, relationships, environment, and stability may differ from middle- and upper-class peers (Payne, 2009; Yudkin & Yudkin, 1968). Poverty is a culture of its own, and it knows no racial, gender, or geographic boundaries (VanTassel-Baska, 2010). Neuroscience research implies that the effects of poverty hit early and hard (Plucker & Peters, 2017; Yudkin & Yudkin, 1968). However, Gorski (2018) stated that none of these barriers tell us anything about a child's potential, intellectual capabilities, or desire to learn. As a society, a school system, and researchers, we must move away from deficit thinking and stop blaming students in economically disadvantaged households for shortcomings, citing test scores and graduation rates as proof of these shortcomings (Gorski, 2008). The following section will cover the literature available on the impacts of economic disadvantage. Though the literature is

extensive on the negative impacts economic disadvantage can have on children, gifted children exist in all races, classes, and genders and schools need to be identifying and fostering talents (Davidson Institute, 2020).

Cognitive Development

Brain development in a child's early years is critical, and though children in poverty are denied opportunities and access to building literacy skills, it does not mean they lack potential (Gorski, 2018). Studies have found links between a child's socioeconomic status and brain function, specifically in language, self-regulation, memory, and emotional processing (Noble et al., 2014; Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2020). Kim et al. (2019) found that poverty in early childhood can predict brain networks' efficiency and that the connection was significant in girls living in poverty. Areas of the brain, such as the prefrontal cortex, cingulate cortex, insula, hippocampus, and amygdala, reduced efficiency in low-income girls (Kim et al., 2019). Kim et al. (2019) also found that the greater exposure to poverty, the more significant impact on brain efficiency. Noble et al. (2014) state that a connection has been made between a child's brain and family income; for every dollar in increased income, the brain's surface area was more significant, and links can be made between income and executive functioning levels. The brain's frontal cortex supports executive functioning, language, impulse control, planning, and memory development; the brain structure impacts all, and underdevelopment has been found in children living in poverty, no matter the gender (Noble et al., 2014; Payne, 2009). Even though income can impact the brain's development, early interventions can

result in cognitive and behavioral gains for low-income students. (Gorski, 2018; Noble et al., 2014).

Social Development

Jensen (2009) identified four major risk factors for families living in poverty, emotional and social challenges, acute and chronic stress, cognitive lags, and health and safety issues. Many low-income students enter school already behind even when low-income parents do everything they can; limited resources can create a disadvantage (Jensen, 2009; Bradley et al., 2001). Payne (2005) pointed out that children in poverty go without resources and opportunities, and (Slocumb & Payne, 2011) having access to resources increases the likelihood that children will do better in school. Poverty is not just the lack of money but is the lack of resources such as financial, language, emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical resources, as well as lack of support systems, role models and mentors, and knowledge and understanding of hidden rules (Burney & Beilke, 2008; Slocumb & Payne, 2011). People in the United States tend to socialize within their socioeconomic class, and many families in poverty do not have access to the same informal networks and cultural experiences as their higher-income peers (Budge & Parrett, 2018). Figure 2.1 are data from the United States Census Bureau (Knop & Siebens, 2018) and shows that low-income children are less involved in clubs, lessons, and sports than their higher-income peers (Knop & Siebens, 2018). The lower the poverty level the less involved with only 24 percent of children at the lowest poverty percent involved in sports while 57 percent of children ages six to eleven at more than four times

over the poverty line participate in sports, that is more than double (Knop & Siebens, 2018).

Figure 2.1

Involvement in Extracurricular Activities by Income and Age

Children Involved in Extracurricular Activities by Poverty Status

(In percent)

| Poverty status | Age 6 to 11 | | | Age 12 to 17 | | |
|---|-------------|---------|--------|--------------|---------|--------|
| | Club | Lessons | Sports | Club | Lessons | Sports |
| 0 to under 100 percent in poverty | 18.5 | 19.6 | 24.1 | 18.6 | 19.4 | 32.9 |
| 100 to under 200 percent in poverty | 21.9 | 21.7 | 29.4 | 24.6 | 23.3 | 35.2 |
| 200 to under 300 percent in poverty | 29.9 | 31.0 | 39.7 | 30.1 | 28.4 | 44.3 |
| 300 to under 400 percent in poverty | 36.5 | 37.0 | 46.8 | 33.3 | 31.5 | 51.3 |
| 400 percent and over in poverty | 36.5 | 49.9 | 56.5 | 36.8 | 39.7 | 56.5 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2014 Panel, Wave 1.

The stress that poverty puts on parents can impact their child's development through lack of nurturing and parent attention on the child's needs, impacting their overall health (Jensen, 2009; Payne, 2005). According to Jensen (2009), poverty also affects a child's behavior due to the challenges they face, the social and emotional instability, and the attachment formed between a child and parent. Social and emotional difficulties such as lower levels of motivation, higher rates of disabilities, teenage motherhood, absent fathers, and concerns for safety and survival also impact students from low-income backgrounds (VanTassel-Baska, 2010).

Language Development

“Fifty years of research demonstrate that children who live in poverty often come to school behind on language development and with fewer early literacy skills than their peers” (Budge & Parrett, 2018, p. 40). Education protects against poverty, and children in homes with low levels of education have underdeveloped abilities because they are exposed to concrete uses of numbers and language, short phrases, limited vocabulary, and

simple processes, which leads to an inability to generalize what they read and hear (Slocumb & Payne, 2011). In a seminal study, Hart and Risley (1992) found that adults living on welfare have less vocabulary than a three-year-old in a professional household which points to the importance of language and vocabulary-building activities for children from poor households. School rules may not connect with home rules in all families; different environments require different responses, children from poor households need support to learn the hidden rules of school and workplaces (Payne, 2009). Slocumb and Payne (2011) point out that the information children from low-income family's process are not organized to allow them to transfer information to new situations.

Many false stereotypes exist about children in poverty and their exposure to language (Gorski, 2008). To ensure students can use English in all forms, we must not assume that a child from poverty speaks improperly or unintelligently (Gorski, 2008). Studies show that people experiencing poverty speak with the same sophistication as their wealthier peers and reading differences can be linked to discrepancies in opportunities and not language use deficiency of parental disinterest (Gorski, 2008).

Economically disadvantaged families have shared experiences, and the similarities are social conditions, barriers, and inequalities families living in poverty must overcome (Gorski, 2018). Schools, teachers, and society need to work to remove the negative views and stereotypes about poverty and build on the strengths that children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds bring to school every day (Gorski, 2008).

Impact on Academic Achievement

Wyner et al. (2009) explains that very little is known about high achieving students from low-income families, and more attention needs to focus on this group. More recently, Hegedus (2018) found a stronger negative relationship between poverty and school achievement than was previously thought, the higher the poverty level, the lower the achievement in schools. Achievement is linked to higher income when based on standardized testing (Hegadus, 2018). As student's progress through elementary school, low-income students are more likely to fall from the highest quartile of achievement, and those students who did not start in the top quartile are less likely to get there than their higher-income peers (Carnevale et al., 2019; Wyner et al., 2009). Once students enter high school, a low-income high achieving student is more than twice as likely to drop out or not complete high school on time as a higher-income student (Wyner et al., 2009). Wyner et al. (2009) found similar trends continue between lower and higher-income high achievers after high school. While high achieving students attend college no matter their income level, higher-income students are much more likely to attend highly selective colleges and to complete a degree program; 77 percent of high-income students graduate while only 59 percent of lower-income students (Carnevale et al., 2019; Wyner et al., 2009).

Studies have proven that higher-income students have advantages over their lower-income peers from exposure to vocabulary to participation in extracurricular activities and attending schools with smaller class sizes and more experienced teachers (Plucker et al., 2015; Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2020). Alexander et al. (1997) state that

children do not start school on equal ground; even if they receive the same education in school, out-of-school experiences differ significantly. Olszewski-Kubilius (2010) stated that even if children from low-income backgrounds have potential, they often struggle in gifted programming due to gaps in their learning that do not allow them to access accelerated curriculum without remediation. Sociodemographic risk factors such as income begin to determine the child's academic prospects and weigh on children's development throughout their schooling (Alexander et al., 1997; Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2020).

Although students from low-income families have less opportunity, fewer resources, and suffer from low expectations in the classroom, 3.4 million K-12 students achieving in the top quartile are from families earning less than the national median income providing proof that low-income students perform at high academic levels despite their circumstances (Wyner et al., 2009). The more clearly, we can see the barriers that economically disadvantaged families face in pursuit of equitable education, the sooner we can put systems in place to build on students' strengths and transform education (Gorski, 2018). Like academic achievement, economic disadvantage also can impact a student's gifted identification status.

Impact on Gifted Identification

Economic disadvantage does not only impact development and academic achievement but also can impact a student's likelihood of a gifted identification. Burney and Beilke (2008) state that students living in poverty are difficult to identify as high achieving and that poverty could be the most critical student difference. Low-

socioeconomic learners are consistently underrepresented in gifted and advanced education and programs, yet most research on underrepresentation focuses on ethnicity and English language learners (Garn et al., 2010; Grissom et al., 2019; Plucker & Peters, 2017). When studying under-representation, poverty is often lumped together with diversity, so there is no clear picture of the impacts of poverty on student achievement and gifted identification (Burney & Beilke, 2008; Olszewski et al., 2020; Plucker & Peters, 2017). Burney and Beilke (2008) stated "Focusing on overcoming the limitations of poverty may be more productive in influencing the lives of students" (p. 295). This lack of attention could be due to the way gifted programming is reported; reports from the United States Department of Education's Civil Rights Department do not report data on gifted enrollment by family income (Grissom et al., 2019). Wyner et al. (2009) report focused attention on students scoring in the top 25 percent on nationally normed standardized tests and living below the national medium of family income using three federal databases that tracked students in elementary through college past twenty years. Only 28 percent of the first graders scoring in the top quartile nationally are from low-income families compared to 72 percent from high-income families, suggesting that disparities exist in achievement before formal education begins (Wyner et al., 2009). Data collected at the state or district level does provide evidence of the underrepresentation of low-income students in gifted programming (Wyner et al., 2009). Kindergarten through fifth-grade students in the top twenty percent of income in the United States are seven times more likely to be in gifted programs than the students in the bottom twenty percent of income (Carnevale et al., 2019; Grissom et al., 2019). Even if considering other

factors, students in the highest income are twice as likely as students in the lowest to receive gifted programming (Grissom et al., 2019; Plucker et al., 2015). Students from higher-income backgrounds have more opportunities and resources to develop their gifts and talents (Ford, 2007). Grissom et al. (2019) believe that more research should focus on socioeconomic status and access to educational resources and what factors contribute to the underrepresentation of low-income students in gifted programs. Ford (2007) called for a need for collaboration between educators, families, and communities to pool resources and support low-income students to support identification.

Hamilton et al.'s (2019) study suggested that poverty is related to a school's gifted identification rates. Individual and institutional poverty leads to the underrepresentation of low-income students in gifted programming (Hamilton et al., 2019). Card and Giuliano (2015) pointed out that economically disadvantaged and minority students are underrepresented in gifted programs. Obstacles that may prohibit the identification of low-income students as gifted include misconceptions about what giftedness is, how giftedness manifests, as well as the instruments, tools, and procedures used to identify giftedness (Swanson, 2010). While some of the underrepresentation or gap in identification can be due to differences in cognitive development (Kim et al., 2019), there is also evidence that the traditional referral-based system tends to overlook potential from disadvantaged families (Card & Giuliano, 2015; Jolly & Matthews, 2012). The traditional referral system relies mainly on parent and teacher referrals, and students from low-income and culturally diverse groups are often overlooked (Card & Giuliano, 2015; Jolly & Matthews, 2012; Swanson, 2010). According to Swanson (2010), teachers can be the

gatekeepers to gifted programming; if they do not understand giftedness and make assumptions about low-income children, they can exclude them from identification. Many educators adhere to the deficit ideology that people experiencing poverty are agents of their economic condition and that people in poverty do not value education which leads to stereotypes and misconceptions about economically disadvantaged children's abilities and potential (Gorski, 2018). VanTassel-Baska et al. (2009) found that low-income students are more likely to be identified as gifted when using performance-based assessments, not standardized tests. Low-income students participating in gifted programming are building self-esteem, cognitive skills, and self-confidence, which points to the importance of identification and programming for low-income students (VanTassel-Baska et al., 2009).

Schools with higher low-income populations are less likely to offer rigorous and advanced courses; therefore, denying low-income students the opportunities and the rigorous academic preparation they need for success (Barton & Coley, 2009; Burney & Beilke, 2008). Beyond the loss of opportunity at school, children from low-income backgrounds also have limited access to programs outside of school that offer enrichment opportunities, social skills development, and background information that is useful in school (Burney & Beikle, 2008; Plucker et al., 2015; Slocumb & Payne, 2015). Schools with a high concentration of students with economic disadvantages have fewer well-trained teachers and parent advocacy is less likely to occur (Turnbull et al., 2015). The gifted gap has not narrowed despite school districts and states making changes to the

identification process to broaden participation in gifted programs (Burney & Beilke, 2008; Card & Giuliano, 2015; Hamilton et al., 2018; VanTassel-Baska et al. 2009).

Plucker et al. (2010) stated The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) focused on closing achievement gaps in K-12 schools; however, the focus has been on minimum competency and not on students at the higher end of the achievement gap. Gaps at the higher end of achievement have been coined excellence gaps and receive little attention prompting questions about equitable educational opportunities (Plucker et al., 2010). According to Plucker and Peters (2017), the United States spends far less than other countries on aid for the poor, and until we reduce poverty, excellence gaps will continue to grow. The gap between higher-income and lower-income students continues to grow and has widened substantially over the past generation (Plucker et al., 2015). Lacking access to academic opportunities, differentiation, and counseling has a significant impact on low-income student success (Plucker et al., 2015). The Jack Cook Kent Foundation funded a state-by-state analysis completed by Plucker et al. (2015) to measure policy support for advanced learners and highlight the inequities in educational outcomes for advanced learners from low-income households. From the research, five principles of how states address the excellence gap emerged; attention to advanced learners is incomplete and chaotic, economic conditions drive outcomes, in all states small portions of low-income students score advanced, not a single state has a comprehensive system to track high performing low-income students, all states should do more for advanced learners (Plucker et al., 2015). Plucker et al. (2015) argued that the lack of consistent policy will continue to impact significantly high ability low-income students and society.

Poverty is complex, controversial, misunderstood, and not easily identifiable (Burney & Beilke, 2008; Plucker & Peters, 2017). School settings need to accurately define poverty if they intend to create specialized interventions or identification processes that will benefit students living in poverty (Plucker & Peters, 2017). According to Plucker and Peters (2017), the most significant achievement gaps based on income are in the United States because of high levels of childhood poverty and the lack of support for families living in poverty. The considerable achievement gap continues to grow as very few low-income students score advanced on standardized achievement tests (Plucker & Peters, 2017). Barton and Coley (2009) state “The unavoidable conclusion is that if we are to close the gaps in achievement, we must first close the gaps in these like experiences and conditions” (p.3). The achievement gap has been a focus of educators and researchers since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, but despite efforts to close gaps, they continue to widen (Barton & Coley, 2009). Plucker et al. (2010) pointed out that data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) suggest that excellence gaps have widened between high and low socioeconomic groups under NCLB despite the intention of the law to close gaps.

Twice Exceptionality

According to Reis et al. (2014) a twice exceptional learner is a learner with both a disability or disorder and a gifted identification and often do not fit the traditional definitions of either exceptionality. Although the awareness of twice exceptionality is growing identification systems and services are not fully developed or implemented (Reis et al., 2014). A national study by Foley-Nicpon et al. (2013) found that educators have

some familiarity with twice exceptionality and those specializing in special education or gifted education had more understanding. Foley-Nicpon et al. (2013) stated that the lack of experience in working with twice exceptional students is creating an underlying inadequacy in the educational system to meet the needs of twice exceptional students. Professional development is needed for all teachers to better understand the needs of twice exceptional students, including their needs and areas for growth (Foley-Nicpon et al., 2013).

Alternate Identification Practices

According to Wyner et al. (2009) students with economic disadvantage are unlikely to obtain the scores needed on nationally normed tests because of the correlations between income and achievement. Local norms are an alternative way to use assessment scores for gifted identification. Local norms would shift from having to be in the top five percent nationally to the top five percent locally (Peters et al., 2021; Peters & Gentry, 2012). Peters et al. (2021) state the use of local norms better align to definitions of giftedness in schools, and they would improve equity in identification.

According to Renzulli (2021) strategies for addressing underrepresentation in gifted programming for low-income students have focused on local norms and universal screening which is still focused on traditional testing procedures. To achieve greater equity in gifted education for our low-income population's norm-based approaches should be supplemented with information about students' interests, talents, learning styles, expression style, preferences, motivation, and executive functions (Renzulli, 2021). Using a more personalized approach and flexibility to add information to

identification processes would open the door wider for underrepresented populations in gifted education.

Referral for Gifted Identification

According to McBee (2006) the gifted identification process in most school district requires a referral to be formally assessed. The referral process can create an unfairness in the identification process if children are not being referred for assessment (McBee, 2006). According to Olszewski-Kubilius & Cortwith (2018) a factor that contributes to under-identification of low-income students is under-referral by teachers. The use of teacher referral in many systems and the educator's beliefs about giftedness can hinder the identification of low-income students (Olszewski-Kubilius & Cortwith, 2018). Olszewski-Kubilius & Cortwith, 2018 state that often educator's beliefs include that giftedness is demonstrated in effortless learning and above grade level achievement. McBee (2006) found that students who did not receive financial assistance were more than three times likely to be referred for gifted assessment and paid lunch students received more than four times as many referrals than free lunch students. McBee (2006) also found that parent referrals were rare among all groups, but less frequent in low socio-economic groups.

The Schools' Role in Supporting Economically Disadvantaged Families

Is poverty a system problem? Is it a school problem? Is it an individual problem? These questions have been debated for a long time because poverty creates barriers that impact school success (Payne, 2009). According to Payne (2009), we cannot assign the problem of poverty to one cause or one system, and educators and schools can create

systems to support low-income families; however, the systems schools create must be centered around the individual student's needs and not just the resources available at the school. The number of students entering school eligible for free and reduced lunch is increasing, and while schools cannot fix or prevent poverty, schools can make a difference in the lives of low-income children (Budge & Parrett, 2018). The need to provide equitable opportunities is a common theme in supporting economically disadvantaged students. According to Plucker and Peters (2017), to truly offer equitable opportunities, we must ensure that families know the opportunity exists, that it would be valuable for their child, and systems need to be in place to support access to the opportunity. Educators should begin by analyzing what resources a child from poverty does not have access to; for example, does the child have transportation available to attend special programs or opportunities (Payne, 2009).

Payne (2008) stated students living in poverty may struggle with formal schooling because children in families with little formal education learn how to speak, behave, and learn in conflict with the expectations in schools. Teachers need to understand that students from poverty have different background knowledge and resources than other students and should work with families and students to overcome these challenges (Payne, 2008). According to Budge and Parrett (2018), school and classroom cultures should support caring relationships, encourage high expectations and support, be centered around a community of equity, provide professional accountability for learning, and support courage and will to take action. One of the biggest obstacles to disrupting poverty is recognizing the barriers to learning present in our classrooms and schools (Budge &

Parrett, 2018). Bias and beliefs about poverty are present in our society, and teachers and schools must recognize their stereotypes and create classroom cultures where all students thrive (Budge & Parrett, 2018; Gorski, 2018). According to Gorski (2018), what we believe about poverty informs how we teach, advocate, and interact with our students. The deficit view of those struggling economically is the dominant view even among educators (Gorski, 2018). Too often, teachers believe that people in poverty do not value education, do not have positive role models, and lack skills needed for success; until we focus on changing deficit thinking, students from poverty will not have equitable classrooms (Gorski, 2018).

According to Lockhart and Mun (2020), the more opportunities schools provide for engagement with families, the more they can learn and the better equipped they will be to provide academic communities for gifted learners to excel. The more open and positive schools are with families, the stronger the relationship can impact attendance and engagement (Lockhart & Mun, 2020). Teachers should be using parents as advocates and resources to meet their gifted children's cultural and diverse needs (Grantham et al., 2005). Creating a welcoming atmosphere in the school and classroom for parents is essential because many low-income families do not have the time, or the knowledge needed to work with their child's school (Payne, 2008). Payne (2008) urged educators to think about how the school may feel to a low-income family and provide support to welcome families; one way to help bridge the home-to-school relationship is planning home visits. Gorski (2018) urged educators to step back and change our perspectives of low-income families and their involvement in schools because all parents care about their

child's education, and there are many ways families can be involved with their child's education beyond being present in a school building or classroom. This study's theoretical framework, Funds of Knowledge (Moll et al., 1992), is based on the idea that all families have knowledge that supports their children's learning.

Theoretical Framework

Funds of Knowledge will provide the theoretical lens for this phenomenological study. The theory of Funds of Knowledge will act as the guiding principle when working with families to explore their beliefs, experiences, and practices around giftedness and family involvement. Current research tells us that more needs to be done to understand family beliefs and experiences with school and gifted identification (Besnoy et al., 2015; Grissom et al., 2019; Jolly & Matthews, 2012; Lockhart & Mun, 2020).

The term Funds of Knowledge began as the idea that a community uses various social funds daily (Wolf, 1966). Valez-Ibanez (1988) built on the concept of social funds in an ethnographic study. Funds of Knowledge as a theory was born from the Funds of Knowledge project, which focused on the idea that education could be significantly enhanced when teachers learn about their student's everyday lives (Gonzalez et al., 2005). Gonzalez et al. (2005) began working with teachers in Tucson, Arizona, to study the household and classroom practices among working-class Mexican communities. The study's purpose was to work with teachers to develop teaching practices that included the knowledge and skills found in homes (Moll et al., 1992). Funds of Knowledge are based on families' knowledge which is based on their experiences, work experiences, social practices, and social history (Gonzalez et al., 2005). Every child enters school with their

Funds of Knowledge grounded in what they have learned from their family and community, including language, background schema, learning styles, social abilities, vocabulary, family traditions, family values, family activities, and more. Moll et al. (1992) define Funds of Knowledge as "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (p. 133). Funds of Knowledge focus on the student's and families' actual lived experiences, not stereotypes because experiences differ from student to student, and cultural experiences are not always the same even within the same cultures (Gonzalez et al., 2005). Too often, researchers focus on the knowledge that families may lack when they should be focusing on the knowledge that can be found in the working-class, immigrant, and minority homes that could benefit their children's education. Gonzalez et al. (2005) believe that no matter the child's background or economic status, there is knowledge, cultural resources, and cognitive resources available in the home that can be used in the classroom. The purpose of this research, to explore families' beliefs, experiences, and practices, as well as the research questions stem from a Funds of Knowledge lens; the understanding that all families have knowledge to share to support their children's learning which can be used by educators to better meet student's needs. The theoretical framework Funds of Knowledge is used while creating interview questions and while analyzing the findings from participants.

Family Involvement

"The family is the most important support to the student" (Olszewski-Kubilius, 2007, p. 51). Students with parents involved at school are more likely to have higher

grades, more minor behavior issues, better attendance, enjoy school more, and are more likely to complete high school (Anderson & Minke, 2010. Barton & Coley, 2009; Jansorn, 2020; Koshy et al., 2013). Barton and Coley (2009) also found that teachers are more likely to give attention to and identify learning needs in students with involved parents. Parent involvement is greater for middle and higher-class students than lower-income families, and high-poverty schools report a lack of parent involvement to be a consistent issue (Barton & Coley, 2009). Gorski (2018) pointed out the need to recognize that in and out of school conditions limit economically disadvantaged families' ability to participate the same as wealthier families and that in no way is the lack of involvement a sign of parent's disinterest in their child's education.

