

***Providing Outreach to Diverse Families:  
Strategies from Working with Informal  
Community Networks***

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**July 10, 2010**

**9:00AM to 4:30PM**

**Assessment Resource Center**

2800 Maguire Boulevard  
Columbia, MO 65201

**MPACT Parent & Transition  
Mentor Training**

## Strategies for Distributing Information to CLD Families During Transition Planning

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1) Use multiple means of communication to reach all families.

For example:

Verbal communication (i.e., face-to-face, from the pulpit, radio, parents meetings, word of mouth, and teaching)

Written communication (i.e., emails, handouts, flyers, mailings, bulletin boards, booklets, and newsletters)

Electronic communication (i.e., websites and emails)



2) Identify the best method of communication for your families. (*Informal community networks reported that oral communication was the most successful method of communicating with their CLD families*).

3) Identify and communicate with the appropriate chain of command within a cultural community (e.g., elders, pastors, parent advocates, case workers, and supervisors) before randomly distributing information to family members.

4) Identify and communicate with the appropriate authority figure within the family before trying to distribute information to individual family members so that no one will be offended. *For example, informal community networks identified that in some CLD families, approaching the mother before acknowledging the father can be offensive.*

5) When presenting written information to CLD families keep it simple and not wordy.

## Strategies for Overcoming Barriers to School Involvement when Working with CLD Families During Transition Planning

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### **Poor Parent-Teacher Relationships**

1. Identify CLD families' cultural beliefs about transition and the IEP goals
2. Explain to the families any contradictions between the IEP team's beliefs and the family's belief
3. Avoid power struggles with parents
4. Consider the families feeling
5. Determine which ideas are open to compromise and collaboration with the parent?

### **Language**

1. Explain to parents transition terminology
2. Use translators who can interpret as well as explain to families the transition terminology
3. Make arrangements with the translator prior to the meeting to ensure that the transition terminology is understood
4. Use language parents can understand rather than professional jargon
5. Create a take-home video in parent's native language

### **Intimidation**

1. Allow family to express their feeling
2. Explain to parents that they are the true experts
3. Respect families' ideas and decisions
4. Explain your intentions for the meeting
5. Use an icebreaker at the start of the meeting to help families feel comfortable
6. Create a safe and inviting environment for families

### **Illiteracy**

1. Learn the educational level of the parents to understand the parents' needs
2. Offer an education video in the family's native language that is viewed in the home prior to IEP meeting of that explains IEP documents and the importance of culture in IEPs
3. Place educational videos on a webcast or You-tube
4. Make available an audio CD that accompanies special education documents
5. Take time to read documents to families
6. Work with the family to identify a trusted family member, friend or a family advocate who can assist parent in reading documents
7. Provide documents that are simply written

**Lack of knowledge**

1. Keep an open mind regarding what school involvement should look like
2. Recognize other ways parents are involved with their child's education besides attending school functions
3. Explain to families the IEP team's and school's expectations for family involvement
4. Share with families the benefits of family involvement
5. Asks parents to identify the ways in which they can be involved at school and out of school
6. Teach parents about school involvement

**Cultural Differences**

1. Ask families specific questions regarding their beliefs about transition services
2. Acknowledge the families differences regarding transition
3. Do not try to change family's beliefs; instead invite parents to share more
4. Explain to the family the IEP team's belief about transition
5. Asks parents to identify their beliefs about being an adult and independent
6. Find interpreters with the same culture as family or someone who can relate to the families' culture
7. Learn about the family's community to get a better understanding of their culture
8. Learn if religious practices influence parent perceptions about disability

**Socio Economic Status**

1. Schedule meetings at times more convenient for parents
2. Consider alternative meeting places other than the school such as community cultural centers and FBO where families frequently visit.
3. Ask parents what they are able to do to support their child's goal.
4. Remain flexible and available for parents
5. Provide transportation to IEP meetings if needed

## Teacher Strategies for Applying Cultural Reciprocity to Transition Planning and Services

### Step 1

*Share and explain the IEP team's values that are important for the child as he or she grows into an adult.*

**For example:**

- We believe (certain activity) would benefit a child because...
- In the U.S. culture (certain activity) is recommended because...
- Self-determination is.... We feel it is important because...



### Step 2

*Share activities, programs, and concepts that may not be familiar to the family's culture and ask the family to identify which are important and those that are not.*

**For example:**

- Which parts of self-determination are valuable to your family? Which are not?
- What are your beliefs about being an adult?
- What are your beliefs about your child's independence?
- Does your cultural have different expectations for a