Economically Disadvantage Family Involvement Impact on Gifted Education

One of the most positive influences for students from low-income backgrounds is the parent's positive attitude toward education (Jansorn, 2020). It has been confirmed that high achieving students have families that view education as a means of breaking the cycle of poverty (Jansorn, 2020; Jolly & Matthews, 2012). According to Anderson and Minke (2010), "Parents and educators define involvement differently; parents take a more community-centric view that includes keeping their children safe and getting them to school, whereas teachers define involvement primarily as a parental presence at school" (p. 312). Differing definitions can lead parents to feel unappreciated by their children's school (Anderson & Minke, 2010). Jansorn (2020) surveyed 133 families with a median income of 33,700, the parent input findings are that low-income families do not feel that they have a relationship with their child's school that supports their gifted child. Schools

need to work to create partnerships between parents and teachers beyond a yearly conference. Schools should have policies and systems that eliminate disparities across social classes (Gorski, 2018). Policies and practices start with the leadership and school staff beliefs about poverty. Building a trusting relationship based on the family strengths, creating opportunities for involvement, seeking parent input, and offering guidance about educational opportunities are a few examples of how schools can work with families to develop a true partnership (Jansorn, 2020). The inequality between low-income children's opportunities means that the trust between families and their child's school is even more critical. Both low-income families and schools need to trust that each party is doing all they can to support the child's learning and growth (Jansorn, 2020).

Hunsaker et al. (1995) state that understanding the impact of family on achievement is not clear; their executive summary focuses on the role of the economically disadvantaged family on student achievement and the implication of family influence on gifted identification and programming for economically disadvantaged students through analysis of the current research. The school's inability to find and serve gifted students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds points to the need to understand economically disadvantaged gifted students (Hunsaker et al., 1995). After reviewing current literature, Hunsaker et al. (1995) identified implications for gifted economically disadvantaged students. Hunsaker et al. (1995) state that one implication for gifted educators is using the strengths of the family of economically disadvantaged students and not assuming that economic disadvantage is an indicator of lack of

educational interest or support. All families should be included in the identification process (Hunsaker et al., 1995).

Families from middle and high economic backgrounds provide essential educational opportunities that are not always available to students from lower economic backgrounds to no fault of their own (Van Tassel-Baska, 1989). Van Tassel-Baska's (1989) research asked, "What influences the talent development process for the able poor, those students who attain high-level academic success despite their background" (p. 23). Van Tassel-Baska (1989) found that education and the family value system play a crucial role in influencing disadvantaged gifted learners. Though many families were not well educated or financially stable, they are influential in their child's lives by seeking opportunities for their children and offering encouragement and support (Van Tassel-Baska, 1989). Gifted learners from disadvantaged economic backgrounds had at least one parent, typically the mother, who took the lead, monitored their child's education, and encouraged them to work hard to get an education and do better than previous family generations (Jolly & Matthews, 2012; Van Tassel-Baska, 1989).

Garn et al. (2010) suspected that families with limited resources had creative ways to work around their financial limitations to meet their child's needs. According to Jolly and Matthews (2012), gifted students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds create a network of resources, such as extended family, community resources, and schools, compared to parents of average ability economically disadvantaged children. Garn et al. (2010) explored parents' influence on academic motivation in their gifted children. The study found that parents know their children's

learning needs and interests and modify the home learning environment based on needs and interests (Garn et al., 2010; Swanson, 2010). Parents felt that while they have knowledge and expertise about their child's learning, schools did not always use that knowledge to meet their children's needs and often left their children unchallenged and unmotivated, leaving them to modify homework and assignments for their children (Garn et al., 2010; Jolly & Matthews, 2012).

Barriers to Involvement

According to Ford and Harris (1999), economic disadvantage plays a role in limiting family involvement; however, Burney and Beilke (2008) pointed out the importance of family involvement in developing a support system for high achievement in low-income students. Poverty is not an excuse and should not be interpreted as a lack of caring but a barrier to family involvement (Burney & Beilke, 2008). Burney and Beilke (2008) state barriers can include lack of a stable job or regular work hours, health benefits to taking time off, priority on meeting basic human needs, and lack of financial ability to hire outside help such as tutors and babysitters.

An area that could make a significant difference for traditionally underserved populations in gifted education is building positive relationships between schools and families (Lockhart & Munn, 2020). Barriers currently exist that defer parent involvement, such as professional barriers created by the teacher's need to be the expert in what they teach and how they interact with families (Crozier & Davies 2002; Lockhart & Mun, 2020). Teachers may struggle to accept families' feedback or integrate new practices, which will stifle a connection between home and school (Lockhart and Mun, 2020).

Schools also create barriers to a positive relationship with families when they assume families have nothing to offer due to cultural differences or economic hardships (Crozier & Davies, 2002; Lockhart & Mun, 2020). Families' time, work schedule, education level, resources, language, and beliefs about their child's abilities can all impact a parent's involvement with their child's school (Lockhart & Mun, 2020; Swanson, 2010). Many of the barriers to parent involvement stem from trust and how well the school and teachers have created a trusting relationship in which the family feels their involvement is sought and valued (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Lockhart & Mun, 2020). Parents' belief about their role in their child's education can also create barriers; if parents believe their only role in educating their child is to get them to school, this can create a barrier for involvement (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Hornby and Lafaele (2011) also point out that parents' belief in their ability to help their child with schoolwork and their belief about their child's intelligence can also create barriers to involvement. Swanson (2010) stated that there may be misconceptions among low-income families about their child's abilities or the purpose of gifted programs. Hornby and Lafaele (2011) state that if a child is gifted, families may not believe that they need to be involved in school, and families who believe their child is gifted may be hesitant to be involved.

Supports for Involvement

Families want their children to succeed, and quality education will improve their child's gifts, abilities and improve their potential to be economically advantaged (Lockhart & Mun, 2020). Schools that create an open communication line have gained their family's trust in educating their child and involving families in decision-making

about their child's education supports higher family involvement levels (Lockhart & Mun, 2020). According to Moll et al. (1992), teachers' who realize that all families have value and take an active role in learning about the child's experiences outside of school and their family are more likely to build relationships that will impact the classroom and learning. According to Dikkers (2013), schools can do a lot to support parental involvement, beginning with opening schools to the community and providing opportunities for families to interact. Schools can also recognize parents as their children's first teachers and offer support and guidance for learning activities at home. Providing regular and consistent communication opportunities between the teacher and the family with systems to encourage family communication with the teacher and the school, communication should be a two-way street, will build stronger relationships between schools and families (Dikkers, 2013). Dikkers (2013) also encouraged schools to seek community resources to support and work with schools and families. Schools must work with economically disadvantaged families in creative and responsive ways to support involvement (Burney & Beilke, 2008). Finally, Dikkers (2013) recommended recruiting families to volunteer at school, at home, and in the community to support their children in any way they are capable. The literature reviewed that supports the importance of family involvement led to this study's conceptual framework. The Six Types of Involvement (Epstein et al., 2019) will influence the interview questions, provide a structure to organize findings, and a lens to analyze the findings.

Conceptual Framework: Six Types of Involvement

Epstein et al.'s (2019) Six Types of Involvement is the conceptual framework for the phenomenological study. According to Epstein et al., (2019) the need for family involvement is the most agreed upon topic in education, both teachers and administrators want to work with parents in positive ways and parents want to know how to connect and communicate with teachers. Despite the overwhelming need and want for school and family partnerships, most schools still need support in creating programs to foster positive partnerships (Epstein et al., 2019). According to Epstein et al. (2019), school and home partnerships decline as students get older, affluent communities have more positive involvement with the school, and economically stressed communities' schools tend to contact families more often with problems and complaints. Two-parent family homes in which the mother does not work are more likely to be involved in school activities. In each of these scenarios, schools can create positive family involvement opportunities and partnerships with families. Epstein et al. (2019) also compiled research from hundreds of studies across the United States and other nations. Epstein et al. (2019) found from the studies that almost all families care about their children, want them to be successful, and partner with schools in their child's education. The studies also found that nearly all teachers and administrators want to involve families and struggle with building programs to support partnerships (Epstein et al., 2019). As a result of these studies, a framework for The Six Types of Family Involvement was developed (Epstein et al., 2019). The framework assists teachers and administrators in creating programs for school, family, and community partnerships that will benefit students (Epstein et al., 2019). Each of the

Six Types of Involvement includes different practices and structures to improve and encourage involvement (Epstein et al., 2019). To involve all families, challenges that emerge will need to be addressed, schools will need to reflect and redefine their ideas of involvement (Epstein et al., 2019). Simultaneously, the six types are a guide for partnerships; each school will need to make changes and choose practices that meet their families and community needs (Epstein et al., 2019). The framework of Six Types of Family Involvement is typography, not a hierarchy, and families can incorporate more than one type of involvement in design, implementation, and results. Epstein et al.'s (2019) Six Types of Involvement include parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, design making, and collaborating with the community. The Six Types of Involvement help guide schools in engaging families in many ways and in different places to create partnerships (Epstein et al., 2019). Creating partnerships between families, schools, and communities helps students succeed both in school and life (Epstein et al., 2019). The Six Types of Involvement will be used to guide interview questions and to provide a framework for the researcher to organize the findings within the types of involvement that families are engaging in both in and out of school buildings. The Six Types of Involvement will provide a lens for analysis using both the participants experiences and the researchers fore-sight about involvement to form new meanings about families with economic disadvantages and their beliefs and practices with involvement in their children's education.

Table 2.2 explains each type of involvement and practices to support involvement.

Table 2. 2*Epstein et al. 's (2019) Six Types of Involvement*

| Type | Practices for Support |
|--|--|
| Parenting Help all families establish home environments to support children as students. | Parent education and other courses or training for parents; Home visits at transitions points. |
| Communicating Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication about school programs and student's progress. | Conferences with parents, language translators, schedule of useful notices, phone calls, newsletters, memos, and other communication. |
| Volunteering Recruit and organize parent help and support. | School/classroom volunteer programs, surveys to identify available talents, times, and locations of volunteers. |
| Learning at Home Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities. | Provide information on skills requires for students in all subjects at each grade; Provide information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home |
| Decision Making Include families as participants in school decisions and develop parent leaders. | Active PTA/PTO or other parent organizations, advisory councils, or committees for parent leadership; District-level advisory councils and committees. |
| Collaborating with Community Coordinate resources and services for the community for families, students, and the school, and provide services to the community. | Provide information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other programs and services; Provide information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including summer programs. |

After a comprehensive review of the literature on economic disadvantage and the impacts on development, achievement, gifted identification, gifted programming, and the

impact of family involvement on gifted education a missing piece or gap in the current literature emerged.

A Gap in the Research

Few, if any, studies focus on family with economic disadvantages beliefs, experiences, and practices related to giftedness. While there is existing research on economic disadvantage, underrepresentation, and the importance of family involvement, there is a clear gap in the research on underrepresentation of students with economic disadvantages and their family's beliefs, experiences, and practices with involvement in education. More research needs to be conducted to understand parent's attitudes, values, and expectations of gifted and high achieving students from low-income backgrounds (Jolly & Matthews, 2012). Research also needs to be done on parents' understanding of giftedness and how these understandings impact, influence, and drive behaviors at home (Jolly & Matthews, 2012). According to Besnoy et al. (2015), future research needs to focus on best practices in building a relationship between school and home. Grissom et al. (2019) believe that more research should focus on socioeconomic status and access to educational resources and what factors contribute to the underrepresentation of low-income students in gifted programs. Research on families' impact on gifted identification of students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds is limited even though underrepresentation of economically disadvantaged students in gifted programs is a long-standing issue (Hunsaker et al., 1995; Koshy et al., 2013). Lockhart and Mun (2020) state that little attention has been given to the family's role in gifted and talented students' education which could be a missing piece to understanding underrepresentation. To

understand the connection between economic disadvantage and underrepresentation in gifted programs, a further examination needs to be conducted on economically disadvantaged family beliefs, experiences, and practices around giftedness and educational involvement.

Summary

Chapter two provided the reader with a review of the current literature on economic disadvantage and the impacts it has on cognitive development, social development, language development, academic achievement, and gifted identification, as well as current literature on the impacts of family involvement on education with the focus on economic disadvantage and giftedness. The review of this literature provided a deeper understanding of the problem of practice and led to the research questions for this study. The chapter also introduced the theoretical framework, Funds of Knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) that will ground the study, and the conceptual framework, Six Types of Involvement (Epstein et al., 2019) that will guide data collection and analysis and provide a lens for the many variables explored. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks connect to the purpose of exploring families' beliefs, experiences, and practices. Finally, the chapter points to the need for this study, with an overview of the gap in the current research on economically disadvantaged family beliefs, experiences, and practices with giftedness and family involvement.

Chapter 3: Methods

This study used a phenomenological research approach. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), "Phenomenological research is a design of inquiry coming from philosophy and psychology in which the researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon described by participants" (p.13). The researcher describes the lived experiences of families with economic disadvantages and gifted students and their beliefs and practices pertaining to giftedness and family involvement based on descriptions from participant interviews. The third chapter will provide information about Hermeneutic Phenomenology and the rationale for using this phenomenological approach to research and outline how it guided the research design and data analysis for the research study.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the beliefs, experiences, and practices of families with economic disadvantages pertaining to giftedness and family involvement in education.

SECOR is interested in supporting families with economic disadvantages and providing resources and building blocks to create new opportunities within the community. To accomplish this, SECOR has been secured as a community partner to recruit food bank and Food for Thought food bag recipients as participants in the study.

This study provides information to SECOR about the lived experiences of families with economic disadvantages; they can use programs for community support through their Community of Hope Program. Three research questions that support the purpose of the study will guide the research.

Research Questions

1. What are the beliefs and experiences of families with economic disadvantages pertaining to giftedness?
2. What are the beliefs of families with economic disadvantages pertaining to family involvement with their children's education?
3. What are the supports for and barriers to families with economic disadvantages involvement in their children's education?

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Phenomenology is based on the work of philosopher Edmund Husserl, who claimed that empirical science could not uncover the phenomenological meaning of the lived experience (Dibley et al., 2020). Husserl sought to develop a way to clarify how objects are experienced and present themselves to human consciousness (Sloan & Bowe, 2013). Descriptive or transcendental phenomenology aims at getting at the essence of experience itself through careful examination that enables the researcher to uncover the lived experience (Dibley et al., 2020). "Husserl defines phenomenology as a descriptive philosophy of the essence of pure experience. He aims to capture the experience in its primordial origin or essence, without interpreting, explaining, or theorizing." (van Manen, 2014). According to Dibley et al. (2020), Husserl's phenomenology offers an

approach to observation and understanding that puts aside our understanding, opinions, and prejudice of a phenomenon. Phenomenological research begins with wonder and can only be followed while giving in to a state of wonder (van Manen, 2014). Bracketing out our pre-understandings allows meaning to develop an understanding to be genuine (Dibley et al., 2020). Phenomenological research is not based on a standard set of practices or steps and cannot be conducted using a procedure (van Manen, 2014). "Phenomenological method is always a matter of attempts, bids, and hopeful risks." (van Manen, 2014, p. 29).

According to Martin Heidegger, the researcher brings their background expectations and frames of meaning that cannot be bracketed (Dibley et al., 2020). Heidegger was concerned with being in the world instead of Husserl's being of the world (Dibley et al., 2020). He believed that through our prior understandings and reflections, we could ask questions and further our understandings of experiences "it is the lived experience itself concerning the world in which that experience occurs that creates a phenomenon or situation that can be understood and interpreted" (Dibley et al., 2020 p. 18). Phenomenology is more about questions than answers, and there is nothing more meaningful than the search for the meaning of meaning (van Manen, 2014). Peoples (2021) explained that Heidegger believed that there was no way to bracket our experiences, as Husserl's approach requires, because we are always present, and there is no way to separate ourselves from being. Heidegger's solution to bracketing was the use of the hermeneutic circle (Peoples, 2021).

Hermeneutic Phenomenology is based on the everyday understanding of phenomena. The hermeneutic circle guides the researcher to go back and forth, questioning our prior knowledge to understand the lived experience with a deeper meaning (Dibley et al., 2020; Peoples, 2021). Heidegger considered preconceived knowledge the fore-sight or fore-conception, and as we begin to understand something through research, our fore-sights are revised (Peoples, 2021). According to Dibley et al. (2020), the core of hermeneutic phenomenological research is the parts, and the whole is one, informing each other to increase understanding of the meaning of human experiences. The researcher continues in the circle like a spiral making sense of parts with the whole and sense of the whole with the parts until a new understanding is formed (Peoples, 2021). Heidegger explained interpretation with the hermeneutic circle as making constant revisions of what we know about the world (Peoples, 2021). Hermeneutic phenomenological research requires many perspectives on a phenomenon and an openness to uncover what may be overlooked (Dibley et al., 2020). Hans-Georg Gardner followed Heidegger and extended his work offering "an extended, though distinct, development of Heidegger's thought" (Dibley et al., 2020, p. 12). Hermeneutic phenomenology is also known as philosophical hermeneutics and has been influenced by many other philosophers (Dibley et al., 2020).

Personal Context

The problem of practice, purpose, and research questions fit with the methodology of phenomenology. Hermeneutic phenomenology stood out as a good fit for this research because of the use of interpretation through the hermeneutic circle (Dibley

et al., 2020). I sought out a doctoral program specifically to research underrepresentation in gifted education because I was an underrepresented student in elementary and middle school. My family's status in the community created teacher bias and a difficult time in school. As an educator working in low-income schools, I have experienced first-hand the inequity in the identification of students living in poverty as well as the lacking resources available to families. My fore-sight with the problem and my personal investment in answering the research questions are impossible to bracket, so working with a method that requires interpretation and the use of the hermeneutic circle to form new meaning was the best fit for the methodology (Peoples, 2021).

Rationale

Phenomenology was a natural fit for this study because the methodologies focus on exploring lived experiences. This study will explore the lived experiences of families with economic disadvantages and their beliefs about giftedness, and their beliefs and practices with involvement in their children's education with the methodology (Dibley et al., 2020, Peoples, 2021, van Manen, 2014). Phenomenological questions come from experiences that cause a time to pause and reflect (van Manen, 2014).

Underrepresentation has been a topic that has caused the researcher to question systems. After a time of reflection, questions began to emerge related to families with economic disadvantages of gifted children; questions have emerged repeatedly throughout a lifetime of experiences (van Manen, 2014). The researcher's purpose was to better understand families with economic disadvantages beliefs, practices, and experiences by telling their own lived experiences, and phenomenology uncovered the meaning of their

experiences with giftedness and family involvement (Dibley et al., 2020). Hermeneutic Phenomenology provided the best method because the researcher has the experience of attending school as a child with economic disadvantages and has worked in economically challenged communities for more than twenty years. The hermeneutic circle provided a process where fore-sight could be revised through the writing process and changed until new meanings were formed (Peoples, 2021). Heidegger's framework and the further development from Gadamer allow for the use of lenses; looking through the researcher's own biases and understandings, the lenses change as new meaning is formed, and lenses are created as the process of interpretation continues (Peoples, 2021). Van Manen has continued to develop the hermeneutic approach based on Gadamer's philosophy (Sloan & Bowe, 2013). van Manen's phenomenology "is a project of reflection on the lived experience of human existence, where the reflection can be seen as being part of an investigation of the nature of a phenomenon" (Sloan & Bowe, 2013, p. 7). The researcher used hermeneutic phenomenology to investigate the beliefs, experiences, and practices of families with economic disadvantages pertaining to giftedness and family involvement and to reflect on personal experiences with the phenomenon.

Setting and Participants

This hermeneutic phenomenological study was conducted in the fall of 2021 and winter of 2022. To better understand a possible cause of the underrepresentation of students with economic disadvantages in gifted education, the researcher investigated the beliefs, experiences, and practices of families with economic disadvantages. Recruitment was facilitated by the community partner, SouthEast Community OutReach (SECOR). In

2020 SECOR provided food and other resources for 15,000 families at their food bank and sent 1,500 food bags home with school children each week. SECOR was retained as the community partner because of their involvement with the community to provide resources for those in need. One qualification for the study is to have economic disadvantages, and SECOR provides food to families who are not able to provide food for themselves. Not being able to provide food for yourself and your family would point to an economic disadvantage and falls under the definition of economic disadvantage used in the study, “the extent to which an individual does without resources” (Payne, 2005, p. 7). SECOR's role in the community and their access to a large number of families who are facing economic disadvantages made them a useful community partner for recruitment purposes. SECOR began recruiting participants at the end of August through an email to all school liaisons for the Food for Thought program (See Appendix B). SECOR also distributed flyers to their food bank and food bag recipients about participation in the research study on September tenth and seventeenth. The email and flyer provided information about the study's purpose, procedures, and benefits and contact information for the researcher to participate or with a question (See Appendix C). Purposeful sampling was used for this study. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), purposeful sampling is used in qualitative research to “intentionally sample a group of people that can best inform the researcher about the research problem under examination” (p. 148). After four weeks of unsuccessful recruitment with emails and flyers continuing to be distributed, the researcher applied for an IRB addendum to the recruitment plan, and the email was sent to all school staff at Food for Thought schools and was also shared

with other school staff members that had food programs not fulfilled by SECOR. The recruitment email was sent to schools in other districts and was also shared with another food organization, Food for Hope to be shared with its participants. SECOR also made phone calls to liaisons at their food for thought schools requesting that they personally reach out to any families who met the studies criteria. Snowball sampling was also added to the recruitment plan, and participants were asked to refer others. The researcher selected the type of sampling strategy that best fits the method and the sample size to ensure that the participants could best inform the researcher of the beliefs, experiences, and practices of families with economic disadvantages as they pertain to giftedness and family involvement. The researcher used the sampling strategy, purposive sampling, for this phenomenological study because all participants must experience the same phenomenon. However, the researcher will also use maximum variation sampling to add diversity to the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher attempted to select participants that added diversity to the study by selecting participants with children from different ethnic backgrounds and attending school districts in different geographic areas; however, all the participants are from the same county even though recruitment took place in at least three other counties.

Nine possible participants completed the survey; three participants answered no to the qualifying question about food support. The researcher followed up with each of the possible participants to gain more information. Two possible participants responded, and it was decided they did not meet the qualifications of the study, and the third was determined that they did meet the qualifications. The first six families to complete the

survey that met the requirements for the study of economic disadvantages and a gifted child living in the home were sent a participation consent form. Consent to the research outlined their rights to stop participation at any time, their right to refuse to respond to any question, and their right to review their interview transcript and the final analysis to discuss the accurate representation of their lived experiences (see Appendix D). They were given information about the study's purpose and the emphasis on participants' lived experiences to describe the common meanings for families with economic disadvantages and how it could help guide a deeper understanding of underrepresentation in gifted education. One family did not return the consent form, and after several unsuccessful attempts to obtain consent, the research moved on to the next family to complete the survey. Families who completed the survey and did not meet the qualifications received a thank you email stating that they did not meet the qualifications for the study. To ensure confidentiality, participants chose a pseudonym for themselves and their family members to move forward with the research process before the first interview. Electronic data was held on the university's one-drive account, including pseudonyms, consent forms, transcripts, and recordings.

Research Design

The research design focused on the use of two interview sessions with each participant to collect rich data about their beliefs, experiences, and practices pertaining to giftedness and family involvement. During each interview session, semi-structured interviews were used as a method of data collection. According to Peoples (2021), semi-structured interviews are recommended for phenomenological research because it allows

the researcher to write questions to cover the research questions but also to let participants discuss other information that could be important to the study. Phenomenology includes knowledge as co-constructed by the researcher's focus, and the choice of interview questions aids in data gathering as much as the participants' experience (Sloan & Bowe, 2013). A hermeneutic interview should feel like a conversation; open-ended questions will be used to guide the discussion (Dibley et al., 2020). Before the interview process, the researcher used a refinement process to increase the validity and reliability of the interview protocol (Yeong et al., 2018). The researcher was an active listener and allowed for unexpected turns in the interview to truly hear the participants' experiences (Dibley et al., 2020). After the interviews, the researcher kept private notes in a journal recording initial impressions of the interview and emerging ideas, as well as any follow-up questions to be included in the next interview (Dibley et al., 2020).

Data Collection and Procedures

Data collection began with the use of a short five-question survey to gather demographic data about possible participants and ensure they met the criteria for participation. Possible participants were asked for their email, ethnicity if they had a gifted child, if they used a food bank service, the level of their child's school, the type of school, and the county they live in. After the data was collected on the survey, the researcher contacted participants who met the study's qualifications of having a child they believed to be gifted and using a service to provide food for their family to obtain written consent. Table 3.1 is an overview of the survey data collected.

Table 3. 1*Participants' Demographic Information by Identification Letter and Pseudonym*

| Participant | Gender | Ethnicity | School Type | School Level |
|--------------|--------|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| (A)Ciara | Female | Black | Public | Elementary |
| (B)Madonna | Female | Other | Public | Elementary |
| (C)Gabriella | Female | Hispanic | Public | Elementary |
| (D)Helen | Female | Black/Hispanic | Public | Elem/HS |
| (E)Sophia | Female | White | Public | Elementary |
| (F)Rachel | Female | Black | Public | Elementary |

Two participants identified as Black, one participant identified as more than one race or ethnicity, one participant identified as Hispanic, one as White, and one as Other. Black participants make up 33 percent of the study's participants, while White, Hispanic, Bi-Racial, and Other make up 16.6 percent each. According to Census.gov (2021), the racial or ethnicity demographics of the county are 11.5 percent Black, 76.5 percent White, 19.8 percent Hispanic, and four percent of two or more races. Based on United States Census Bureau (2021) information, my study does not mirror the county demographics. However, according to Data Commons (2020), the median household income for Black families is 59,879 compared to Hispanic families at 65,596 and White families at 85,755. The lower household income for Black families in the county would point to the increased number of Black participants. After written consent was obtained

electronically, interviews were scheduled with each participant. To protect the emotional health of participants, they were able to opt out of the study at any time as well as refuse to answer any interview questions during the interview. Participants were reminded of their rights at the beginning of each interview process to ensure that they understood they could opt-out at any time or refuse certain questions. All participants completed both interviews by answering all the questions. Participants were also asked to find a private location to complete their virtual interviews, so they would feel comfortable sharing personal information. Interviews began with an informal conversation to build trust and form a relationship before asking participants to share sensitive information about their lives. "Open-ended questions and possible interrogatives provide the general direction the hermeneutic conversation will take, but the participant often leads in the telling of the experience in question" (Dibley et al., 2020, p. 97). After both interviews, participants also reviewed their section of the findings to provide feedback and clear up any misconceptions on the researcher's part. All six participants provided positive feedback about the experience and were appreciative of the opportunity to participate.

A reliable interview protocol is essential in obtaining good quality qualitative data (Yeong et al., 2018). Developing a valid interview protocol requires both an extensive understanding of the research topic and a process of refinement of the interview protocol to correct shortcomings before the interview process begins with participants (Yeong et al., 2018). To increase the reliability and validity of the interview questions, the researcher received an expert review of the interview protocol from Dr. Tamara Stambaugh, an expert in the field of gifted education who has expertise in giftedness and

poverty. Dr. Stambaugh provided feedback on the protocol's structure, length, writing style, and ease of understanding, as well as ideas for questions she felt necessary to refine the interview protocol for alignment with the research questions and purpose of the study (Yeong et al., 2018). Dr. Stambaugh's feedback was used to revise and add questions to the interview protocol, and then a discussion took place between the researcher and Dr. Stambaugh to finalize the suggested changes to the protocol. The researcher also attempted to receive feedback from two other experts in the field of gifted education with expertise in poverty but was unable to obtain feedback from either expert after several attempts at communication via email.

Table 3.2 is a list of the interview questions used in the first interview, including the rationale for each question, alignment of the question to the research question, and the citation that supports the question. Table 3.3 is a list of the interview questions used during the second interview with each participant with the same structure of alignment as table 3.2 with research questions, rationale, and citations. Using a semi-structured interview protocol (Peoples, 2021) allowed the researcher to also include clarifying questions and probing questions during the interview process to obtain more information from participants when needed to fully answer the questions provided in Tables 3.2 and 3.3. Interview questions were created using the literature from chapter two pertaining to giftedness and family involvement as a guide. The purpose of open-ended interview questions was to learn about the participant's beliefs, experiences, and practices and to allow for the participant's story to be authentic and not guided by the researcher's experiences of bias. The second set of interview questions was created to gather

information about the participant's experiences, beliefs, and practices pertaining to family involvement, as well as the barriers and supports for involvement. Epstein's Six Types of Involvement (2019) were used to code the participant's responses but were purposefully not included in the interview questions, so the participants would not be guided to respond under each type of involvement. The researcher wanted to know how participants were involved in their children's education and had concerns that including questions specific to each type of involvement would guide the participants to specific responses. The responses were then coded based on Epstein's Six Types of Involvement (2019). After each interview, the researcher would make a note of any question that needed follow-up or more probing to have a complete understanding of the participants' lived experiences.

Table 3. 2

Interview Questions and Rationale Interview One

| Question | Rationale for Question | RQ | Citation |
|---|--|----|-------------------------|
| Tell me about yourself? | An introductory question to start the conversation | NA | Dibley et al., 2020. |
| What does giftedness mean to you? | The intent is to understand the participants' perspective of giftedness. | 1 | Jolly & Matthews, 2010. |
| Would you tell me about your child(ren)? | The intent is to continue the conversation and relationship building. | 1 | Dibley et al., 2020. |
| When did you first recognize your child(ren) as gifted? | The intent is to understand giftedness and how it appears in their children. | 1 | Jolly & Matthews, 2010. |
| What experiences, if any, have you had with giftedness outside of your child? | The intent is to understand the participants' perspective of giftedness and how it manifested in others in their families. | 1 | Jolly & Matthews, 2010. |

| | | | |
|--|---|-----|--|
| Describe an experience you have had with your child's giftedness? | The intent is to understand the participants' perspective of giftedness. | 1 | Jolly & Matthews, 2010. |
| Describe an experience you have had with another person's giftedness? | The intent is to understand giftedness from the participants' perspective. | 1 | Jolly & Matthews, 2010. |
| Explain what school has been like for your gifted children)? | The intent is to understand what school has been like for their gifted child from the participants' perspective. | 1,2 | Grissom et al., 2019; Lockhart & Munn, 2020. |
| How does giftedness impact the way you interact with your child? | The intent is to build an understanding of the participants' beliefs, practices, and experiences with giftedness. | 1,2 | Jolly & Matthews, 2010. |
| What are your goals or expectations for your gifted child? | The intent is to understand the participants' beliefs, practices, and experiences with giftedness. | 1,2 | Jolly & Matthews, 2010. |
| Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your child or their giftedness? | The intent is to build an understanding of the participants' beliefs and experiences with giftedness. | 1,2 | Jolly & Matthews, 2010. |

Table 3. 3

Interview Questions and Rational Interview Two

| Question | Rationale for Question | RQ | Citation |
|--|---|----|---|
| Do you have anything you would like to add since our last interview? | The intent is to allow additions to interview one after reflection. | NA | Dibley et al., 2020. |
| What does family involvement in education mean to you? | The intent is to understand beliefs about family involvement in education. | 2 | Lockhart & Munn, 2020. |
| What ways do you support your child's giftedness publicly and privately? | The intent is to understand the beliefs and practices of the participants. | 2 | Jolly & Matthews, 2010. |
| Is there an experience that stands out to you with involvement? | The intent is to understand the participants' experiences with family involvement in education. | 2 | Garn et al., 2010; Lockhart & Munn, 2020. |

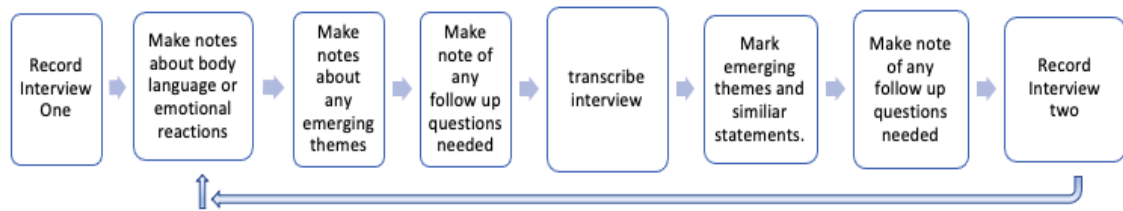
| | | | |
|---|--|-------|---|
| How, if at all, does your child's giftedness impacts your involvement? | The intent is to understand the participants' beliefs about giftedness and involvement. | 2 | Jolly & Matthews, 2010. |
| What factors support your involvement with your child's education? | The intent is to understand the participants' experiences with family involvement in education. | 3 | Dikkers, 2013; Lockhart & Munn, 2020. |
| What are some things that get in the way of your involvement? | The intent is to understand participants' experiences with family involvement in education. | 2 | Ford & Harris, 1999; Lockhart & Munn, 2020. |
| Are your goals for your child and your involvement in education similar or different from the schools? Will you please explain? | The intent is to understand the participants' beliefs and experiences with involvement. | 2 | Jolly & Matthews, 2010. |
| Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your family or your child(ren)? | The intent is to keep the conversation moving and allow the participant to add anything to their story they would like the researcher to know. | 1,2,3 | Dibley et al., 2020. |

Each of the two interviews was recorded and then transcribed by the researcher. Immediately following the interview and before transcription, the researcher made quick notes about the body language of the participant and anything else that stood out during the interview that may not be clear in transcription. The researcher also made a note of emerging themes and any ideas that may lead to follow-up questions or further research. After the transcription of each interview, all participant responses were entered into a table separating each response from each question to allow the researcher to view the data from each participant's responses separately and together under each question on the interview protocol.

Figure 3.1 shows the researcher's process for data collection in a graphic representation.

Figure 3.1

Data Collection Process



Data Analysis

"The interpretative process aims to gain an understanding of the meaning of everyday experiences to offer plausible insights about our interactions with the world we live in" (Dibley et al., 2020, p. 114). Hermeneutic phenomenology does not offer a guide or a set of steps to follow for analysis because it is not meant to be formal; instead, it is a journey of learning to think, trusting that thinking, sitting with the data, and allowing the understanding to come (Dibley et al., 2020). The researcher cannot force understanding to go and must use meditative thinking and an openness to understand (Dibley et al., 2020; Sloan & Bowe, 2013).

This study began with a survey and then a selection of participants. Participants participated in two interviews. Interviews lasted anywhere from 30 minutes to 75 minutes based on the amount of detail the participant shared. Each of the interviews was recorded and then transcribed by the researcher. While transcribing the interviews, the researcher included tone, mood, body language, facial expressions, and pauses to clarify interpretation in her notes. According to Dibley et al. (2020), interpretation will begin

with the very first interview; the researcher listens carefully to the story being told, the transcript will be read from start to finish, and then line by line, making notes about what stands out in the text.

The researcher read each transcript from start to finish and then, line by line, made notes about what stood out in the text, highlighting similar statements or words among participants. The first reading and initial notes show what the researcher noticed first as an interpreter; paying close attention to emotions and ideas that are seen first guides what matters to us (Dibley et al., 2020). After the initial reading, the researcher entered each participant's transcript into a table organized by research questions. This allowed the researcher to read the interview question and then each participant's response to that question one by one marking themes that related to each research question. Focusing first on research question one and interview one, the researcher started noticing themes connected to how the participants described the beliefs and experiences with their child and others' giftedness. With each reading, the researcher marked notations in different pen colors. As themes emerged, highlighters were used to highlight themes color-coded by statements that fit into the theme in each transcript. A key was created to track which colors were used to highlight statements that fit into themes. For example, everything highlighted in yellow connected to the theme of resiliency to describe giftedness. The researcher used the initial themes to think further and reflect and continue to build on themes with each new reading. As Heidegger termed it, the next step is dwelling with the data allowing our mind to move from one part to the next, making links, building meaning, and understanding from the material that leads to interpretations

(Dibley et al., 2020). The researcher actively participated in dwelling, allowing time to ponder, wonder, and ask questions that resonate within as each story is read and reread, allowing the bubbling up of central concerns, themes, connections between meanings across stories, and patterns that connect to themes (Dibley et al., 2020). Between readings, the researcher would take breaks and go for walks outdoors to be able to allow her mind to dwell on the data. This time often resulted in connecting meaning and patterns between participants' stories. After several readings, the researcher began writing a summary for each participant and created tables to show the themes evident in each participant's response to the questions that related to research question one. As the researcher was writing the summaries and creating tables, she constantly referred to the transcripts to create meaning of the participants' beliefs and experiences pertaining to giftedness. Working with the data in this way, writing, reading, rereading, rewriting, and rereading allows interpretations to emerge, reflecting the participants' experience and the phenomenon (Dibley et al., 2020).

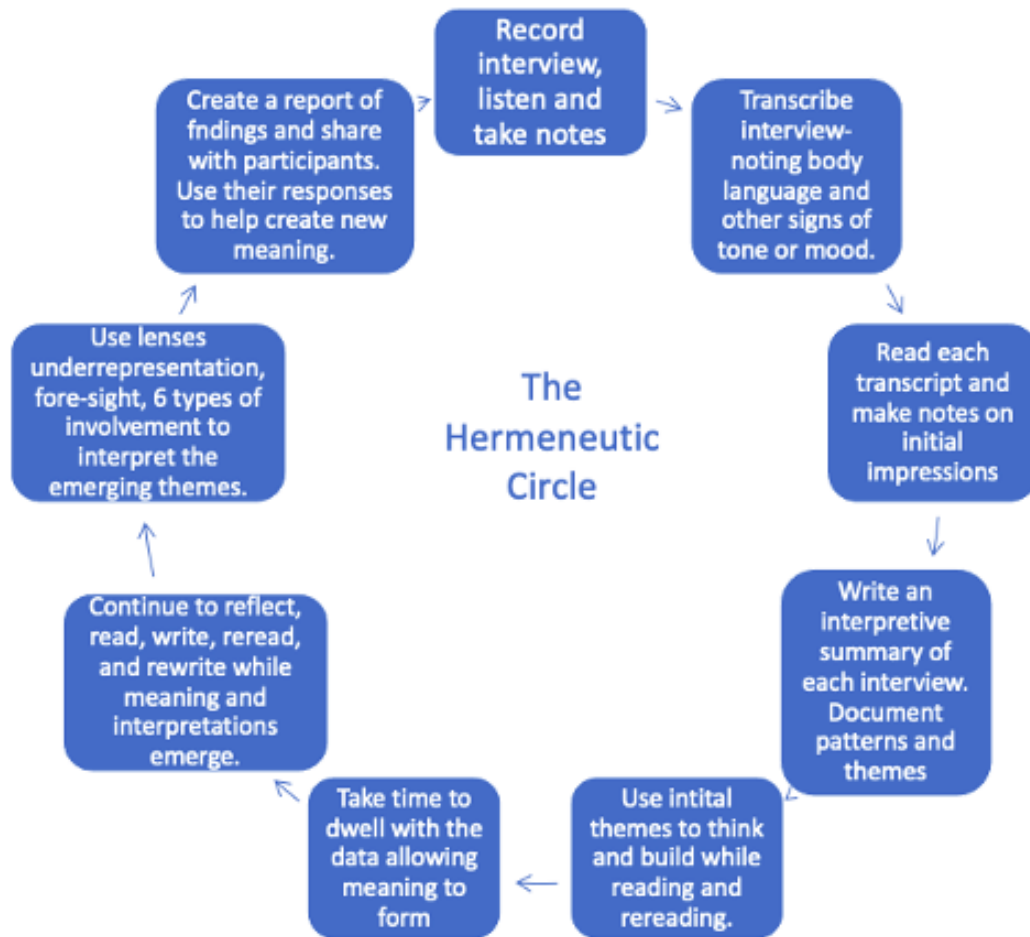
After the process was completed for research question one, the researcher repeated the process for research questions two and three. The researcher focused on the interview questions that connected to each research question two and three and began with marking initial themes and followed the same process. The researcher allowed time to dwell on the data. At the same time, dwelling on the research, read and reread transcripts marking patterns, themes, and similarities with highlighters and marking notations and questions with colored pens. Tables were again created to show themes

related to Epstein's Six Types of Involvement (Epstein et al., 2019) and the supports and barriers to involvement that were emerging from the participants lived experiences.

Throughout the process, the researcher used the lenses of fore-sight, underrepresentation, Funds of Knowledge (Moll et al., 1992), and Epstein's Six Types of Involvement (Epstein et al., 2019) to interpret the emerging themes and patterns while still allowing the meaning of the participants' lived experiences to emerge authentically. The researcher repeatedly read and marked up transcripts, went for long walks to allow the information to merge, journaled about her own experiences and bias, and listened to the audio-recorded interviews to allow meaning to emerge. After the researcher had time in the hermeneutic circle, a report was created of the findings and themes to provide insight into the meaning and understanding of families with economic disadvantages, beliefs, experiences, and practices pertaining to giftedness and family involvement in education. To add to the validity of the study, the report in chapter four was shared with all participants to provide further insight based on the sections that pertained to their story; participants were given the opportunity to provide feedback and clear up misunderstandings (Dibley et al., 2020). After review, none of the six participants requested to make any changes to their findings and expressed gratitude to be included in the study and were thankful to read about others that had similar lived experiences. Figure 3.2 is a visual representation of the researcher's journey of analysis using the hermeneutic circle. The visual representation shows a circle with arrows; however, the researcher did move back and forth between areas of the circle and spent more time in some sections than others through the process of analysis.

Figure 3.2

Data Analysis Process with the Hermeneutic Circle



The process required the researcher to take the time needed to think about the participants' stories and trust the thinking and allow understanding to come and new meaning to form (Dibley et al., 2020). Time in each section of the circle varied, and some sections were visited multiple times until themes and meaning were completed.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher is an essential part of the analysis and understanding of hermeneutic phenomenology (Dibley et al., 2020). Hermeneutic phenomenology allows for the researcher's interpretations based on their fore-sight and therefore does not need to be bracketed, as in other forms of phenomenology (People, 2021, Sloan & Bowe, 2013, van Manen, 2014). The researcher has shared her own lived experiences in chapter one and journaled throughout the research process to allow space to create new meanings and replace fore-sight with revisions (Dibley et al., 2020; People, 2021). The researcher used the process of journaling to question her preconceived thoughts about a family with economic disadvantages, beliefs, experiences, and practices pertaining to giftedness and family involvement in education (Dibley et al., 2020). The researcher began journaling during the process of creating interview questions to begin recognizing her own beliefs and experiences related to each question so that she was able to leave space for participants' beliefs and experiences that may be similar or different from her own. After each interview, the researcher continued to journal, making connections between her past beliefs and noting how the participant's experiences mirrored her own or were different from her own. Writing in a research journal continued through the transcription and analysis process, so the researcher was able to use her fore-sight to connect to a participant's lived experiences and leave space for new meanings to form based on both her experiences and the participant's experiences. The hermeneutic circle and journaling to question my views based on my past experiences and how they influenced my reflections and interactions prepared me to analyze participants' lived experiences.

Summary

The methodology used in this study was described in detail in the chapter to inform the reader about phenomenology and provide an understanding and rationale for hermeneutic phenomenology. The chapter also outlines the setting and participant recruitment by the community partner SECOR and the criteria for participation. A description of the data collection process and procedures, data analysis, and the researcher's role in the research process concludes the chapter. Chapter four will provide a profile for each participant and the findings from the data collection.

Chapter 4: Findings

This study explored the beliefs and experiences of six families with economic disadvantages pertaining to giftedness and family involvement in education. The parents of gifted children participated in two interviews to gain understanding and perspectives of their beliefs and experiences with their gifted children, giftedness in general, and their involvement in their children's education. The data collection and analysis were guided by a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to uncover the lived experiences of the participants individually and as a group experiencing the same phenomenon.

Chapter four presents the lived experiences shared by the six participants. This chapter reviews the findings that emerged from the data collected during two interviews. The interview protocol was linked to the three research questions and allowed for participants to share their beliefs and experiences about giftedness and family involvement. Profiles of the participants and their children, the themes drawn from the interviews and a connection to the research questions are presented in this chapter.

Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the beliefs, experiences, and practices of families with economic disadvantages pertaining to giftedness and family involvement in education.

Research Questions

1. What are the beliefs and experiences of families with economic disadvantages pertaining to giftedness?
2. What are the beliefs of families with economic disadvantages pertaining to family involvement with their children's education?
3. What are the supports for and barriers to families with economic disadvantages involvement in their children's education?

Summary of Participants

Each of the six participants shared stories, experiences, and their beliefs during two interviews. All the participants spoke about their children and families and how giftedness and education has had an impact on their lives.

Funds of Knowledge are based on families' knowledge which is based on their experiences, work experiences, social practices, and social history (Gonzalez et al., 2005). The participants, through their stories, experiences with their children and other's giftedness, their involvement in their children's education and the life lessons they pass on to their children highlighted their families' Funds of Knowledge during each interview. Funds of Knowledge focuses on the student's and families' actual lived experiences, not stereotypes because experiences differ from student to student, and cultural experiences are not always the same even within the same cultures (Gonzalez et al., 2005). Gonzalez et al. (2005) believed that no matter the child's background or economic status, there is knowledge, cultural resources, and cognitive resources available in the home that can be used in the classroom. The summary of each participant shares

personal information about each participant and how they described themselves and their children and through these descriptions their Funds of Knowledge began to emerge, and their family values were evident.

Participant A

Ciara is a 34-year-old Black female and single mother of three children. She is the fifth of six children and is attending college for her master's degree. Her two younger children, Shane and Shira, attend an elementary school and her oldest child, Zach, attends high school. Ciara uses the support of SECOR through their Food for Thought program and receives weekly food bags. She identifies all three of her children as gifted or twice exceptional; however, none of her children have a formal identification at school.

Ciara describes her son Zach as a strong willed, very independent teenager, and a natural athlete. She believes, Shane to be her child who is strongest in academics and is outspoken and a natural leader. Ciara reports her daughter, Shira, is very creative and artsy and is gifted in acrobatics and gymnastics, but also struggles with a learning disability.

Throughout both interviews Ciara expressed her love for her children and a deep understanding of her children's strengths and needs both in and out of school. She stressed the importance of education and advocating for her children's needs at school. Her own educational path is teaching her children the value education holds for her and that it is never too late to chase your dreams and try to better yourself. She believes that it is essential for her children to have access to the best education and according to Ciara "knowledge is power and the more that you know the more of the world they'll

understand, be able to see and maneuver through” (Ciara, 2021). Ciara has very specific goals for her children’s future and actively works to encourage them and foster particular career paths.

Participant B

Madonna is a single mother of four children. She works full time and recently received a promotion at work. Madonna has struggled with addiction in the past and shared stories of how her and their father’s addiction impacted her children. She uses the support of SECOR’s Food for Thought program to provide food assistance for her family. All four children have spent time in foster care over their lives. Now that she is back with her children, she is working to build a stable and loving home. Madonna has twin boys, Nike and Asher, who attend two different elementary schools. Asher attends a school with a behavior support program to meet his needs in school. She also has a daughter, Riley, who attends elementary school and an older daughter, Olliana, who is attending online middle school. Madonna identifies her son, Asher, as gifted; however, he is not identified at school.

Madonna describes Nike as her most challenging child because of his opinionated personality, but also states that she loves that he is so opinionated. She describes Asher as all around awesome, smart, and hard working. She states that people really like Asher because “he is just super cool and is good at everything he tries.” Riley, Madonna’s middle child, is emotional and is sensitive to others’ feeling. She works hard to try and make everyone around her happy and is in tune with others’ emotions. She also describes Riley as smart and sweet. Olliana, Madonna’s oldest daughter is artsy and

exceptionally good at SFX makeup. She struggles socially and is impacted by peer relationships easily.

Throughout both interviews Madonna speaks of her children in a very loving manner. She speaks freely about her addiction and the recovery process and how this has impacted her children. She points out repeatedly their resilience and how well they have been able to overcome and work through the trauma. Madonna stresses the importance of school and hard work throughout the interviews and believes that hard work will help them reach a more stable future.

Participant C

Gabriella and her husband were both born in Mexico. Her family struggled financially, and it is important to her to give her children the opportunities that she never had. Her family receives food support from SECOR's Food for Thought program. Books and reading are very important to her as a parent because she did not have access to books until she was in high school. It is very important to her to do the best she can for her children and provide a life different than hers. She was married at 23 and had her first of three children shortly after. She speaks openly about her desire for more education for herself and her deep-rooted insecurities around her dreams. All three of Gabriella's children attend an elementary school. She believes that all three of her children are gifted, and her oldest son, David, is identified at school.

Gabriella describes David as thoughtful, smart and an avid reader. He was premature and had a few developmental delays that he received therapy for as a toddler. He is very kind, but also emotional and she also recognizes these traits in herself.

Adriana, Gabriella's middle child is strong willed and a bit challenging as the only girl. Gabriella describes Adriana as the boss of the other children and is outgoing, smart, and competitive. Mark, the youngest child is outgoing and full of energy. He loves to dance and dances all over the house. She also describes him as very smart and points out that all her children are very smart because they had different education and opportunities than she did.

Throughout both interviews, Gabriella, stresses the importance of a good education and being able to provide her children with opportunities that she never had as a child. She expects them to have a good education but does not care what career path they take as long as they are happy and feel fulfilled and successful in their own way.

Participant D

Helen is a Black female, single mother of four children. She was a young mother and did not finish college to be able to take care of her first child. Her family receives food assistance from SECOR's Food for Thought program. Helen was also raised by a single mother who stressed the importance of education and now Helen also values education for her own children. Helen is currently finishing her degree in education while working to support her family and knows that while, not easy, it is important that she chase her dreams and live the life she was meant to live. She loves being a mother and knows her experiences have made her a stronger and more resilient person. Helen's two oldest children, Violet, and Dash, attend high school and her two younger children, Edna and Jack-Jack, attend elementary school. Her oldest son, Dash, was identified gifted in

elementary school and her youngest son, Jack-Jack, is currently being tested by the school, and Helen identifies him as gifted.

Violet, Helen's oldest child is currently working toward her CNA while simultaneously attending high school. Helen reports that Violet struggles with anxiety and competing with her younger brother can be stressful. Helen works with each of her children to discover their personal strengths. Dash was identified in Florida in the third grade as gifted and attended a school for gifted children until high school. They moved to Colorado and though Dash is in all advanced classes he does not feel that he gets the support that he needs for his giftedness and that expectations are sometimes too high with little support. Dash is interested in engineering and is a Rubik's Cube aficionado. Edna enjoys creating YouTube videos and has her own channel where she creates short, animated videos. She is an amazing artist and mathematician. Jack-Jack is her youngest child and loves Minecraft and Roadblocks. Jack-Jack has always been interested in educational games and enjoys learning but has had some struggles with social interactions at school.

During both interviews Helen speaks of her children with pride and love. She knows each of their strengths and challenges well and enjoys working with each of them at home, specifically on their writing. She was raised to believe that education is important and is raising her children to also value education. As a parent she thinks it is important to allow her children to have opinions and a voice. She works hard to find time to be involved and excited about their activities in and out of school. In the future, she

hopes her children all find the passion that feeds their drive and become the best versions of themselves.

Participant E

Sophia is a White female and a single mother of one son. She grew up in a financially unstable family and her family used government assistance programs. Sophia attended college and is well educated and is established in the work she does. She shares custody with her son Alexander's father. His father struggles financially and uses food support and other government support programs so Alexander has a bit of a different life at each parent's home. Alexander attends elementary school in and is twice exceptional. He receives gifted programming at school as well as support through an IEP for a social pragmatic communication disorder.

Sophia describes Alexander as pretty awesome and full of personality. He does well in school and is smart, capable, and independent. Alexander is very creative and is talented in music, playing several instruments from a young age. He is passionate about music and plays in a music group and enjoys talking about different bands and groups from classic rock to rap, his interest in music runs deep. Alexander is also strong in his faith and love of the lord.

Throughout both interviews Sophia spoke of Alexander's amazing strengths with pride. She enjoys spending time with her son and participating in his passion areas in and out of school. She shared several stories about Alexander's experiences with school projects and summer camps that highlight his giftedness. Sophia also became emotional when speaking about how gifted education has impacted Alexander's life and the early

struggles some teachers had recognizing Alexander's gifts and to not focus on the behaviors created by his disability. Sophia is an amazing advocate for her child's needs. She hopes that he will attend a middle school for gifted children and eventually grow into the best possible adult. She knows he is capable of anything he sets his mind to and will accomplish greatness.

Participant F

Rachel is a Black female and the biological mom of three children and has an adopted son and several stepchildren she spends time nurturing. She grew up in a large family of five brothers and one sister and was raised by a single mother. She recently lost her job and her home to a devastating fire but is rebuilding her life for herself and her children and has a very positive outlook on the future. Rachel receives services from SECOR for food assistance and other assistance to rebuild her home. She strongly believes that they cannot dwell on the negatives and need to find the positive in their situations. They spent some time homeless, but her focus is on all the support and people that helped them and their new opportunities at a better life. Her three biological children attend school in the same district, one at high school and two in elementary school. She believes all three of her children to be gifted; however, they are not identified as gifted at school.

Rachel describes her oldest son, Elijah, as an amazing son and always willing to help her and the family. He taught her what true love is and is always there for her. Her middle child, Chandra, is vibrant and free spirited. She excels in math, dance and gymnastics and has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Her youngest child,

Faith, is a loving child and is emotional and sensitive to other's feelings. Rachel also spoke about her stepchildren and how she spends time with each of them even though she is no longer involved with their fathers. She also adopted a son RJ, that has had some struggles with family in his life and has experienced a lot of traumas but has been able to overcome and readapt.

Rachel speaks about her children with love and positivity. She also shared a lot about her brothers. Overall, she speaks a lot about perseverance and resiliency and her family's ability to overcome any hardship that has been thrown at them. In the future she wants her children to be successful mentally, spiritually, and financially. She hopes they are happy and have a strong foundation from their childhood. She prays that they do not experience racism and that they prosper within different religions and races to have a better community.

Summary

Each of the participants shared beliefs and experiences with giftedness and family involvement in education during their two interviews. After each interview the researcher spent time transcribing each interview and reading participants' story allowing the initial themes to emerge from the collective stories of all six participants. Themes began to emerge early about each participants' beliefs around giftedness.

Identification of Initial Themes: Research Question One

Hermeneutic phenomenology requires a hermeneutic perspective that differs from a scientific approach, it requires a meditative thinking to interpret the participants stories through thinking, questioning, and understanding (Dibley et. al, 2020). During initial

coding the researcher began a list of initial themes that were noticed in the first reading. Initial themes that began to emerge from the first reading of transcripts from interview one was resiliency, creativity, sensitivity, and twice exceptionality or a possible overexcitability.

Initial Theme: Resiliency

The theme of resiliency can be found in the following quotes about resiliency from participants B, C, and F. Madonna states,

I think just through some of the resiliency or like the trauma that me and their father had put them through they've been in. Well, Olliana has been in five different foster homes . . . seeing how amazing they are and how much they have overcome all like these hurdles that life threw at them, through no fault of their own.

Gabriella said the following

I do feel like they need to have that pressure of saying you know this is tough and then overcoming that and having the result and feeling like yeah it was hard, but I accomplished it and I just feel like that's a positive for them.

Rachel also spoke about resiliency and giftedness "so I feel like he's gifted because a lot of traumas has happened in his life, and he's always turned it into a positive and move forward and expanding his horizons." Her experience with her son's resiliency was woven throughout her interviews. Each of the three participants shared stories of life situations that forced their children to be resilient and overcome trauma.

Initial Theme: Creativity

The initial theme of creativity was evident during interview one in the following quotes from participants A, B, C, and E. Ciara spoke about her daughter's creativity at a young age "The way that she caught on to art and how she could draw, and her coloring was like immaculate like as a grown person. Her teachers kept telling me she's so creative." Madonna also noticed creativity as a sign of giftedness and said this about her sister, "Well I know that my sister is really artistic and she's really good like at music." Creativity as a sign of giftedness in a family member was also something Gabriella spoke about "My brother is very artistic. He can visualize I guess something and then make it happen." Sophia stated "I knew he was gifted in music from pretty early on" when asked when she first noticed her child's giftedness.

Initial Theme: Sensitivity

Participants A, B, C, and F all spoke about sensitivity during their first interview and the theme of sensitivity being a sign of giftedness emerged from the following quotes.

I think giftedness can come within character, you know honestly to because certain people I feel are equipped more with being able to read other's emotions and be able to identify with people, and I feel like more gifted people are sometimes more compassionate and in tune with their spirit man, then people who aren't so I definitely see some of those traits in my kids (Ciara).

Madonna stated "my mild child she's very emotional like I can make a frowny face at her, and she would start crying. She's really like in tune with other people, and like

wanting everyone else to be happy and ok.” Gabriella expressed “He is very kind, but also emotional kind of like me.” During interview one Rachel also spoke of her daughter’s sensitivity “The one thing she will give you is love, one thing she will give you is that thing you are missing. She can fill a void, . . . she can relate to a lot of people.” Sensitivity was emerging as a common thread for many participants when describing giftedness.

Initial Theme: Twice Exceptionality/Overexcitability

The final theme that began to emerge from the initial reading of interview one about giftedness was twice exceptionality or a possible over excitability. The following quotes from participants A, B, C, D, and E point to twice exceptionality or an overexcitability being a sign of their child’s giftedness. Ciara states the following about her children.

He’s very gifted and talented and likes acrobatics and gymnastics, but she struggles with dyslexia, and she has some learning disabilities that we’re working with right now. I have to keep in mind that my boys have ADD, ADHD and their executive functioning skills are not always there.

Madonna also identified a disability or overexcitability “he does have an IEP for behavior and attends a special program.” Gabriella stated, “I think it’s also because growing up David started having them, you know therapy, occupational, speech and stuff like that so whatever I was picking up” and Helen said, “he would be getting in trouble a lot in class and trouble like you know being bored, falling off his chair.” Sophia also spoke of her sons struggles with a disability “We struggled with him from probable about

two or three with behavior issues . . . we've realized he has social pragmatic communication disorder.”

After the first reading and initial coding the researcher read and reread the transcripts making notes and creating a narrative for each participant noting ideas and questions (Dibley et. al. 2020). The researcher continued to read transcripts and listen to the recordings of the interviews, dwelling in the data and taking note as new ideas, connections and themes emerged. The researcher spent time pondering and wondering while taking walks to allow the data to link from participant to participant to start to form common meanings in the lived experiences (Dibley et. al, 2020). While dwelling in the data the researcher continuously went back to the lens of Funds of Knowledge and how family beliefs and experiences were supporting their children's educational needs in the home. As new themes emerged the researcher would return to the data to reread.

Identification of Themes: Research Question One

Using the initial themes that emerged from the interview process as a starting place the researcher spent time in the hermeneutic circle creating new meaning. Spending time reading and highlighting the transcripts from each participant's interview and reading the responses to each question as a whole document allowed for more information to surface connecting to the initial themes and new themes also emerged. The researcher spent time dwelling with the data and connecting patterns and themes between the participants stories and her own lived experience. After several readings and time to process the documents as parts and as a whole the following themes, as seen in table 4.2,

emerged linked to research question one; What are families with economic disadvantages beliefs and experiences pertaining to giftedness?

Table 4. 1

Themes for Research Question 1

| Table of Themes | Participants | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Theme | A | B | C | D | E | F |
| Resiliency | | X | X | | | X |
| Creativity | X | X | X | X | X | |
| Overexcitability | X | X | X | | | X |
| Twice-Exceptionality | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Intelligence/Academic Ability | | X | X | X | X | X |
| Divergent Thinking | X | X | | X | X | X |
| Opportunity | X | | | X | X | |
| Asynchronous Development | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Behavior Problems | X | X | X | X | X | |

Resiliency

Participants discussed resiliency in their children and others that they knew as gifted. Resiliency for many of the participants was described as a characteristic of giftedness, the ability to overcome adversity or trauma to succeed was a common theme in the stories and lived experiences of several participants. Resiliency was also explained over and over when asked what giftedness meant to them.

Madonna shared stories of how her children have had to overcome trauma from being in foster home and dealing with her addiction.

. . . over the last two years they have kind of straightened themselves out and like just shown how strong and resilient they really are and through all of that I've been recognizing on other levels how smart they are . . .being with them and seeing how amazing they are and how much they have overcome all like these hurdles that life threw at them, through no fault of their own. Giftedness means . . . you're really smart or resilient and good at overcoming (Madonna).

Gabriella shared that as a parent she believes that the hardships have built the ability to persevere through tough situations and will help her children be successful in life.

I do believe that success has a lot of hardships in between, so I do feel like they need to have the pressure of saying you know this is tough and then overcoming that and having the result and feeling like yeah it was hard, but I accomplished it and I just feel like that's positive for them (Gabriella).

Rachel's family has faced trauma recently in a house fire and she discusses the trauma not only her children and adopted child have faced, but also the trauma her siblings have had to overcome and how that trauma has made their gifts and talents stand out.

RJ my adopted child is amazing because he comes from . . . hell, hurt, trauma, and lies. What makes him talented is despite the hell he's been through he just wants to be a kid. I think that's what makes him talented to be able to see the situation

and readapt his life direction. (My brother) he's completely gifted, he lives his life like a person with two arms . . . he's gifted because a lot of trauma has happened in his life and he's always turned it into a positive and move forward and expanding his horizons (Rachel).

Several participants described giftedness as resiliency and a trait they recognized in both their children and others. Creativity was another common theme that emerged in the participants lived experiences with giftedness.

Creativity

Participants A, B, C, and E identified creativity as a form of giftedness either in their own children or in others that they have known and have thought to be gifted in their lives. Creativity was mentioned in many forms such as ability to cook without training, artsy, coloring, creating, musical, and creative.

Ciara recognized giftedness in her daughter's ability to draw and color and the teachers pointing out her abilities to be creative at school.

I recognized my last child's (giftedness) right around the time she was in first grade. I was noticing, you know she was just different. The way she caught on to art and how she could draw, and her coloring was like immaculate like as a grown, for she could color like a grown person in first grade. Her teachers kept telling me she is so creative (Ciara).

Madonna has started to notice her children's abilities since they have been back together over the past two years. She has noticed their creativity, specifically her oldest

daughter's ability to use makeup as a creative outlet while she struggles with her mental health.

I've been recognizing on other levels like how smart they are or how creative they are with their makeup. Olliana is really artsy like she is into SFX makeup, she can put a bullet hole on your forehead and bruises on my cheeks. I mean she is really good. Well, I know that my sister is really artistic and she's really good like at music. She really is naturally good at those things. She can pick up a flute and play the song from Aladdin . . . she can draw like nobody's business (Madonna).

When asked about another's giftedness she has experience with, Gabriella remembers her brothers' abilities to create and visualize through art. "My brother is very artistic. He can visualize I guess something and then make it happen. He is very artistic in many ways" (Gabriella).

Helen discusses her oldest son's ability to paint and draw. She also talks in detail about her children's writing and how they all enjoy writing as a family. "He's (Dash) also an artist... he paints and draws" (Helen).

Sophia discussed how her son had an opportunity to be part of a camp for gifted children. At the camp students worked on different creative projects and she was amazed by the art he could produce. Sophia also spoke of Alexander's love of music and his ability to play several instruments.

. . . the art that he (Alexander) turned out was just incredible. I couldn't believe you know they did like let's do a self-portrait or let's do a Georgia O'Keeffe and every day he brings home something that was like really amazing art. He

loved being creative when he was young, he loved doing art. He's played the keyboard since he was four and he plays in a music group, and he knows how to play the guitar and the drums (Sophia).

Creativity is a characteristic of giftedness and was easily identified by many of the participants when describing what giftedness meant to them. Participants also were able to identify an ability to understand other's feeling and emotions as a sign of giftedness.

Overexcitability

Dabrowski, a polish psychologist, had an interest in the emotional and intellectual development of gifted individuals (Daniels & Piechowski, 2008). According to Daniels and Piechowski (2008) part of Dabrowski's theory includes emotional overexcitabilities which can appear as sensitivity, emotionality, a deeper understanding of self and other's feelings. Many participants described their gifted children as having a sensitivity to other's feelings and emotions or described them as insightful. They explained situations where their children instinctually knew what someone else needed or could read a person's feeling or intentions.

Understanding themselves and others is a trait that Ciara sees in all three of her children. She specifically points out how in tune her daughter is to others and how she feels deeply.

They are in tune with their inner selves and in people in general. My daughter, for instance, no matter where we are, if we see people sleeping outside on the corner, she can always spot them and identify them. She feels their pain and feels really

sad. She is able to read a lot of pragmatics, you know, sometimes better than I am. Sometimes she is like wow, I really like her, of that guy like it be somebody she just stays far away from like I got a real bad vibe from. I think she just identified with people's emotions more (Ciara).

Madonna recognizes her middle child's emotionality and her need to make those around her feel comfortable and happy.

Riley is my middle child she's very emotional like I can make a frowny face at her and would start crying. She's really like in tune to other people, and like just wanting everybody else to be happy and ok (Madonna).

Gabriella recognized that her oldest son is emotional which is also a trait she identifies in herself. "He is very kind but also emotional kind of like me" (Gabriella).

At a very young age, Rachel's daughter Faith, could identify what others need and works to help others fill what may be missing.

She's (Faith) very dedicated and loyal she shines out of everyone, so when I tell you one thing, she is love, one thing she will give you is that thing you are missing. Like I'm having a sad day I wish I was loved, I feel alone like that little girl can fulfill that void she can relate to a lot of people (Rachel).

Participants' descriptions of their children and their heightened sensitivities could be a sign of an overexcitability in one or more area. Dabrowski's theory includes five forms of overexcitability that can be present in gifted children (Daniels & Piechowski, 2008). The forms include psychomotor, sensual, intellectual, imaginational, and

emotional. Often overexcitabilities can be misdiagnosed as other disorders in gifted children which could then lead to a twice exceptional identification.

Twice Exceptionality

All six participants mention either a learning disability such as dyslexia or other disorders that their children face like attention deficit disorder. Only one of the children is identified formally as twice exceptional.

Shira, Ciara's youngest child has struggled with both dyslexia and a learning disability at school and her son's both have attention deficit disorder and need support with executive functioning at home.

She (Shiara) struggles a lot. . . she struggles with dyslexia, and she has some other learning disabilities that we're working with right now. I would say it impacts it somewhat not anything major, somewhat affected. I have to keep in mind that my boys have ADD, ADHD and their executive functioning skills are not always there. I have to be patient and with Shiara I have to realize it takes a little bit more time and need more attention and needs to go at her on pace, but somewhat impacted but not anything drastically (Ciara).

When asked about another's person's giftedness, outside her children, Madonna spoke of her sister who is a gifted artist and musician, but also had dyslexia that created struggles for her in learning.

She has dyslexia and so she has that and then, so it's funny because she has these problems that kept her back, but at the same time she had all this other awesome stuff that she was good at (Madonna).

When discussing her oldest child's identification as gifted at school, Helen spoke about how his behavior issues at school were noticed before his gifts. His constant movement could be an indicator of a psychomotor overexcitability.

So, my son the sixteen-year-old used to get in a lot of trouble in school, so they were born out here than we moved to Florida we lived in Florida five years and then we moved back here. So, my sixteen-year-old he would be getting in trouble a lot in class and trouble like you know being bored falling off his chair and coming off disrespectful all these different things and I was pretty hard on him because I was like you know that's not how we do school, you know, like education has been a big deal in our family. So, I would see him come home, then I just started kind of watching for other signs and he was like what's going on he's like I don't know. I don't know that he just couldn't identify what was really wrong, so I was watching him and I would be like where's your homework where's your homework he would say I did it on the bus, so I would check it and he'd be like done with his homework like so quickly, and this happened going on a couple of years, where it was like you know not focused at all in school, and you know following just little things and that zipping through his homework and I will meet with the teachers and conferences like I'm not sure that he's being challenged enough and you know, maybe extra homework, what do you see in class they're like well yeah he's getting his work done, but very played to the side you know of well you know he just needs to be more in tune and engaged I'm like okay well usually, when the students not engaged there's

reasons behind that. So, there was finally his third-grade teacher he had a teacher where she's like you know I'm seeing some things in him, would you be okay if we got him tested. You know, for those tests that they do to identify twice exceptional or gifted and absolutely I feel like this was the break you know, like this is kind of because you know I didn't know you know I hadn't been educated around those things at that point, I was you know working in dealerships and communications and corporate and all of that (Helen).

Sophia reflects on her son, Alexander's journey to gifted education. His behavior was noticed as a toddler and he was tested and diagnosed with a communication disorder. His early years in school were a struggle because his behaviors overshadowed his gifts. Once he was given opportunities to be part of gifted programming he really began to blossom.

I think we struggled with him from probably about like two or three on with behavior issues and so we have because I'm in healthcare we've been lucky to be able to get him like the care he needs to address the issues like and so he's been able to go through testing and we've realized that he has what they call social pragmatic communication disorder, so a lot of the issues that he was having is not necessarily behavior a lot of it was just his lack of understanding social norms and his inability to kind of pick up on those social situations and then he also has ADHD so then that makes it really difficult. As he got further on in school teachers were giving him opportunities to participate in GT type activities, and that is where we really saw that he would thrive and I always

knew you know, from a young age from a for answers that he is really intelligent it's just finding things that interest him to be able to showcase that so he's not always the best if he has an activity that isn't more self-directed or are picked by him. So luckily, we've been able to have some really great GT teachers, they've really advocated for him. We had reached out to the school, you know once his diagnosis came through, and we were asking for I can't remember if it's the IEP or the 504 whichever one is like a higher level. They said no, you don't really need an IEP we're just going to do a 504 because he's not he's at grade level he's doing just fine. At grade level, so he doesn't need any additional support but that's not really the case for someone like Alexander he shouldn't just be getting by I mean he definitely should be excelling and exceeding and being given challenging opportunities so he shouldn't be struggling with reading or struggling and in different subjects, he should be like leading the class in those subjects, but because he was at grade level they just weren't interested in in helping us to get him to support that he needed. So it was probably even like two years ago that the GT teacher had brought up this concept of twice exceptional to me and saying because he has a disability, we know that he's gifted based on the testing and the grades, but he should be like at a sixth grade reading level in third grade not like barely getting by on the third grade reading level so she was really great advocate within the school to help some of the Special Needs folks that were more resistant to him actually needing special needs needing that extra help in writing and things like that and helped us all kind of understand that he could do more, and he

should be doing more, so I don't know. Like I don't think as a mom I was probably educated well enough or had support outside of the school system to be able to advocate for my son in the way that he really needed, so I think now finally in his last year of elementary school he's in fifth grade he actually does have the IEP and he gets special needs help, but he is also granted the opportunity to work with the GT children and all of that as well. (Sophia).

Parents can struggle with accepting a diagnosis for their child and Rachel expressed how hard it was when her daughter Chandra was diagnosed with ADHD, however she does speak about how much she has learned about parenting and supporting her child. She also points out how the school was able to support Chandra and get her the help she needs. “. . . and she (Chandra) has ADHD. So, that was really a shock because that's the first time I had to deal with something like that as a parent, but what I noticed is she just has more energy than others” (Rachel).

Often, participants mentioned that the school noticed their child's disability instead of or before their giftedness. While the school may not have recognized their gifts the participants were able to identify many gifted traits including intellectual ability.

Intelligence and/or Academic Ability

When describing what giftedness meant to them two of the participants with formally identified at school gifted children mentioned intelligence or academic ability. None of the other participants described giftedness or shared stories about giftedness that were linked to test scores or academic achievements. Participants also did not relate giftedness to programming in schools that their children participated in specific to their

giftedness. Several participants did share stories about noticing their children's intelligence or advanced abilities at a young age.

Helen spoke about her son being tested for gifted at school and also includes academics in her definition of giftedness. “. . . so, they got him (Dash) tested. And then, it has tests wound up coming back, I would say just under what is identified, but for his demographic he qualified” (Helen). Participant D (Helen) also defined gifted as follows; “Students who are able to think in a conceptual way about academic or I should say students that have a natural ability and naturally gravitate to gravitate toward thinking in a conceptual way versus a structural way” (Helen).

Sophia includes curriculum, assignments, and learning quickly in her explanation of what giftedness means to her.

Like strictly from a grade perspective, you know it's someone who can come to the curriculum and capture it quickly succeed in the assignments rather quickly, maybe they get bored in the class because they're not feeling challenged enough (Sophia).

Other participants referred to their children as smart and told stories about noticing their giftedness in intellectual or academic ways but did not include these terms in their explanation of what giftedness means to them.

Madonna recognized her son Asher's abilities with math at a very young age and felt his abilities were more advanced than other children his age.

Asher has always been smart, and I'll just give you an example we were at the department and he, I you know always had worked when they were with me, so

he was in preschool so they this one time we were doing visits because me and their dad had relapsed, anyways, long story short, we were in a visit and Asher was going into kindergarten and I was giving him problems. I gave him three problems and I have written them down and the hardest one was $6 + 6$ and he wasn't in kindergarten and first thing he said once I gave them to him was how do you write 12? I always knew he was super smart because the hardest problems were $6+6$ and he asked how to write 12 so he knew what it was, but he didn't know how to write (Madonna).

David, Gabriella's son is an avid reader and is often found reading quietly.

"He (David) would be disappearing, and we would find him sitting down somewhere just reading and it's often that you know expecting something and he is sitting done and reading" (Gabriella).

When speaking about her youngest son, Helen, noticed how much her knew as a toddler and found his attraction to learning games a sign that he may be gifted like his older brother. "I noticed when he was two years old because he knew all of his alphabet and he knew how to count up to, I want to say 20 something . . . and he would choose learning games versus the non-learning games" (Helen).

Rachel also noticed her son's math abilities at a very young age. "Elijah when he was about two years old, he could add and subtract. It was really cool, with it, he could rap songs and numbers and count money, he was very good at math" (Rachel).

Divergent Thinking

Many participants spoke about their children's abilities to think differently than other children their age. Some participants included this ability in what giftedness means to them and others just highlighted this skill in stories about their children's giftedness or their interactions with their children.

When describing what giftedness meant to her, Ciara discusses an ability to see things differently than others and an ability to identify with people.

Means just people who are different than the norm. They learn differently they see different things than the norm over the typical populations. I think giftedness can come within character, you know honestly to because certain people I feel are equipped more with being able to read other's emotions and be able to identify with people, and I feel like more gifted people are sometimes more compassionate and in tune with their spirit man, then people who aren't so I definitely see some of those traits in my children but they are more in tune with their inner selves and in people in general (Ciara).

Helen's son Dash has shared with her that he feels that he learns differently than the others in his advanced high school classes.

He's (Dash) different than the other gifted students, and this is how he explained that he said there's gifted where your comprehension is quick and then you work quickly, he's like my comprehension is normal, and then I work quickly like routine (Helen).

Sophia's description of what giftedness means to her includes a unique approach to life and looking at things differently than others. "It's somebody to me that has like to say unique approach to life that maybe it they're looking at things differently than someone in their age group would think" (Sophia).

Chandra, Rachel's middle daughter is a self-learner and needs to experience learning for herself. "She (Chandra) just found the talent within herself she's more of a self-learner so if you tried to tell her something she is going to look at you like yeah that was blah blah" (Rachel).

Opportunity for Gifted Programming

Participants spoke of the importance for their children to be challenged or be a part of gifted programming. They spoke of a change they could see when their children were engaged or challenged at school in their behaviors and love for learning. According to Johnsen (2018) students in classrooms with no differentiation are less likely to show gifted characteristics and gifted and talented students must be given the opportunity to perform. Only three of the participants children are currently participating in programming for gifted children in their schools.

Ciara reflected on facilitating opportunities for her children and advocating for their needs at school to provide them with the opportunities they need for learning. "I have facilitated for them a lot and they have offered so many accommodations for them and tried to advocate and give them resources." Ciara's ability to advocate for her children have allowed them to have opportunities they need to be successful in learning and the receive accommodations and challenging assignments.

When Helen's son Dash was identified in Florida, he was eligible to attend a school for gifted learners. Once Dash began the new school Ciara saw a big difference in his love of learning and attention and engagement at school.

And what they do in Florida is they have the regular schools, the K through eight schools and then they have special schools, like the typically the challenge school kind of like what we have here. And so there's a school K eight school of math and science so because he qualified gifted he qualified to go to that school free of charge, so my daughter wound up going to one school and he went to another school, which I was totally as soon as he hit that new school he bloomed like he said oh look, this is what we did today mom, and this is what we did today mom and his actually sitting at the table with the eyebrows crinkled on his homework and challenge right so it was just beautiful, we have a really positive experience about how he was identified um (Helen).

Sophia noticed her son begin to thrive at school after he was given the opportunity to participate in gifted programming. Alexander struggled with school because of a communication disorder. In the early elementary grades teachers often suggested he be held back a year. Once the gifted teacher and a district team identified him as twice-exceptional he began gifted programming in school. "As he got further on in school, teachers were giving him opportunities to participate in GT type activities, and that is where we really saw that he would thrive" (Sophia).

Many of the participants noticed at a young age that their children were smart or intellectually gifted, they also noticed that while they may be advanced in one area that they showed asynchronous development.

Asynchronous Development

Several participants while sharing stories about their children and their giftedness allude to that their children have variations within themselves and have developed unevenly across certain skill levels. Without knowing, it many participants were describing asynchronous development within their children which is a common characteristic of giftedness (National Association for Gifted Children, n.d.).

Ciara noticed that her daughter was different than other children in first grade. She had a different way of viewing the world than the other children but was also just a kid at other times. “I was noticing, you know she (Shiara) was just different. She had a different eye for things. She was just very organized for her age. She loves school and is a social butterfly” (Ciara).

Gabriella spoke about her son, David, and his developmental delays in some areas due to premature birth, but how he has always excelled in other areas.

He (David) is very thoughtful, and he is very smart. He loves reading. It’s hard to get him off the books sometimes. He has a few challenges from the time he was little. Mostly we believe developmental because he was premature and there were some things that were definitely a little challenging for him, but we feel like he has he’s usually able to overcome those difficulties with time (Gabriella).

Helen noticed that her son (Jack-Jack) knew his alphabet much younger than the other children and he always tended to pick the learning games. She also mentions that when he started school, he struggled with understanding social boundaries and how to interact with other children his age.

As he got into kindergarten, he had some weird social things. Where he was very closed off and then, once he they're like oh open up you know in person, open up and elementary he had issues with respecting other spaces and stuff like that, not in a bad way like he would never get in trouble it's just like ask first before you hug or you can't touch people's cheeks stuff like that so then that kind of became the focus from kindergarten through elementary school I'm working on his social skills, I think, through that he lost so much confidence and in loving school I just saw a shift from like learning (Helen).

Sophia spoke about her son's abilities to play music at a very young age. He started at the age of four and was a natural musician. Later in the interview she also mentions his struggle to communicate to children his own age.

He's really interesting kind of kid and he's not bored boring to talk to he loves one on one time with adults and that is kind of the best way that he learns to have you know someone really connected with him and part of that is probably because he's an only child and then part of it is just this he doesn't really, really relate to the fifth graders you know there's not a lot of fifth graders that he can really communicate with or understand him so yeah (Sophia).

Asynchronous development is a common trait of gifted children and was recognized when describing giftedness or sharing experiences by several participants. In many cases the school did not notice the asynchronous development as a sign of giftedness, but a manifestation of a behavior issue.

Behavior Problems in School

According to Jensen (2009), poverty also affects a child's behavior due to the challenges they face, the social and emotional instability, and the attachment formed between a child and parent. According to Johnsen (2018) “undesirable behaviors tend to limit services for some gifted and talented students because teachers and other educators may have particular stereotypical expectations of how gifted students should perform” (p. 17). Five of the participants mention their children having some type of behavior problems in school during the interview process. Two of the three participants with formally identified children spoke of behavior issues being the first indicator to a teacher that the child may be gifted.

Ciara when asked about school and her gifted children, expressed that school is often difficult for her sons.

Shane today is testing me he doesn't want to go to robotics class and his teacher made him mad and I just missed a call right before here from Zach's math teacher, he probably late or on his phone. So, with my boy's it's been challenging, every year, Zach started in first grade and Shane probably third grade and on up, it's very challenging for them (Ciara).

Madonna's son Asher, is attending a school with a behavior program to meet his needs. She spoke about how this school can support his behavior and academic needs.

Asher's school is fantastic and moving Asher to the school with a behavior program has been great. I think at his last school sometimes the approach for him was too much too scary and it wasn't what he needed. The new school for whatever reason, the way they do it has been great (Madonna).

Helen's oldest son Dash was getting in trouble at school for silly behavior and disrespect before a teacher thought he should be tested for the gifted program at school.

He would be getting in trouble a lot in class and trouble like you know being bored falling off his chair and coming off disrespectful all these different things. And I was pretty hard on him because I was like you know that's not how we do school, you know, like education has been a big deal in our family. So, I would see him come home, then I just started kind of watching for other signs and he was like what's going on he's like I don't know. I don't know that he just couldn't identify what was really wrong, so I was watching him and I would be like where's your homework where's your homework he would say I did it on the bus, so I would check it and he'd be like done with his homework like so quickly, and this happened going on a couple of years, where it was like you know not focused at all in school, and you know following just little things and that zipping through his homework and I will meet with the teachers and conferences like I'm not sure that he's being challenged enough and you know, maybe extra homework, what do you see in class they're like well yeah he's getting his work

done, but very played to the side you know of well you know he just needs to be more in tune and engaged I'm like okay well usually, when the students not engaged there's reasons behind that (Helen).

Sophia noticed behavior issues in her son at a very early age, but also noticed his intelligence. In early elementary school the behavior issues were the focus of her child's education.

I think that a lot of times you know, depending on the teacher, he has had in school opportunities were either given or taken away from him, based on what they interpret it as behavior issues and I've had not his teachers, but other teachers say you know he probably just needs held back because he's not like up to par on the behavior side. (Sophia).

Behavior problems at school was often recognized quickly while some of the participants children still have not been identified as gifted. While the participants were able to identify many characteristics of giftedness in their children their teachers were often missing the traits and were not seeking the parents' input.

Summary of Research Question One

A summary of findings for research question one, all six participants have beliefs and experiences with giftedness both with their own children and with other family members, friends, or children. The participants with formally identified gifted children leaned more toward school performance, academic achievement, and intelligence when speaking about giftedness, while the families with children that were identified at home spoke more about resiliency, creativity, and sensitivity to identify giftedness. All six

participants spoke about twice exceptionality or possible overexcitabilities being present in their children and others that they identify as gifted individuals in their lives. Each of the six participants shared beliefs and experiences through stories about their children and others in their lives that highlighted their Funds of Knowledge and the values and morals that they are passing on to their children about education and success.

Identification of Themes: Research Question Two

Through the process of coding and the hermeneutic circle for research question two the researcher used the conceptual framework; Epstein's Six Types of Involvement (Epstein et al., 2019) as a lens for coding. Research Question Two: What are families with economic disadvantages beliefs pertaining to family involvement with their children's education? aims to uncover participants lived experiences with involvement in their child's education. The researcher used the types of involvement as well as codes taken from the description of Epstein's Six Types of Involvement (2019) to organize the participants beliefs and practices pertaining to their involvement in their children's education. Table 4.3 represents the six types of involvement, the codes used while analyzing the transcripts from each of the participants, and the participant that identified the type of involvement. Parenting, communication, learning at home, and decision making were present in all six participants interviews through their lived experiences with involvement.

Table 4. 2

Epstein's Six Types of Involvement

| Type of Involvement | Codes | Participant |
|----------------------------------|---|------------------|
| Parenting | Home environment that supports education | A, B, C, D, E, F |
| Communication | Communication with teachers, parent conferences | A, B, C, D, E, F |
| Volunteering | Support classroom or school activities | B, C, E |
| Learning at Home | Opportunities outside of schoolwork for learning, museum trips, church, clubs, camps, nature walks, any activity the family participates in that would promote learning | A, B, C, D, E, F |
| Decision Making | Participation in IEP, 504, and ALP meetings, advocating for their child's needs | A, B, C, D, E, F |
| Collaboration with the Community | Use community resources to promote learning, help organize community resources, students participate in community outreach programs. | B |

Parenting

All six participants spoke about the home environment and how they support education at home. Participants support education in different ways including helping with homework, purchasing books and extra materials to support learning, and making it clear to their children that education is an important part of their family's values.

Ciara shared during her second interview that her involvement in her child's education was very important to her and part of her core values. "It means a lot it's one of my core values actually you know it means a lot it's very important for children to have

the best levels and access to education” (Ciara). She also shared an example of how she supports her child’s education as a parent

Shane and Shiara they need that reassurance they constantly need that validation they constantly need those words of admiration, they constantly need those pushers, they constantly need me to be patient with them, even with their learning styles it's just like okay simple things in my head I'm like no this you know, but I have to go back and be very patient, especially with Shiara not to make her feel insecure or bad, so it takes a lot just me coming down to their level a little more often than I feel like the average child at their age (Ciara).

Madonna explains that family involvement to her is being involved with what her children are doing at school and supporting them.

I think well like being present, going through all those papers that get sent home, making sure they do their homework. . . to have him (Asher) do his reading and then to be like present so if he has any questions, I can help him through it and so to me that’s involvement (Madonna).

Gabriella reflected on the ways that she motivates her children to learn and how she conveys to them the importance of learning.

I always had him with me, you know, I was his only teacher up to the point that he goes to kinder and then him having those experiences and being excited about school, and so we always try to make it about you know it’s good you know it’s like you should be like it’s a privilege, like the education that you have is like not a little thing to have not only shoes and clothes, but the education, books that you

enjoy not all children have access to that, so I have always tried to explain to them, not only that their privilege of having. Not everybody has that, and I have always made that point to them like you know, there are children they wish they had what they have, but they have to think that. Maybe they learn stuff they can later on help others (Gabriella).

Helen spoke about how important education was to her mother and how it is part of her family's value system. She gave details about how she is involved with her children's education as a parent and the environment she creates at home to foster a love for literacy.

Reading is a big one, I just feel like literacy is a big one for me for the younger children so having them read to me having them share primarily, even with my daughter who's not I don't consider gifted she could be having them share their accomplishments you know it's such a big deal to me because I feel like for them to be able to articulate you know have this feeling inside of being proud and thriving toward their goals. Being able to articulate it and to sharing it with somebody else it helps them kind of build that confidence, and you know become I guess it almost brings it into fruition when they speak it out, you know versus just the action and they speak it out um so really encouraging them to share with me, even though I'm super busy I've always been that parent that has tried to take time to listen and to respond, you know have feedback for my kid (Helen).

Sophia stressed the importance of parents getting involved in their child's education in her second interview.

Well, I think it's super important. For kids to have their family involved like especially there you know direct parents, I think that you know, parents need to guide a child, through their education, regardless of giftedness and encourage them to push themselves a little bit. And so, if you just kind of rely on the schools to do that, you might not have as great of an outcome so feel like it's really important that parents get involved (Sophia).

For Rachel it is important that she passes down specific skill at home to her children, specifically the ability to take risks and be able to support themselves financially with their passion areas or skills.

I had my daughter's my children start their own company. To show them that they do have the ability to do the same thing I can do as an adult. To also show them the ability that they can succeed on their own that money I don't want my children to be someone that gets a job or gets a check and they're like I have to run through my check. I want it to be a common thing, since I was a little kid, I had a job I made money, I had savings and had stability (Rachel).

All six parents not only were finding ways at home to value education through their parenting they were also communicating with the school and receiving regular information about their child's education.

Communication

All six participants spoke about the importance of the home to school connection and open communication with their children's teacher. Communication looked different across participants, some mentioning an application on their phone or email called class DoJo while others spoke of texts, calls, and conferences with the teacher. Communication with the teacher was an important factor for all participants; however, none of the participants mentioned communication with the school outside of the teacher or about school events.

Ciara spoke during her interview about advocating for her son with his teacher this year to try and mediate some personality differences they are having in the classroom.

He and his teacher have not been getting along this whole school year they haven't seen eye to eye. I think it's a personality glitch it's nothing against the teacher and nothing against Shane and I've been going around and around with her and long story short, we asked for mediation, you know someone else to come in and the school counselor called me and is glad to do that mediation. However, she told me that they like to do the mediations, private without the parents, you know, and I had originally when we had that conversation I agreed. And then I slept on it, and then I had to come back and call her the next morning I said, you know I really feel like my child needs someone there that he feels comfortable with and who's going to advocate for him so I'm going to decline, that closed door meeting and I would like to be present, so I feel like for Shane, that will show

him that you support him, he does have someone who is advocating and hearing his voice, whether it's true or not, or so (Ciara).

Madonna speaks about how well the teacher's communicate using class DoJo at her children's school. She can use the consistent communication to praise her children. "Class DoJo or pictures, his teacher is really good at sending pictures and stuff and there is one picture of him, like he is doing his work and so you know we put that on Facebook and just said I am so proud of him" (Madonna).

Gabriella speaks about the importance of meeting the teacher's and communicating regularly so that her children know that education is important to them as a family.

I try to be involved. I try to get to meet their teachers and I do try to have communication with the teacher a lot, because I feel like when the kids notice and they're more likely to try harder. For us, for me, for the time that my parents were somewhat involved I was doing better and then it was almost like well nobody's looking you know, nobody cares really, say it was kind of like I don't know, maybe motivational too. Just knowing that their parents are on top of it, I know my kids like from time to time I'll be like oh yeah I talked to miss you know, whoever it is from that child and or do you have something to tell me about school, what did what did you learn what did you do what and it's not just that, but like I'll ask specific questions or I'm like can you can you explain that to me like I don't know I think one of the things that

motivates David specifically is that I sometimes you'll see me on something and I'm like oh cool that's so cool I didn't know (Gabriella).

Conference, emails, and checking in regularly with her children's teachers are all important forms of communication for Helen and her involvement with her children's education.

Well, from primary I would say through middle school it's a lot of the conferences and email communication. I've always been big on conferences through middle school. . . So yeah, I would say just you know, conferences and emails being a part of the teachers. Like if they're a part of class dojo or see saw wherever they send messages on just making sure that you have that and you're checking it regularly (Helen).

Rachel has a close relationship with the teachers at her younger children's school. The elementary teachers as well as other district departments really helped support her family when their home burnt and found her housing and other household items, including a Christmas Tree, "The elementary school for sure, like, I even talk with the teachers outside of school" (Rachel).

While all six participants found ways to communicate with the school through email, phone calls, or conferences only three participants were able to volunteer at school.

Volunteering

Three of the participants spoke about wither volunteering in their child's classroom or at school events. They put an emphasis on the importance of being

involved, but also discussed barriers that got in the way of them being able to volunteer at school, such as time and work commitments.

Madonna was involved with her children's preschool policy council when they were younger and was even appointed to a secretary position for the group.

Well, this is like preschool though, but during that time I was the secretary for the policy council, so I was super involved in that for like two years. It was an appointed position so I that. I would take notes and transcribe them and so just being there and doing that was a part of involvement I've tried to volunteer at the school a bit, but I didn't get picked. . . I would love to do like the PTO, but I just don't have the time, right now, and so, I just got like a new position at the job, and I just don't have time (Madonna).

Gabriella spent time working with other children in her daughter's classroom until the pandemic closed the school to the opportunity for her to be in the classroom.

I have been involved in Adriana's classroom more. When she started school, I had the opportunity to come to the classroom and help the teachers. I would sit down one to one with specific students. We would work on something they were struggling with. She noticed the difference, for me it was something, I have always liked to be involved with the kiddos (Gabriella).

Although Sophia cannot always go to school events or volunteer in the classroom, she works hard to support her child's interests and get him excited about outside of school events like math competitions. "I always, you know, try and help when there's school events and get excited about things if he's participating in something that might be

extracurricular like he has the math competition this weekend and so that's kind of a big deal" (Sophia).

While not all the participants were able to volunteer at school all six participants found ways to encourage learning opportunities at home.

Learning at Home

All six participants spoke about opportunities that they provide to their children to learn outside of school. These opportunities spanned from trips to museums and summer camps to nature walks and purchasing books or checking over their homework. Though varied experiences all participants found value to making sure their children had chances to explore their learning interests outside of school.

Teaching her children, a love of learning and how to treat others are skills that Ciara believes start at home with her. "I do feel like family and engagement is very, very important because it ultimately shapes the child and how they're going to learn how to love and treat others, and how to be when they grow older" (Ciara).

Madonna makes sure that she is involved with homework and reading with her children but also finds outside experiences to be important for her children's learning.

It's been really important to get him up and to have him do his reading and then to be like present so if he has any questions, I can help him through it . . . I am also thinking about doing an escape room and going to a pumpkin patch and like doing the mazes and racing his siblings, those kinds of things (Madonna).

Gabriella speaks of the importance of helping with homework, providing books and spaces to read as well as educational events and activities outside of school.

Checking backpacks and homework, saying so you have homework, asking questions. For us, or for me, has always been like. With the kids like homework shouldn't be a punishment and anyway homework it's even books, books educational stuff you know that those are right. . . I try to get them to the kid's museum, I have always tried to put that little thing in their brain that there is more out there than tv, there is more out there than Legos and stuff that he can build. Stuff that to put their brain to, you know, I like to tell them I want to see the little wheels spin on your head (Gabriella).

Helen shared many stories throughout her interviews about learning with her children. Sometimes this was reading and editing their writing with them or having a conversation about a club they were participating in after school. The idea she stressed the most though was making sure her children knew she cared about their interests and that education was important.

And I let them be free thinkers free thought I've gotten excited even if I'm really not I tried to pretend like I'm excited about what they're excited about let them be excited to demonstrate, even if I'm like not now because I just feel like especially gifted students, need to be seen and heard. . . I just feel like literacy is a big one for me for the younger children so having them read to me having them share primarily, even with my daughter who's not I don't consider gifted she could be having them share their accomplishments you know it's such a big deal to me because I feel like for them to be able to articulate you know have this feeling inside of being proud and thriving toward their goals. . . I would say just to let

them, even if I'm tired, even if I don't feel like it, even if I'm over the day my own day I always take every day before I leave to work, I say love you learn lots. And they know it by heart that the older one state to the younger ones in the younger ones say to me and, like everyone says it to everybody. It's been a tradition, since for school when we leave in the morning love you learn lots and then when we get home it's how was your day what did you learn today and they'll make something up half the time I'm sure it's not even accurate but just to let them know you know, like that education is important, like, I said that came down the line, my mom was she didn't really ask how my day was or what I was learning, but she always took pride at that conference, and I saw her in the midst of her craziness. be able to be like I'm proud of you academically, so I always try to let the kids know like hey, by the way, I still do care, you know (Helen)

Sophia spoke in her interview about providing opportunities for learning outside of school with her son, but she also spoke about remote learning during Covid 19 school closures and the importance of being engaged with her son during that time.

I tried to get him to experience a lot of things right, like so we we're able to do things together, like maybe go to the museum or do a nature walk. . . and then during the pandemic there was like a Google classroom for GT and a Google classroom for his regular school and he would get really excited every Monday or Tuesday morning and like go in there and like what did your teacher do, and like let's do the puzzles that she gave us, and it was just like really fun stuff that was

still teaching them strategy and, like thinking through and spelling and you know all the things, but it was in a way that he was super pumped up about (Sophia).

Rachel spoke about teaching her kids the importance of money management at home and the understanding that they can make their own money and be successful as adults. She also mentions working with her children on homework and helping her daughter feel comfortable to be independent.

It makes me more involved it makes me do my due diligence, so you know, sometimes as parents your life is going so fast you like sit down and do your homework, you know, instead of you sitting with your child and doing the homework with them and making them feel comfortable. With learning and feeling comfortable with doing their work so that they can do it on their own what they started doing it like right now Chandra would read her book or do a packet just completely on her own, and I feel like that's because I had to do my due diligence, I had to sit there and do the homework with her, I had to read for not only an hour all through the day you know reading signs so I feel like it just made me be more involved more due diligence more appreciative of having a child yeah (Rachel).

Learning at home can be done in many different forms and to provide these out of school opportunities participants also had to engage in decision making about their children's education and what to prioritize.

Decision Making

During the interviews with each participant, it was clear that education was a priority in all their families and that they actively made decisions that would support their children's learning and education. Many participants made decisions around advocacy and teaching their children to advocate for their unique learning needs at school. Other participants made decisions to seek out learning experiences for their children outside of school.

Ciara and Helen both spoke about advocating for their children and how important it is for them to know that you will advocate for them but that they can also advocate for themselves. Deciding when and how to advocate for your child's needs can be a difficult decision for parents.

My child needs someone there that he is comfortable with and who's going to advocate like for Shane, that will show him that I support him that you support him, he does have someone who is advocating and hearing his voice (Ciara).

I was like you have to talk to your teacher about it, I think your teacher would listen, let me know what the teacher says and then if I need to get involved, I'll get involved if you don't want to be in the group anymore. . . so I encouraged her to advocate for herself. I am not the parent that pops in to try and fix my children's problems I'm the one who advises them to advocate for themselves. If it doesn't go well, let me know, I'll intervene (Helen).

Madonna spoke briefly in her first interview about her child being in a program to support his behavior and being moved to that school during a previous school year. Asher

has an individual education plan (IEP) and part of the process of his IEP was to find the least restrictive environment for his learning. This process would have taken a lot of time and decision making on Madonna's part to provide her child with the best opportunities to learn. "I think Asher's school is fantastic and moving Asher to his new school has been great" (Madonna).

Gabriella spoke about her and her husband's decision to limit screens in their home and how because of this her children would rather read or spend time together than sit in front of a screen.

They cannot just grab a screen or turn on the tv, they have to ask us. Screens are kind of hard to come by at home. They don't just get to watch tv anytime, they have to earn it and by the time that comes they are already doing something else (Gabriella).

Sophia was the only participant that spoke about her decision making in terms of gifted education and decisions she is making because her child is gifted.

I applied for Alexander to start middle school at a school for gifted children. The application itself was almost seemingly simple, but then I'm like well what else should I put in it, so I probably spent like a good ten hours thinking about it and working on it (Sophia).

Rachel spoke a lot about her struggle with her daughter's ADHD diagnosis and having to make the decision to take her to the doctor and get a diagnosis. The diagnosis led to extra support and a 504 plan at schools that would help Chandra catch up academically to her peers.

The teacher immediately got my attention like we have a problem you need to take her to the doctor; we need to get her tested. When I found out she had ADHD it was very devastating for me I've never had a child, with anything like not even asthma does that make sense. So, I look at kids with ADHD judgmental like they're hyper they're jumping off things like they're really bad like they don't listen they're not able to do anything and the school helped me understand that it's the parent it's how the parent raises them it's how the parents involved (Rachel).

While the participants were able to find many ways to support their children's education and make decision to advocate or seek out opportunities only one participant spoke about ways, she engages with community collaboration as a way to be involved with her children's education.

Collaborating with Community

Madonna was the only participant that discussed collaborating with the community as part of her involvement in her children's education. During her son's school fundraiser this year she was able to speak to the company she works for and ask them to sponsor the school's fun run. "My company that I work for sponsored a silver spot for the Boosterthon" (Madonna). No other participant mentioned using community resources for educational purposes or connecting the school with community resources. All six participants' children use Food for Thought the food bag program ran by SECOR within their schools for food support, but none of them mentioned the program in their interviews.

Summary of Research Question Two

In summary of research question two all six participants are involved in their children's education. There was an emphasis on the importance of education throughout all the interviews and for some participants the importance for their children to do better than they did in school and life. Participants all spoke about education being a value in their home and that they would go to great lengths to show their children how important school was for their family. All six participants worked to communicate with the school, provide learning opportunities at home, and to be part of the decision making for their children's education. Participants did tend to speak more about advocating for their child's special education needs or behavioral needs than their need to be challenged or be part of gifted programming at school. Several participants were also not aware of the gifted identification process or what programming was available at their children's school.

Identification of Themes: Research Question Three

Participants responded to several questions during the interview process about the supports and barriers for their involvement with their children's education. Questions included what factors, people, places, and things support your involvement with your child's education and what are some things that get in the way of your involvement. Both questions aim to understand how the families are supported at what supports matter to the families and what stands in the way of their ability to be involved in a way they would like. Through the process of coding and the hermeneutic circle several common themes emerged for both supports and barriers among participants and their experiences.

Participants named teachers or school as the most common support and time as the most common barrier to their involvement. Table 4.4 illustrates the themes for research question 3: What are the supports for and barriers to families with economic disadvantages involvement in their children's education?

Table 4. 3

Themes for Research Question Three

| Theme | Participants | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Supports | A | B | C | D | E | F |
| School/Teachers | X | X | | X | X | X |
| Community | X | X | | X | | |
| Family | | | | X | | X |
| Church | | X | | | X | X |
| Barriers | A | B | C | D | E | F |
| Time | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Single Parenting | X | | | X | | X |
| Economic Strain | X | X | | | | |
| Mental Health | X | X | | | | |

Supports

Teachers and the schools were the supports that was mentioned most often by participants. Five of the six participants told stories about their children's teacher or the school supporting them with both academic needs, but also with other supports to help their family. Several participants also spoke about community supports like the YMCA or clubs, family support from extended family, and support from their church. One participant spoke about technology being a support for her children because they have access to so much information and learning games via the internet. Only one participant felt like she did not have support in her involvement from anyone other than herself.

School/Teachers

Teachers and school support were the most mentioned support system among the six participants. Participants spoke about communication, support for special needs and accommodations, support in traumatic events, and teachers building relationships with their children and family. None of the participants mentioned anything about specific support from teachers and or the school around involvement with gifted education or gifted programming in school or for outside resources.

Ciara spoke about the school supporting her voice and how she is feeling, but also mentions a frustration that the school is not able to support her children's needs or figure out what her children need to be successful. Although she feels that they are supportive of her involvement and want to help they have not been able to provide solutions.

I feel like honestly the schools have supported me to an extent from our last school and now our current school has been you know great at just supporting my

voice and how I feel. I don't feel like they understand what to do that, you know they're kind of like with me their like we hear you we want solutions we want things better, but they don't even know how to help me and the child so that's why I kind of feel like that needs to be more of an indicator and guideline or some type of basis to where they can be identified to where we can get additional services and help (Ciara).

Madonna also expressed how much the school has helped to support her children, especially her child that she believes to be twice exceptional.

Well, definitely the school helps me support him, you know I think the schools in his district have been great in like keeping me in the loop and involving me. Even like having discussions and being thought of for this project, I mean all of that keeps me in the loop (Madonna).

Helen appreciates the alignment that she feels is present between her thinking and the schools thinking when it comes to her children and their education. “It’s great to have teachers that kind of are aligned with your thinking and they’re seeing the same things you’re seeing” (Helen).

Sophia and Rachel have both witnessed how supportive the teachers at their children’s elementary schools are and their commitment to providing supports for their children.

Well, I think the teachers have been really great most, most of them and just seeing their commitment to my son makes me want to like step up my game, a little bit encouraging certain things, and then you know me trying to do a little bit

better with like the reading comprehension questions and this and that you know just to really support what they're trying to do in the classroom and that's probably like the biggest impact (Sophia).

Rachel speaks about how much the school and the teachers have supported her family through a traumatic situation and have been able to provide them with the stability they needed to deal with such a difficult time in their lives.

The school showed up and showed out, I never knew they love me that much I didn't even really think they knew who I was. But like teachers from the year before, and the year before and peras and guards like everybody was calling me and I'm like I didn't even know you guys remember me or knowledge me from that day they really when I say they were supportive like him that's how I got this house like it may not be in the district, but they're still gonna allow my kids to go to school there so that's a blessing. It's bigger than what we had before, and its way better than what we had before so (Rachel).

Almost all the participants found the teachers or the school their child attends to be a support to their involvement while only three participant found community as a support.

Community

Several participants mentioned community supports for their children's education. Stories were told about everything from book clubs to sports teams, to the local barber shop supporting their children's learning and educational goals.

Helen told several stories about community supports for her children. Books clubs have been very helpful for her youngest son, and he really enjoys the time spent talking about books with his peers. However, the story that stood out was her oldest soon practicing his chess skills at the local barber shop.

I don't to be honest, I don't go out of my way to dig for opportunities like that, um I've been really like self you know, like learning chess with my 16-year-old you know he wanted to grow his chess skills, so I would play with them, so it's been really more so, what I can do. I've encouraged him to play with the Barber that was like when we were at the barbershop, stuff like that. Play with the Barber chess, and then he got his behind whooped, let me tell you at the barbershop in the ghetto, beat his behind at chess, and it was just a great kind of like epiphany like it doesn't matter where you are and what resources, you have that intellect can thrive anywhere, you know, and it was it was I loved it I love the fact that he got beat and then he played like the next guy and he won, and it was just very empowering for him, you know to see people in that circumstance, you know beat him and he goes to this school and all of that, but um that was great that was that was great and then like book club was great like for Jack, the little one it really has been a great outlet for him, it really has (Helen).

Madonna has found sports and community sports teams to be a great outlet for her son and an encouraging way to keep him focused on his academics.

Getting him into soccer has really helped getting him into rugby that helps because that interaction with him. Like those kids who are doing well in school

help to push him to do well in school because he's got that like social support (Madonna).

Ciara felt that she has a great support system through the YMCA in the last state they lived in but has struggled to build the same support system in Colorado.

I had a great support system in our last place, you know, we had our church family that was really good. We had our local YMCA where I felt like we lived, and we knew everyone who worked there, and they all knew my kids and watched them from for years (Ciara).

Community organizations such as the YMCA or even playing chess with the barber can support families in their involvement with their children's education.

Unfortunately, only two participants in this study found family to be a support system.

Family

Family was mentioned by two participants as a support for their involvement in their children's education. Lack of extended family living close and lack of feeling like they have a robust support system with family was also mentioned by several participants.

Helen and Rachel both mentioned their extended family being a support for their children and their involvement in their children's education. Helen stated, "having those people like my mom or their teachers that are like also helping in the collective effort to push them in the right direction." Rachel spoke about her extended family at great length during her interviews and how much they support each other through life.

Gabriella and Sophia mentioned the lack of extended family support with their children's education when asked about what supports their involvement. Gabriella said "We don't really have a circle, a big circle. We don't have a big family here and because of that I am often having to stop what I am doing to go do something else." Sophia stated that "we don't really have a lot of family support on the things that he does."

Family support was a great help to some participants while others really felt the missing piece of having family to support them while they worked on involvement. While family may not be able to support all of the participants, some participants were able to find support at church.

Church

Several participants mentioned their church community as a support for their involvement in their children's education. Ciara, Sophia, and Rachel said church or faith as a support and Madonna believes that getting her children involved in church would offer her more support and is one of her goals. None of the participants elaborated on the types of support their church offers but listed church as a support.

Every participant identified supports that help them with involvement in their children's education. On the flip side participants also identified the barriers that prevent them from being involved in their children's education.

Barriers

Overwhelmingly time was the most significant barrier for all the participants; however, they also cited single parenting and financial resources as barriers in their ability to be involved with their children's education. One participant also spoke about

her former addiction as a barrier and two participants spoke about current struggles with mental health as a barrier. Participants also talked about the school not always understanding the obstacles that they face and the misunderstandings creating a disconnect between them and the school, and their expectations of parental involvement.

Time

All six participants mention time as a constraint to their ability to be involved in their children's education or activities at the school. Five of the six participants are single parents and work full time jobs and find that work and house tasks get in the way to supporting their children's education the way they would like.

"Definity time management" was Ciara's response to the question what gets in the way of your ability to be involved with your children's education. Madonna responded to the same question with "other than time" as she went on to explain other barriers.

Gabriella expressed her frustration with the pace of life and constantly feeling like she has too much to do.

Its' always cooking, cleaning, sports, and stuff like that. Things that I have to take care of that sometimes I feel like I could spend more time one to one with each one of them trying to get them to learn stuff. . . I really just you know, sometimes being busy just go, go, go. I feel like I am always busy I feel like I myself want to slow down. It's hard but it is just trying to keep up with everything (Gabriella).

Helen speaks about lack of time being a frustration. She also mentions how much she would really like to have more time to focus on her children.

I'm just going to say lack of time. I wish I had all the time in the world to give my kids. I just got to sneak in my bits and pieces and get in where I fit in and use the weekends best and after school. I wish I had more. Lack of everything right like I mean time to look for more math clubs, maybe there's external. Time to look for other resources that's why I like the school clubs. Because they kind of lay it out right there for me yeah no I mean I wouldn't like if it was something that I had to do extra to dig and find that information I don't know that I would have you know (Helen).

Sophia recognizes time as a barrier for her involvement. She mentions work, housework, and life getting in the way of her ability to focus the time and attention she would like on her son's education and academic needs.

Yeah life. You know, like work. Just being busy with the House or you know just like needing a moment to myself and like not really being able to say okay you'll have to go and read and just be like fine I'm just gonna let him play video games because I'm tired and I don't want to like you know yeah I mean, I think I think I could definitely push harder if I felt like I had more capacity to, but sometimes I have to have a break to (Sophia).

Time was the most named barrier by the participants, but the lack of a second parent to support education was also a barrier named by participants.

Single Parenting

Five of the six participants are single mother's raising their children alone. Four of the participants mention single parenting or the lack of a second parent as a barrier to their ability to be involved with their children's education.

Ciara states "Being a single mother definitely affects that" when asked what gets in the way of her ability to be involved with her children's education. Rachel echo's Ciara's statement when asked the same question "being a single parent." Madonna also recognizes single parenting as a barrier "being a single mom" to her ability to be involved in her children's education.

Helen discusses the lack of another parent to support her and back up her ideals about education as a barrier to her involvement.

Lack of a second parent I'm just gonna throw that out there, because it's the reality. As much as they don't want to talk about it it'd be really nice to have somebody seconding my initiatives or me being able to be like see it wasn't just one person that said it, you know, and I mean it's always better coming from multiple people but, again, the teachers have been great. So that's definitely a barrier, you know them not being able to see, I mean both their dads are highly intellectual so when they're around their dads they are able to be like oh my dad's really smart too, but it would be different if it was in a family dynamic in the house every day, consistent (Helen).

Single parenting could hinder the mother's ability to be involved as much as they would have liked, another barrier discussed was economic strain.

Economic Strain

Although all participants children are part of the Food for Thought program at school that supplies the family with food for the weekend, two participants mention economic disadvantages as a barrier to their involvement in their children's education. Ciara states "lack of support, financial strain for sure" when asked about barriers and Madonna says, "money is a stressor."

Economic strain can create a barrier for involvement and creates stress for some of the participants. Stress can impact mental health which was another barrier identified.

Mental Health

Two of the six participants mention their own mental health as a barrier to being able to be involved with their children's education. Both participants see their own mental health and the time they need to spend working to better themselves as a factor in their time to spend with their children.

Madonna was very open in her interview about her struggles with depression and her former addiction and how both factors are barriers in her mind.

I think sometimes like just getting in my head and like being depressed about things like that definitely gets in the way. Like setting the standards for myself and what I think things should be in that part of getting in my head and then just getting so upset when like you don't meet those standards . . . for me it is really difficult to be like totally engaged and involved in you know participating when I feel like I'm just kind of like on a treadmill or reading water and like I'm just barely able to breath sometimes. I just need to be kinder to myself, so that reflects

out onto them and if things aren't completely upset with like the house things and like I just cleaned it and there are 4 of you and 1 of me, why isn't anybody helping me, so we're so caught up in that that I'm not able to say let's sit down and so some of your reading. You know because I've exhausted myself being pissed off and I just need to figure out a way to reel that in so that's something that I'm like really working on (Madonna).

Ciara also mentions her own mental health as a barrier to her involvement "mental illness, mental health issues, my own issues that I've dealt with from being misunderstood growing up (Ciara)."

Alignment of School and Home Expectations

Many participants felt that their expectations of how and when they should be involved were not aligned with the school's idea of involvement.

Ciara was very vocal about her perception of the school's expectations and the misalignment between their expectations and her reality as a single working mom.

I feel like they don't take in a lot of those factors that I just kind of mentioned, even with myself, you know. With what I'm just going through just personally as a parent that affects my engagement with my kids, I don't feel like they take that into consideration, and you know even just recently the counselor was talking to me and I was explaining to her just the situation and life and what's going on at home and how its' generalized areas of what's going on in school. And she was very interested in learning this because she told me, I am a white privileged lady, I do not know but I want to know. So, they don't get it when I say I'm a single

mom because they're not single parents, you know they don't get it when I say I've been out of work for two months I'm living off of nothing they don't get it, because they have two and three incomes. So they don't understand that mental illness and what causes the disconnect sometimes with the parents and me, being able to help them in all areas that they need they don't get that in their head, I feel like sometimes I'm judged a lot, even kind of the teachers, you know I don't think it was you know, on purpose, but just little things I mean do you guys have a weekly checklist I'm like I'm working on revamping our chore list, and all this and all that why I took off work well, you don't even have just a simple after school checklist like you know the little things like you know just the verbiage like in her mind it's simple like I don't want you have this in place, you know but she's not taking consideration I'm not meeting my kids at home a lot their home before me or I'm working late or this or that. I had to do this or I'm the one that's cooking cleaning and doing this, so I don't, they follow certain, they don't get it in their head they're just like why can't you just be the best parent that you are they don't understand the barriers. . . Definitely feel like I could be doing a lot more, as far as involvement, because it is so fast, but I feel like with my kids the most involvement for what I can handle has just been on their mental I've just been more involved just their mental purging teaching them. How to deal with issues you know Shiara is getting bullied, and Shane is trying to figure out where to fit in. I just have to be involved more just in their mind. I want to be more involved in their schoolwork, yes. I want to be involved at their school and Community

events, yes. But realistically what I'm going through I've had to just pick my battles, and right now the one battle that I feel like that I can help them with is just being there for them mentally (Ciara).

Madonna's elementary age children are attending different schools and she spoke about the differences in expectations between the two schools for her children and for her as a parent. One of the schools serves a population with a lower income and the other school is in a more affluent neighborhood. The school with a lower income population had lower expectations of her as a parent and her involvement.

You know, I think that the one school (where Nike and Riley are) doesn't really expect much out of me I feel like and I don't know if it's because of the pandemic, you know but. They don't have very much homework like they don't come home with anything and so really what is my expectation and other than getting them up and getting dressed and sending them to school. Like, like besides his little activities coming up like trunk or treat candy or maybe bring in some extra Lysol wipes stuff like that. But realistically I haven't had like a lot of expectations which you know it's good because it's a lot of work, but the same time, is it benefiting the child but Asher, on the other hand, that school has really been given me a lot of expectations we have homework every night and he's in third grade and my other third grader and fourth grader don't have homework every night they get optional like fluffy things to do if they want you know some of the same as like you have to turn this in as part of your grade. So, I don't think that there are expectations of me, or what I would expect them to be at this time

in their life and I blame that on the pandemic a little bit so. I think the question shouldn't be about parent like oh, you know the parent has this on their plate let's make things easier on the parents regardless, middle school and when again the high school and then they consistently have these assignments, that they have to be accountable for on their own and it's no longer really the parents responsibility so well, yes it's nice to have you guys thinking around us, but at the same time, like that's not the right question (Madonna).

Helen, who works in education believes that being “on the inside” gives her a different view of teacher’s perceptions and expectations of parental involvement. She speaks about teacher’s inability to look beyond their own bias to support families.

No, being on the inside of education, I see that it's very black and white, with the way teachers think of parents. It's the parents that cares and the parents that doesn't, there's not in between there's no between. This parent cares but they may be dealing with some things you know socioeconomically that is preventing them from spending the time it's this parent doesn't spend the time and then they're placed in this category as the parent that doesn't care when in all reality, the parent might care and it might just take that one phone call or conversation with the teacher to help them, you know we as adults, we don't know everything and sometimes definitely as parents there's people may write parenting handbooks, but there is no way to do it right so and it's not necessarily the responsibility of the teacher to teach parents, how to parent, but it doesn't have to be so cut and dry and judgmental it could be somewhat more I see your student needs this.

Have you tried this, and I think that teachers don't understand that more parents would be open to that feedback than they think (Helen)?

Rachel also believes there is a disconnect between her willingness to participate in school activities and events and the schools offering for parental involvement opportunities.

I would like to be more involved in the school. Like I asked to volunteer for the crosswalk, but you have to work there, you know. I think they should have more field trips and stuff where the parents can be there, I am one of them parents, where I like to love all the children, I like to help all the children, I like to be very involved and that's not something I have seen. I haven't seen a lot of field trips anymore. I haven't seen a lot of things like that, so that's where I would say maybe not. Because I feel like we should be more involved as parents (Rachel).

Both Gabriella and Sophia were not aware of what the school's expectations were of their involvement, but both expressed that they hoped they were meeting the school's expectations. "I don't know, but I would hope so. We're doing the best we can, like sometimes I feel like we could do more" (Gabriella). Sophia states "I don't really know what the school expects. . . they always seem to give feedback, like thank you for being involved and being accessible" (Sophia).

If participants had a perception of the school's expectation, they did not believe it aligned with their own expectation, but for different reasons. While some participants felt the school didn't understand the barriers they faced and needed compassion others felt the school didn't expect enough. The misalignment could be creating a barrier to

communication and relationships between the participants and the school and could be considered as another barrier to involvement.

Summary of Research Question Three

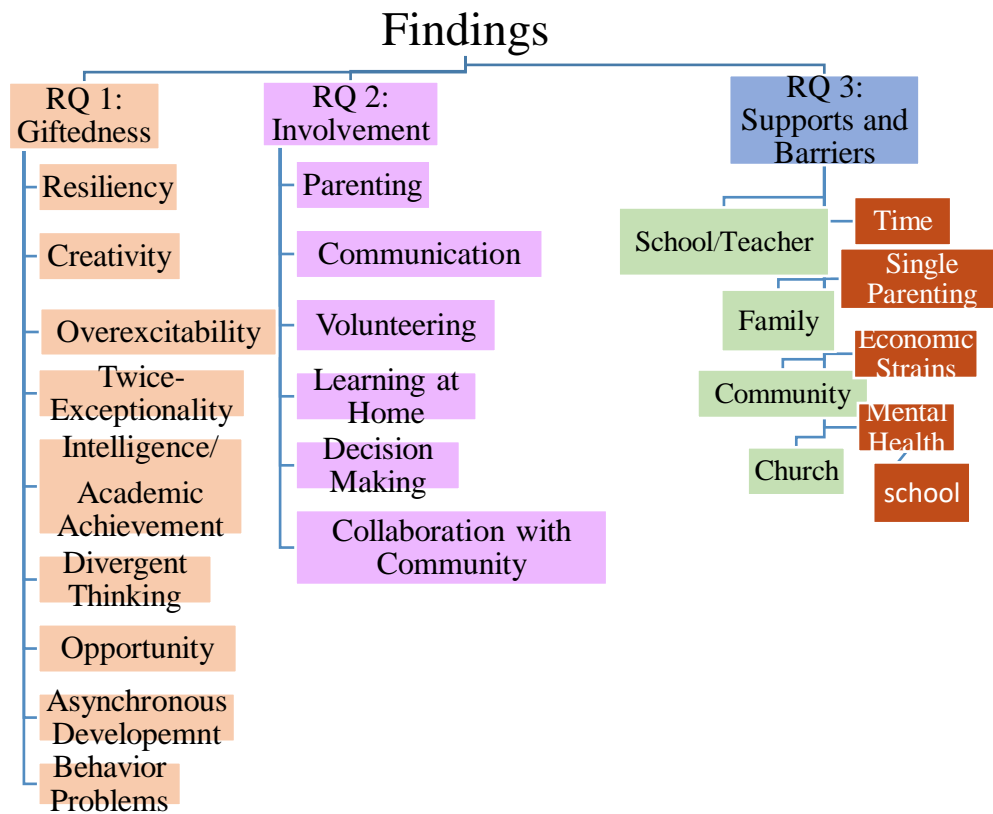
In summary of research question three participants overwhelmingly felt that teachers were a support for their involvement in their child's education. Teachers and the school were mentioned more often than any other support and they were part of each participants' story. Participants shared stories that included teachers supporting their children academically and supporting the family during hard times emotionally. Other supports included community, family, and church. The most significant barrier to involvement in education was time. All six participants spoke of time barriers as a factor to not being able to participate the way they would like. Other barriers that participants mentioned, and all impacted time were single parenting, economic strains, and mental health. Participants spoke about their perceptions of the school's expectations for their involvement being different than their own. They either spoke of a misalignment between the schools' expectations and what they could provide, teacher bias about what families can offer, or were unaware of what the school expected of them. Although this was not mentioned as a barrier, the misaligned expectations could be seen as another barrier to involvement. All six participants felt that they had both supports for their involvement and barriers that got in the way of their ability to be involved.

The graphic representation in Figure 4.1 shows the findings from this study. The findings were organized by research questions: What are families with economic disadvantages beliefs and experiences pertaining to giftedness; What are families with

economic disadvantages beliefs pertaining to family involvement with their children's education; What are the supports for and barriers to families with economic disadvantages involvement in their children's education?

Figure 4.1

Findings for Research Questions



Each of the six participants in this study had economic disadvantages and a gifted child and they shared similar beliefs and experiences. Themes that emerged about the participants' beliefs and experiences pertaining to giftedness, beliefs pertaining to

involvement, and the supports for and barriers to involvement as shown in figure 4.1, build a story about the common meaning for each participants' lived experience.

Summary

Participants over two interviews shared their beliefs and experiences as they pertain to giftedness and family involvement in their children's education. All six participants shared specific opinions and stories about giftedness and their involvement in education. From their individual and collective story's themes emerged for each of the three-research question. Chapter four provided the findings from the participants interviews separated by this studies research questions.

The findings for research question one emerged in the theme's resiliency, creativity, sensitivity, insight, twice exceptionality, asynchronous development, divergent thinking, intelligence of academic ability, and behavior problem. All six participants have beliefs and experiences with giftedness both with their own children and with other family members, friends, or children. The participants with formally identified gifted children leaned more toward school performance, academic achievement, and intelligence when speaking about giftedness, while the families with children that were identified at home spoke more about resiliency, creativity, and sensitivity to identify giftedness. All six participants spoke about twice exceptionality or possible overexcitabilities being present in their children and others that they identify as gifted individuals in their lives. Each of the six participants shared beliefs and experiences through stories about their children and others in their lives that highlighted their Funds

of Knowledge and the values and morals that they are passing on to their children about education and success.

The findings for research question two found that all six participants are involved in their children's education. There was an emphasis on the importance of education throughout all the interviews and for some participants the importance for their children to do better than they did in school and life. All six participants worked to communicate with the school, provide learning opportunities at home, and to be part of the decision making for their children's education. Participants did tend to speak more about advocating for their child's special education needs or behavioral needs than their need to be challenged or be part of gifted programming at school. Several participants were also not aware of the gifted identification process or what programming was available at their children's school.

The themes that emerged for research question three were separated into the supports for and barriers to involvement. Participants identified teachers and school, the community, their family, and church as people or things that provided support for their involvement in their children's education. Overwhelmingly participants named time as a barrier to involvement. They also identified single parenting, economic strain, and mental health as barrier to their involvement.

Finally, chapter four reported the findings about the families' perceptions of the school's expectations compared to their own expectations regarding involvement in their children's education. When participants spoke about their perceptions of the school's expectations for their involvement, they either spoke of a misalignment between the

schools' expectations and what they could provide, teacher bias about what families can offer, of where unaware of what the school expected of them. Chapter five provides an analysis of the findings, implications, and areas for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Students with economic disadvantages are underrepresented in gifted programming nationally and locally. This hermeneutic phenomenological study was designed to explore the beliefs, experiences, and practices of families with economic disadvantages as they pertain to giftedness and family involvement in education. To further examine the problem of underrepresentation and the purpose of exploring the lived experiences of families, the following research questions were posed:

1. What are the beliefs and experiences of families with economic disadvantages pertaining to giftedness?
2. What are the beliefs of families with economic disadvantages pertaining to family involvement with their children's education?
3. What are the supports for and barriers to families with economic disadvantages involvement in their children's education?

Through two interviews with six participants, families with economic disadvantages and a gifted child shared their beliefs and experiences. The transcribed interviews were analyzed for themes and shared experiences to find common meaning in the lived experiences of the participants and the researcher. This chapter will provide an analysis of the findings through the lenses of Funds of Knowledge (Moll et al., 1992), underrepresentation, and Epstein's Six Types of Involvement (Epstein et al., 2019).

The hermeneutic process also includes using the researcher's foresight as a lens for interpretation (Peoples, 2021). The researcher having personal experience as both a child with economic disadvantages and a teacher in a low-income school is not able to bracket out her own experiences, and her fore-sight will be integrated into each lens of analysis. Hermeneutic Phenomenology takes the researcher's fore-sight and the participants lived experiences and, through the hermeneutic circle, allows the researcher to form new meanings (Peoples, 2021). The researcher used journaling of her own experiences and her thoughts and feelings throughout the research process to recognize her own bias and reflect on her lived experiences alongside her participants lived experiences. This chapter will also discuss the implications for gifted identification, the classroom, and the school district; this study's limitations and ideas for future research will also be presented.

Lens of Funds of Knowledge

As discussed in chapter two, Funds of Knowledge as a theory was born from the funds of knowledge project, which focused on the idea that education could be significantly enhanced when teachers learn about their students' everyday lives (Gonzalez et al., 2005). The researcher used the lens of Funds of Knowledge and her own fore-sight while using the hermeneutic circle to allow interpretation and synthesis of meaning in each participant's story and in their stories combined (Peoples, 2021). The researcher, as a student and as a teacher in a low-income school, has built a deep belief system in Funds of Knowledge over her 43 years. Her foresight is based on the idea that all families offer their children knowledge and experiences with the right tools and support and the ability to advocate for their learning needs no matter their economic standing in the community.

The researcher's personal experience as a child and her mother's failed attempt to advocate for her learning needs, as well as her experiences as a teacher working in low-income schools, has formed beliefs based on experiences. Over a twenty-plus-year career working as a gifted teacher in a low-income school, she had not experienced any parent referrals for gifted identification or programming and very rarely had a parent advocate for a more challenging school experience. These experiences have created fore-sight about parent involvement and perception of giftedness as well as a belief that parents have knowledge about their children that the schools are not using or asking about. This belief aligns with the literature from Plucker and Peters (2017), which that stated to truly offer equitable opportunities, we must ensure that families know the opportunity exists, that it would be valuable for their child, and systems need to be in place to support access to the opportunity. The researcher's fore-sight is anchored in a belief that families have the knowledge to share; however, her experience as a teacher has been a lack of school engagement with families experiencing economic disadvantage. To avoid the researcher's own bias impacting her ability to analyze and form meaning from others lived experiences, she spent time journaling about her own experiences and feelings and spent time recognizing her own deficit thinking throughout the hermeneutic circle. To analyze the themes from participant interviews and the researcher's fore-sight with the lens of Funds of Knowledge, the analysis has been separated into research question one and research questions two and three to look at giftedness and family involvement separately.

Research Question One

Current research tells us that more needs to be done to understand family beliefs and experiences with school and gifted identification (Besnoy et al., 2015; Grissom et al., 2019; Jolly & Matthews, 2012; Lockhart & Mun, 2020). Research question one aims to uncover the beliefs and experiences families with economic disadvantages have pertaining to giftedness.

Beliefs

The six participants all have a strong understanding of their children's strengths and areas for growth. They have insight about their children that would be helpful for teachers to understand to be able to best meet their children's needs. The literature from both Ciha et al. (1974) and Silverman et al. (1986) proved that parents are strong identifiers of giftedness in their own children. The six participants in the study were able to identify many gifted characteristics common in children from economically disadvantaged circumstances in their own children (Slocumb & Payne, 1998). During the analysis phase, the researcher began to identify the themes from interview one and, when specifically analyzing the responses to the questions about giftedness, noticed that many of the themes emerging from the interview were also characteristics of gifted students. The researcher reviewed the literature on giftedness and children in poverty and could make connections between the themes that emerged from interview one and common characteristics of gifted children from the current literature. Participants identified creativity, high energy levels (twice-exceptionality and overexcitability), insightfulness, asynchronous development, intelligence, and behavior problems as characteristics in their

children. Participants were also able to identify the aforementioned characteristics as characteristics of giftedness in others. The participants in the study were able to identify their children as gifted based on their beliefs and experiences with their children and other gifted individuals regardless of a formal identification at school. This knowledge would be helpful to teachers when identifying gifted children and programming for their children's educational needs. The knowledge the mothers had of their children is valuable and should be considered by teachers when working with children and building a body of evidence for the children in their classrooms.

The participants in the study also spoke of their children's behavior problems at school being recognized by teachers. For the three families with formally identified students, all three spoke about phone calls home about behaviors happening before gifted identification. Gifted characteristics can manifest in negative behaviors in the classroom; for example, creativity, a common gifted characteristic, may show up as disruptive or going too far (Delisle & Galbraith, 2002). According to Delisle and Galbraith (2002), another characteristic of giftedness is to solve problems quickly, which can manifest as impatience and frustration, while a keen sense of humor can become attention-seeking and disruptive. Two of the participants whose children were not formally identified also spoke about their children having behavior problems at school. These behaviors could be manifestations of gifted characteristics, and if teachers are not trained to understand giftedness, they will only recognize the behaviors as a problem in the classroom and will result in labeling children as problem students when in fact, they are gifted.

Last, participants also recognized their children as twice exceptional. One participant's child was formally identified with a twice-exceptional label with a communication disorder and a formal gifted identification; however, all six participants identified their child as having a disability. Disabilities ranged from ADHD to dyslexia. The three participants whose children were not identified as gifted at school were identified as having a disability that may be masking their giftedness. According to Webb et al. (2005), misdiagnosis of behaviors that are normal for gifted children is a problem and stems from a widespread misunderstanding among health care professionals about the social and emotional characteristics of gifted children. There is a lack of knowledge about the common characteristics of giftedness that can be mistaken for disorders, and the lack of training for teachers, counselors, psychologists, and psychiatrists can result in misdiagnosis (Hartnett, Nelson, & Rinn, 2004, Silverman, 1998). It is possible that due to the lack of training professionals receive across fields about giftedness that giftedness is being misdiagnosed and resulting in missed opportunities for a gifted identification leading to underrepresentation in gifted education and creating further barriers for identification.

Experiences

According to Lockhart and Mun (2020), the more opportunities schools provide for engagement with families, the more they can learn and the better equipped they will be to provide academic communities for gifted learners to excel. Schools could benefit from taping into the knowledge these participants have about their children. Three of the participants have children formally identified at school and receiving services; all three of

those participants spoke about working closely with the school for the identification process and advocating for their children's needs. They also spoke of a specific teacher that recognized what they saw at home and advocated for their children and worked as a partner with them to guide them through the identification process. The three participants that identify their children as gifted at home but do not have a formal identification have not advocated for gifted programming at school and have not created a relationship with a teacher specifically to support their child's giftedness. A family's understanding of their children and their insight into their child's gifts could be a missing piece in the identification of gifted children with economic disadvantages.

Research Questions Two and Three

Research questions two and three focus on the participants' beliefs about involvement in their children's education and what supports and barriers are in place. The participants' Funds of Knowledge guided their practices and beliefs in involvement in education.

Every participant spoke of the importance of education in their family and the specific practices they had in place to support their children's learning. Many participants felt that because of their experiences and economic disadvantages that the school did not have the same expectations for their involvement as they had for themselves. One explanation of the differing expectations is stated by Anderson and Minke (2010) "Parents and educators define involvement differently; parents take a more community-centric view that includes keeping their children safe and getting them to school, whereas teachers define involvement primarily as a parental presence at school" (p. 312). While

some participants felt that the schools needed to expect more from them, others felt the school didn't understand what their life circumstances were and did not recognize all they do to support their children. These experiences were also echoed in Gorski's (2018) work as he points out the need to recognize that in and out of school conditions limit economically disadvantaged families' ability to participate the same as wealthier families and that in no way is the lack of involvement a sign of parent's disinterest in their child's education. It was clear in the findings that the participants' schools could be working to collaborate and build relationships so that it is clear to both the families and the schools what is expected and what is already happening. According to Moll et al. (1992), teachers' who realize that all families have value and take an active role in learning about the child's experiences outside of school and their family are more likely to build relationships that will impact the classroom and learning. All six participants were involved in at least four of Epstein's Six Types of Involvement (2019), and from the participants' perspective, this was not always recognized at the school level. All six participants listed the teachers as their number one support for involvement at school; however, they still did not feel that the expectations matched from school to home.

The six participants responded to several questions about their involvement with their child's education and their relationship with their child's school. Participants told stories about volunteering at school, buying books and other educational supports, communicating with classroom teachers at conferences, and working on homework and other learning activities at home; however, none of the participants described an experience in which they shared information about their children with the teacher. The

stories about teacher support were centered more on the information the teacher or the school could share with them, not on the information they had to share. These findings are supported by several researchers. According to Lockhart and Mun (2020), the more opportunities schools provide for engagement with families, the more they can learn and the better equipped they will be to provide academic communities for gifted learners to excel. Teachers should be using parents as advocates and resources to meet their gifted children's cultural and diverse needs (Grantham et al., 2005). Several participants do mention needing to advocate for their child or teaching their child to advocate, but they do not speak about being asked to provide information about their child or their family. Their family Funds of Knowledge are not being used to support their child's learning in school.

Lens of Underrepresentation

In gifted education, culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse students are not represented in gifted education at the same proportionality as their White and middle/upper-class peers (Goings & Ford, 2018). The researcher used the lens of underrepresentation of students with economic disadvantages to analyze the findings from the six participant interviews. As an educator in a low-income school, the researcher has witnessed first-hand the underrepresentation of children with economic challenges in gifted programming. Frustrated with the system and missed cut-off scores on testing even when characteristics are present, the researcher sought to learn more about the families of gifted children. The researcher's fore-sight on underrepresentation and opportunity gaps merge with the themes from the participants' interviews to analyze how family's beliefs

and experiences with giftedness and involvement could offer insight into underrepresentation. The researcher analyzed both the participants' ability to recognize giftedness and their involvement in the identification process through the lens of underrepresentation.

Research Question One

The participants were asked questions to guide the researcher in understanding their beliefs and experiences with giftedness. Themes emerged from the interviews pertaining to giftedness, including resiliency, creativity, twice-exceptionality or overexcitabilities, divergent thinking, behavior problems, and academic or intellectual abilities. Through the interviews, it was clear that the mothers were able to identify many characteristics of giftedness within their own children. Obstacles that may prohibit the identification of low-income students as gifted include misconceptions about what giftedness is, how giftedness manifests, as well as the instruments, tools, and procedures used to identify giftedness (Swanson, 2010). The Colorado Department of Education provided a gifted identification guidance handbook for school districts on the identification of gifted students that aligns with the Exceptional Children's Education Act (ECEA) mandates for gifted identification (Colorado Department of Education, 2021). As part of the guidance, school districts are given pathways to identification that include cognitive testing, academic testing, and observation scales (Colorado Department of Education, 2020). The guidance also includes a section on parents as partners and refers to Silverman's (1986) research on parents being good identifiers of giftedness in their children and specifically guides districts to use parent input on observation scales

(Colorado Department of Education, 2020). When participants were asked if their children were identified in school, three of the six participants did not have children identified in school. When asked if they believed they should be identified, Ciara stated, "yes, I do; I think that it would benefit them both socially and academically if they were identified, it would help just the whole body of people that are in their lives at school be able to understand them better." Ciara also stated this when asked about the importance of gifted identification and programming "I definitely feel like, there needs to be more support in that area and definitely the criteria that need to be evaluated a little bit more to kind of see what the school considers gifted and not gifted." Ciara was able to identify characteristics of giftedness in her children and believed they would benefit from programming at school; however, her insight about her children's abilities and learning styles was not being sought by the school. When Gabriella was asked if her children should be identified at school, she responded, "I don't know, I wouldn't know. Like again, for me, they're smart, but I don't know." Gabriella could identify gifted characteristics in her children but was unaware that what she saw at home was what the school would be looking for. Gabriella also wasn't aware of what gifted identification or programming looked like at school; when asked what she thought about gifted programming, Gabriella stated, "I think it's pretty cool. I never experienced that myself growing up like never even heard of it, so it's no, it's definitely new for me." Providing regular and consistent communication opportunities between the teacher and the family with systems to encourage family communication with the teacher and the school, communication should be a two-way street (Dikkers, 2013). It is important that families are aware that gifted

identification and programming are available and what the services can provide for their children.

Research Question Two and Three

Throughout both interview processes, none of the participants mentioned being asked about their child's giftedness or being part of an identification process. McBee (2006) stated parent referrals and nominations to gifted programs are essential in identifying gifted learners from underserved populations; however, more parents of white students in middle and higher classes refer their children for gifted programming. Two of the participants who have children who are identified both mentioned that they recognized their child's giftedness before the school and that a teacher finally saw what they saw at home and started a referral process. Helen stated

I will meet with the teachers at conferences like I'm not sure he's being challenged enough, you know, maybe extra homework, what do you see in class, they're like well yeah he's getting his work done, but played to the side you know, well he just needs to be more in tune and engaged . . . finally his third-grade teacher she's like you know I see some things in him, would you be okay if she got him tested (Helen).

Sophia had a similar experience "I felt like he was definitely gifted, but I didn't have anybody kind of in that court with me to say, he's definitely gifted. He started getting evaluated at school in first grade, and he became part of the gifted pool." We know that parents are a good indicator of their child's giftedness, Ciha et al. (1974) study found that parents had a 67 percent effective rating while teachers only had a 22 percent effective rating for gifted nomination; however, the participants in the study where not

asked to participate in a referral process or were even made aware of the how they could refer their children for gifted testing or programming. This leads the researcher to believe that identification practices in the participants' schools are not including parents of students with economic disadvantages in the conversation about giftedness or providing information about the identification process to families. This could be a missing piece to the identification of our students with economic disadvantages because, according to Swanson (2010), teachers can be the gatekeepers to gifted programming; if they do not understand giftedness and make assumptions about low-income children, they can exclude them from identification. Three of the participants in the study felt their children had been excluded from gifted education and that they would benefit from the programming. Some of the underrepresentation or gap in identification can be due to differences in cognitive development; there is also evidence that the traditional referral-based system tends to overlook potential from disadvantaged families. The traditional referral system relies mainly on parent and teacher referrals, and students from low-income and culturally diverse groups are often overlooked (Card & Giuliano, 2015; Jolly & Matthews, 2012; Swanson, 2010). If the system relies on referrals, then parents need to be aware of the process at their child's school for referral, and there need to be efforts made to ensure the process is open and communicated to all families. Participants in this study, though proven to be involved in their children's education, were not aware of the identification process or their rights to a referral to their child's school. While this lack of understanding does not fully explain underrepresentation, including families in the referral process, communicating with families about the process and making it well

known, and working with families to gain their insight during the referral process could give educators more information to be used during the identification process for children with economic disadvantages.

Epstein's Six Types of Involvement

Garn et al. (2010) and Swanson (2010) found that parents know their children's learning needs and interests and modify the home learning environment based on needs and interests. According to Epstein et al. (2019), families want their children to succeed and want to be good partners with the school to further their children's education. Although teachers and administrators often state they want families to be involved, they do not know how to build the programs, which leads them to want support without taking the steps needed to gain support and build relationships (Epstein et al., 2019). The researcher used the lens of Epstein's Six Types of involvement, including parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community, to analyze the finding from participants' responses to questions targeted toward research questions two and three. The researcher used fore-sight of her own parents' involvement in her education and what she has experienced as an educator working in a school with many families with economic disadvantages and the participant's stories to analyze how parents and schools can build partnerships.

Research Question Two

The second interview with participants asked questions targeted to research question two, what are families with economic disadvantages beliefs pertaining to family involvement in their children's education. Throughout the interview process, it was

obvious to the researcher that all six participants cared deeply about their children's education and wanted them to be provided with the best education possible. Gabriella states, "I had tried my best to have them in what I would consider the best school they possibly can; when David started school, we even moved, we really do sacrifice, we decided to move, so he could be in a better school." Each of the participants made it clear that no matter how they were able to be involved that their children's education was a priority in their lives and their decisions. All six participants stated that school was important and a value in their home during the interview. Participants were also involved in all Six of Epstein's Types of Involvement, and all participants spoke of parenting, communication, learning at home, and decision making in their interviews as ways they stayed involved with their children's education.

Research Question Three

Research question three aimed to uncover the supports and barriers that families with economic disadvantages faced while trying to be involved with their children's education. The research on barriers for families, as stated by Burney and Beilke (2008), can include lack of a stable job or regular work hours, health benefits to taking time off, priority on meeting basic human needs, and lack of financial ability to hire outside help such as tutors and babysitters. Participants spoke of many of these same barriers mirroring the research that time, mental health, and financial strain are all barriers they face when trying to stay involved. On the flip side, research from Hornby and Lafaele (2011) pointed out that parents' belief in their ability to help their child with schoolwork and their belief about their child's intelligence can also create barriers to involvement.

Swanson (2010) stated that there might be misconceptions among low-income families about their child's abilities or the purpose of gifted programs. Hornby and Lafaele (2011) stated that if a child is gifted, families may not believe that they need to be involved in school, and families who believe their child is gifted may be hesitant to be involved. All six participants believed their children to be gifted and felt that their child's giftedness was even more reason to be involved in their education. Aligning with the research from Van Tassel-Baska (1989), although many families were not well educated or financially stable, they were influential in their child's lives by seeking opportunities for their children and offering encouragement and support, participants spoke of finding outside of school resources to meet their children's interests and advocating for their children's needs in school. However, families spoke more of advocating for mental health needs and behavior needs than challenging content or gifted services in schools.

According to Lockhart and Mun (2020), schools that create an open communication line have gained their family's trust in educating their child, and involving families in decision-making about their child's education supports higher family involvement levels. Five of the six participants, when asked what supports their ability to be involved with their children's education, listed the school or teachers first. Participants felt supported and that schools were there to keep them involved and offer communication about their children. They spoke of class DoJo, conferences, and emails from teachers. Although participants felt supported by the schools and teachers, they also stated overwhelmingly that the schools' expectations of their involvement did not align with their personal expectations. So, while feeling support, they felt that schools did not

understand their life circumstances and either expected too much with little compassion or did not expect enough and did not believe they were capable of doing more. These feelings align with the research that states schools also put-up barriers to a positive relationship with families when they assume families have nothing to offer due to cultural differences or economic hardships (Crozier & Davies, 2002; Lockhart & Mun, 2020).

Implications

The results of this study have implications for both policy and practice. The study's results imply that without real change across systems, students with economic disadvantages will continue to be overlooked for gifted identification. The implications are presented from a broad view moving toward a narrow view of the classroom.

Policy Implications

Gifted Identification Policy

The participants in the study were able to identify many characteristics of giftedness in their children and described experiences and events with their children where they showed gifted traits. Despite the characteristics and traits evident to the parents, three of the participants' children were not formally identified as gifted and were not receiving services at school. The school's inability to recognize the gifted traits in the students or seek information from the families about their children is creating a barrier to identification for these children. The families were seeking opportunities outside of school to challenge their children. All three participants were facing economic disadvantages, and for one participant, English was her family's second language. According to The Department of Education's Rules for Administration of the Exceptional

Children's Educational Act, 1 CCR 301-8 from the Colorado State Board of Education
(2015)

A method(s) to ensure equal and equitable access for all students. The program plan shall describe the efforts that the AU will make to identify gifted students from all populations, including preschool (if applicable) through twelfth-grade students, minority students, economically diverse students, culturally diverse students, and students with limited English proficiency and children with disabilities;(104).

While the State of Colorado does require school districts to have identification plans in place to identify economically diverse students, those students still need to be scoring a 95 percentile or above on nationally normed assessments or observation tools or rate exceptional or distinguished on a performance assessment. Research states obstacles that may prohibit the identification of low-income students as gifted include misconceptions about what giftedness is, how giftedness manifests, as well as the instruments, tools, and procedures used to identify giftedness (Swanson, 2010). Wyner et al. (2009) research focused attention on students scoring in the top 25 percent on nationally normed standardized tests and living below the national medium of family income using three federal databases that tracked students in elementary through college past twenty years. Only 28 percent of the first graders scoring in the top quartile nationally are from low-income families compared to 72 percent from high-income families, suggesting that disparities exist in achievement before formal education begins (Wyner et al., 2009). Using this research, there are deficits in both test scores for students with economic disadvantages as well as deficit thinking and misconceptions from teachers that would impact observation tools. The teacher's inability to recognize gifted characteristics in children with economic disadvantages is creating further barriers to

gifted identification for our low-income students. These barriers can be broken down with mandated teacher training for all teachers and counselors on gifted education. This training could be added to the state requirements for teaching license renewal requiring all teachers to complete a mandated number of professional development hours in gifted education. Further, gifted education should be a part of all teacher training programs at institutions for higher education. Students spend most of their school day with their general education teachers, and the more knowledge a general education teacher has on giftedness, the characteristics of giftedness, and the manifestations of gifted characteristics across populations, the more likely they are to recognize giftedness in their students. Training will also help to stop the misdiagnosis of gifted characteristics as a disorder, disability, or behavior problem.

Dissonance Between Statute and Practice

The ECEA (2015) states,

For each category of giftedness defined in 12.01(16), criteria for exceptional ability means: 95 percentile or above on a standardized nationally normed test or observation tool, or a rating on a performance assessment that indicates exceptionality/distinguished compared to age mates” (105).

The statute clearly states that a student must have a 95 percentile or above on one of three measures, a standardized nationally normed test, an observation tool, OR a rating on a performance assessment. However, when the statute is interpreted by both the state department and school districts, students are expected to score in the 95 percentile or above on a standardized nationally normed test AND an observation scale (Dr. M. Faulkner, personal communication, March 28, 2022). According to Dr. Faulkner (2022), the misinterpretation by leadership and school districts creates a

barrier to identification, especially for our underserved populations. Students who have one qualifying score, the 95 percentile or above, are not being identified as gifted because districts require more than one measure (Dr. M. Faulkner, personal communication, March 28, 2022). For students who have economic disadvantages or have behavior challenges in the classroom, teacher bias can impact the score on an observation scale, creating difficulties in securing multiple measures for gifted identification. Dr. Faulkner (2022) also stated that school districts often require observation scales to be completed by teachers and are not considering parent observation scales as a qualifying score for identification.

Relying on the 95 percentile and above range on nationally normed test scores and teacher observation tools alone will continue to exclude students with economic disadvantages from gifted identification. Leadership and individual school districts need to use the ECEA statute as it is written and only require one measure, either a standardized nationally normed test, an observation scale in the 95 percentile, OR a rating on a performance assessment that indicates exceptionality. School district identification policies also need to include parent observation scales as a qualifying measure for gifted identification. Research shows that parents are good identifiers of giftedness (Ciha et al., 1974; Silverman et al., 1986). Ciha et al. (1974) conducted a study with 465 kindergarten students and found that parents were more capable of assessing their child's abilities than teachers. Other ways the statute could be interpreted by school districts to break down barriers to gifted identification for students with economic disadvantage could include the use of local norms for identification or opportunity profiles to adjust the qualifying

national normed test cut score for students with economic disadvantage. The purpose of gifted education should be to include students in gifted programming rather than be excluded from services.

School Districts

The Department of Education's Rules for Administration of the Exceptional Children's Educational Act, 1 CCR 301-8 from the Colorado State Board of Education (2015) stated:

The program plan shall describe how the AU implements parent, family, and student engagement and communication with regard to gifted education programs that include, but are not limited to: how parents are informed about access to identification procedures; ways to educate parents and families about giftedness or parenting gifted students; information about involvement and progress reporting; what programming options are available to match student strengths and challenges; information about concurrent enrollment; how to be involved in college and career planning; primary languages in the AU, and ways parents and families may participate in the school community (104).

While this is stated in the ECEA's rules, none of the families that participated in the study spoke about the gifted referral process, engagement in gifted communication, or access to the identification process, which allows for the assumption that not all school districts, even if they have a plan in place, are implementing the plan in a way that is accessible to all parents. The ECEA policy needs to be more specific and outline what needs to be in place at each AU. Beyond policy change with ECEA, the Colorado Department of Education reviews AUs programming plans, and within that review, more needs to be done to ensure that school districts are following the plans they have in place for parent involvement and input.

Practice Implications

School Districts

Research suggests that to truly offer equitable opportunities, we must ensure that families know the opportunity exists, that it would be valuable for their child, and systems need to be in place to support access to the opportunity (Plucker and Peters, 2017). School Districts need to focus more time and resources on parent involvement to ensure that all families understand the characteristics of giftedness, the referral process, the advantage of gifted programming, the identification process, and supports in place to meet the needs of gifted learners. When families understand what could be available to their children, they are more likely to advocate for the necessary support and programs to meet their children's needs. Beyond understanding the services available, families also need to be included in the referral process because we know from research that families are good indicators of giftedness, and all six participants in this study were able to identify characteristics of giftedness in their children that may be overlooked at school. Schools need to find creative ways to provide information to and gather information from all families. Not all families are able to attend information nights or back-to-school nights, so schools need to find other ways to communicate with families. The use of virtual meetings or offering meetings at various times throughout the day or week could reach more families. If schools use websites, email, and electronic surveys to communicate with families, they need to offer alternative forms of communication for families who do not have access to technology. The more schools understand the population they serve, and the communication needs of the population, the better they

will be able to provide information for all families. Learning about families and students should be a priority for all schools.

School Districts also need to be providing teacher education on giftedness and the characteristics common in gifted children across different demographics. According to Swanson (2010), teachers can be the gatekeepers to gifted programming; if they do not understand giftedness and make assumptions about low-income children, they can exclude them from identification. Requiring professional development for all teachers and school leaders would impact the deficit thinking around giftedness and the bust myths that teachers and leaders may hold about gifted children and the value of gifted education. If teachers understand giftedness through a lens of economic disadvantage, they will be more likely to refer children for gifted identification or for gifted programming.

Classrooms

According to research, schools that create an open communication line have gained their family's trust in educating their child and involving families in decision-making about their child's education supports higher family involvement levels (Lockhart & Mun, 2020). According to Moll et al. (1992), teachers' who realize that all families have value and take an active role in learning about the child's experiences outside of school and their family are more likely to build relationships that will impact the classroom and learning. The participants in the study were both able to identify characteristics and traits of giftedness in their children and expressed a deep value in education for their children. First, classroom teachers need to understand giftedness and

the characteristics of giftedness for children with economic disadvantages so they can overcome bias and deficit thinking and begin to recognize giftedness in all populations. This would increase the number of referrals from teachers to gifted programming. Second, classroom teachers need to create systems to build trusting relationships with families, learn more about their students' educational needs from families, and provide open communication between the school and family. This relationship will increase an understanding of the student's needs and increase a family's ability to refer students for special programming and increase the likelihood of advocacy from the family.

Summary of Implication

Underrepresentation of students with economic disadvantages is an ongoing problem in gifted education. The results of this study provide implications for policy and practice that could impact underrepresentation. School districts need to review their identification policies under ECEA and ensure that they have plans in place that would increase the equity of identification processes for students with economic disadvantages. Schools and teachers could include parents in referral processes and increase communication about gifted identification and services.

Limitations

Although the study yielded important findings about families with economic disadvantages, beliefs, and practices with giftedness in family involvement, limitations emerged from three areas: the study's participating population, the limited geographic area of the participants, and the generalizability of the study. The limitations of the study should be considered when using the findings and implications to inform change.

First, this phenomenological study is limited to six participants' lived experiences and therefore is not generalizable. Due to the small sample size, the findings cannot be generalized to other populations. The intent of qualitative research is not to generalize findings to individuals, sites, or places outside of the participants in the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The participants in the study were all from the same county; although attempts were made to recruit participants from several counties, all the volunteers landed in the same county, which consists of a suburban area. All six participants had children in school districts in the same county and may have experienced a similar phenomenon based on their experiences in similar school districts within proximity.

Recruitment of participants was a limitation of the study. Initial recruitment efforts were unsuccessful. SECOR sent flyers and emails on three occasions over a four-week period with no interest. Changes were made and approved by IRB to allow a more personal approach to recruitment. Participants were then recruited by teachers that personally reached out to families. The struggle with recruitment may be due to the barriers participants listed for involvement in school, such as lack of time. The limited number of participants forced the researcher to accept the first six participants that met criteria that may have limited the diversity in geographic location and gender.

As noted earlier, the researcher is a teacher, and three of the participants attended the school in which the teacher was employed. The familiarity with the participants could impact the willingness for participants to share personal information about their beliefs and experiences. While the study was voluntary and the recruitment was performed by an

outside agency, the relationship between the researcher and the three participants may have impacted their willingness to participate and share information.

All six participants were English-speaking women. Research states that 31 percent of single female-headed households live in poverty, while only sixteen percent of male-headed families and six percent of married households (DeNavas-Walt et al., 2012). This data would explain why recruitment was high among single mothers. The lack of male participants and non-English speaking families limits the findings. The findings do not include the perspective of fathers or of families that do not speak English.

Due to the small sample size, location of the participants, and lack of diversity in the participant pool, this phenomenological study may be challenging to replicate. To increase the reliability, audio recordings with transcription and detailed research notes were used to capture the information from the two interview sessions.

Future Research

This phenomenological study explored the beliefs and experiences of families with economic disadvantages as they pertain to giftedness and family involvement. The study lays the foundation for research in several other areas. This study was limited to six English-speaking woman's lived experiences. This study could be replicated to include men and their perspectives as a father, non-English speaking families to include their perspectives, or open recruitment up to a national search to gain perspectives from other regions of the United States. Participants were all from a suburban area, and replication of the study in a rural or urban area could also provide new insights.

Additionally, a study could be conducted that investigates the correlation between giftedness and behavior problems in schools. Several participants in the study spoke about their children's behavior problems at school, and one participant's son was in a behavior program. This could be conducted by looking at the testing data of students with frequent behavior referrals in school and making correlations between giftedness and behavior referrals while also noting the demographics of the students. A mixed-methods study could also include a qualitative section recruiting participants' families to explore their lived experiences with giftedness and behavior. The results of this study could provide further insight into underrepresentation in gifted programming when behavior masks giftedness.

A study could also be conducted on the impact of parent input on gifted referrals. Data on identification rates with and without parent input could be analyzed for trends in the reliability of parent referrals. Data could also be analyzed to find the number of referrals in each of the economic brackets and determine if income impacts referral rates for gifted programming. The results of the study could be used to guide parent referral processes and the importance of parent input into identification and programming in the gifted policy.

Last, a study could be conducted on teacher bias. Data could be analyzed at a specific district or school on the number of teacher referrals in each economic bracket. Teachers could then be recruited to participate in interviews about their beliefs about giftedness and how well they recognize gifted characteristics as they manifest in all

populations of students. This data could be used to inform teacher training and professional development on both giftedness and poverty.

Conclusion

Though some progress has been made toward equitable representation of economically disadvantaged students in gifted programming, gaps in access and achievement persist (Plucker & Peters, 2017). As students with economic disadvantages continue to be identified as gifted or be included in gifted programming at much lower rates than their economically stable peers, it is important to consider what changes need to be put in place to increase identification rates for our students with economic hardship.

Based on the research, the results of this phenomenological study, and the researcher's lived experiences, changes in gifted identification policies to include special considerations for underserved populations like the use of local norms, opportunity profiles, or alternative scores for certain populations could open opportunity to students with economic disadvantage and begin to close the excellence gap. Increasing the knowledge base of teachers and school leaders about giftedness, characteristics of gifted children from all demographics, and the importance of gifted programming could also impact the rate of identification for our underserved populations. My personal experiences as a child from a family with economic disadvantages pointed to the need to educate teachers on their own biases about children with economic disadvantages, and the research and the results of this study support my own experiences. Beyond my childhood experience, spending twenty years as a teacher in a school that serves a community with economic disadvantaged, I am guilty of not making an effort needed to

educate families on gifted referral processes, gifted identification, and gifted services. Involving parents in their child's education, creating a trusting relationship between home and school, and finding ways to communicate about gifted services, referral processes, and programming to all families could increase the identification of students with economic disadvantages. There is a need to move away from the myths about gifted children and open learning opportunities that will bridge the gap between home and school for many of our students. Learning more about our students and their families' Funds of Knowledge while including them in decision-making and communication will allow for a better educational experience for all our children. I urge you to begin advocating for better teacher preparation around giftedness, better identification policies that include a process for best practice in all demographics, and more relationship building between home and school.

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Appendix A: Community Partner Agreement

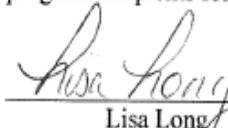
April 1, 2021

To Whom it May Concern,

I am pleased to announce that SouthEast Community OutReach (SECOR) and their Food for Thought Program will participate as a community partner for the doctoral research being conducted by Jennifer Lemoine at the University of Denver under the supervision of Dr. Norma Lu Hafenstein. The purpose of the doctoral study is to explore the beliefs, experiences and practices of economically disadvantaged families pertaining to giftedness and family involvement in education. SECOR and Food for Thought have an interest in supporting economically disadvantaged families and learning about the practices of economically disadvantaged families.

As a community partner SECOR and Food for Thought will distribute information to food bank and food program recipients to recruit families for participation in Jennifer Lemoine's doctoral study. SECOR and Food for Thought may also have individual conversations with food bank and food program recipients to recruit participants for the study. All participants will remain anonymous and will be given a pseudonym to protect their identity. The study will be shared with SECOR and Food for Thought upon completion for review.

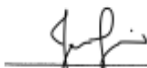
SECOR and Food for Thought has agreed to recruit participants from their food bank and food program recipients for Jennifer Lemoine's doctoral study.



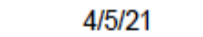
Lisa Long



date



Jennifer Lemoine



date

Appendix B: Recruitment Email

University of Denver

Dear Lisa Long,

Please find the email below to be sent about my study. Please send this email to families who use the food bank and the school coordinators for the Food for Thought program to be sent to families. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Dear SECOR recipients,

SECOR and Food for Thought is working with Jennifer Lemoine, a student from the Morgridge College of Education at the University of Denver and a teacher who works with Food for Thought.

I am working on a study about what families who use a food bank, or the Food for Thought Program think about giftedness and how they are part of their children's education. By doing this research, we hope to learn more about what families think about being gifted and how they are part of their children's education and what experiences they have had with their gifted child and school. This information could help schools better meet student's needs. If your family has a gifted child, you may wish to be part of the study.

Gifted: Your child is in gifted classes at school or if you believe that your child is gifted.

What you would do if you were part of the study

If you decide to be part of this study, you will be asked to be part of two interviews, possibly more, about what you believe and have experienced with giftedness and your involvement in your children's education. Those who finish both interviews will be entered in a raffle to win a one-hundred-dollar gift card; everyone who finishes both interviews will be given a ten-dollar gift card for their time. You will need to be in a private space during the interview, so you are comfortable sharing. The interview(s) will be recorded then what you say will be written as you said it. The recordings and written papers will be stored in a safe place. Each participant will have the chance to read and give feedback on the part of the study about their interview. Each family will choose a pseudonym to be used in the final study to protect their identity.

Being part of this study is voluntary. To volunteer to be part of the study please complete the very brief survey, the survey will be used to decide if you are a good fit for the study. https://udenver.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3xABEIDrPqdGl0O.

or contact Jennifer Lemoine at 720-951-1943 with your name and your contact information. If you have any questions about this study or your participation, please feel free to contact Jennifer Lemoine at 720-951-1943 at any time. You may also contact Dr. Norma Hafenstein, who oversees the research as the faculty advisor, at norma.hafenstein@du.edu.

Thank you,

SECORcares and Food for Thought

Appendix C: Recruitment Flyer

Research Participants Needed

For a study on:
Families with Economic Disadvantages Beliefs,
Experiences and Practices with Giftedness
and Family Involvement

Criteria to Participate

- Receive food from a food bank or school food bag program.
- Have a child in Kindergarten through twelfth grade that you or a school identifies as gifted.

Why Participate?

- Help us learn more about families with economic disadvantages beliefs, experiences, and practices with giftedness and family involvement in education.
- Sharing your story can help other families.

Participation Includes

- Two or more recorded interviews
30-60 minutes in length each
- Read and provide feedback on
the part of the study based on
your interview.

If you are interested or for questions:

Please complete the brief survey at:
https://udenver.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3xABEIDrPqdGI0O
or contact Jennifer Lemoine
jennifer.lemoine@du.edu
720-951-1943



Appendix D: Participant Consent Form



UNIVERSITY of
DENVER

Consent Version: June 28, 2021, #1768593-1

Consent to Participate in Research

Study Title: Perceptions and Practices of Families with Economic Disadvantages Regarding Giftedness and Family Involvement

IRBNet #: 1768593-1

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Lemoine, Doctoral Student, University of Denver

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Norma Hafenstein, clinical professor, and Ritchie Endowed Chair for Gifted Education

You are being asked to be part of a research study. Being part of this research study is voluntary and you do not have to be part of the study. This document contains information about this study and what to expect if you decide to be a part of the study. Feel free to ask questions before deciding to be a part of the study.

You are being given this form, so you have all the information about the study. I will go over the study with you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to give your permission to take part. If you decide to be involved in this study, this form will be used as your permission.

Purpose

If you are part of this research study, the reason for this study is to study what families with economic disadvantages believe about giftedness and their involvement in their children's education.

If you are part of this research study, you will be asked to:

1. Be part of two or more interviews with the researcher.
2. Read what is written based on your interview(s) and provide feedback.

Risks or Discomforts

There are no expected risks for being part of this study. You may be asked interview questions about personal or private information. Inconveniences of the study may include the time you will give for your interview(s).

Benefits

The study will help gifted education with information about what families believe and the experience they have with giftedness and how they are involved in their children's education. You will give information that could help researchers, teachers, and schools understand your experiences with giftedness and family involvement. It could also notify school districts about what is working and what is not working and what changes need to be made to gifted programming. I cannot promise that you will receive any benefits from this study.

Confidentiality of Information

I will ensure that all names are given pseudonyms to keep your information safe. Your identity will remain anonymous when information is presented or published about this study. I will be the only one with access to identifiable data. The link between your identity and the research data will be destroyed after period required by state and/or federal law for record keeping.

With your permission, I would like to record this interview so that I can make a transcript. Once I have made the transcript, I will delete the recordings. Your name will not be in the transcript or my notes. Data obtained in recorded interviews will be stored on the university's one drive account, and any printed transcriptions will be stored in a locked filing box in my home.

All data will be used only for the purpose of the study. All transcripts and recordings will be destroyed at the end of the research study.

The information that you provide in the study will be confidential. However, there may be circumstances where this information must be released or shared as required by law. Representatives from the University of Denver may also review the research records for monitoring purposes.

Limits to confidentiality

All of the information you provide will be confidential. However, if we learn that you intend to harm yourself or others, including but not limited to a child or elder abuse/neglect, suicide ideation, or threats against others, we must report that to the authorities as required by law. Data will be encrypted, and password protected.

Incentives to participate

Those who complete both interviews will be entered into a raffle to receive a \$100 gift certificate. Everyone who completes both interviews will receive a \$10 gift certificate. Gift Certificates will be distributed at the end of the study.

Consent to video/audio recording/photography solely for purposes of this research

This study involves video/audio recording and/or photography. If you disagree to be recorded, you cannot take part in the study.

_____ YES, I agree to be video/audio recorded/photographed.

_____ NO, I do not agree to be video/audio recorded/photographed.

Questions

For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study you may contact, please contact Jennifer Lemoine at Jennifer.Lemoine@du.edu or 720-951-1943. You may also contact Dr. Norma Hafenstein, the Daniel L. Ritchie Endowed Chair in Gifted education, and the academic advisor for the study at Norma.Hafenstein@du.edu.

If you are not happy with how this study is going, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the University of Denver (DU) Institutional Review Board to speak to someone independent of the research team at 303-871-2121 or email at IRBAdmin@du.edu.

Signing the consent form

I have read (or someone has read to me) this form, and I am aware that I am being asked to participate in a research study. I was able to ask questions and have had them answered. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. I will be given a copy of this form.

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| The printed name of | Signature of subject | Date |
| subject | | |

Please take all the time you need to read through this document and decide whether you would like to participate in this research study.

If you decide to be part of this study, your completion of the interviews is your consent. Please keep this form for your records.

Appendix E: Interview Questions

Hi, my name is Jennifer Lemoine. Have you had a chance to review the consent letter you signed? Do you have any questions before we begin? If any of the questions make you uncomfortable, you do not have to answer them. The purpose of the interview is to learn about your experiences, so I am not looking for any specific or correct answer; I just want to know about your beliefs, experiences, and practices hoping it will feel more like a conversation than an interview. I will be recording everything to ensure I get your words right and you will have a chance to review your part of the study so you can tell me if I need to change anything. Before we begin, I would like to tell you what brought me to this research study. I grew up in an economically disadvantaged family and had experiences from my childhood that have impacted my adult life. I became a teacher over 20 years ago and have worked in low-income communities throughout my career. It has always been important to me to create experiences at school for my students that I wish I would have had as a child in school. I had worked with SECOR for ten years on their food for thought program, both as a recipient when I was a single mother and a school coordinator. Do you have any questions before we get started?

1. Tell me about yourself?
2. You know that I am interested in learning more about beliefs as they pertain to giftedness. What does giftedness mean to you?
3. Would you tell me about your child(ren)?
4. When did you first recognize your child(ren) as gifted?

5. What experiences, if any, did you have with giftedness before your child?
6. Describe an experience you have had with your child's giftedness?
7. Describe an experience you have had with another person's giftedness?
8. Explain what school has been like for your gifted child(ren)?
9. How or to what extent does giftedness impact the way you interact with your child?
10. What are your goals or expectations for your child?
11. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your child or their giftedness?

Interview 2: Thank you for meeting with me again. I appreciate your time today. Today we are going to discuss family involvement in education. I will be recording everything to ensure I get your words right and you will have a chance to review your part of the study so you can tell me if I need to change anything. I am going to begin recording now. Before we get started is there anything you want to share with me? Do you have any questions or concerns that came up since the last interview?

12. What does family involvement in education mean to you?
13. What are some ways you support your child's giftedness publicly and privately?
14. Is there an experience that stands out to you with involvement?
15. How, if at all, does your child's giftedness impact your involvement?
16. What factors (people, places, or things) support your involvement with your child's education?

17. What are some things that get in the way of your involvement?
18. Are your goals for your child and your involvement in education similar or different than the schools? Will you please explain?
19. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your family or your child(ren)?

Questions will create an outline to move the hermeneutic conversation forward; there will be follow-up questions to understand a comment further or gain more information. The interview intends to be a conversation between two people and not a set of concrete questions (Dibley et al., 2020). After reviewing the transcription, a follow-up conversation may be necessary to gain more information.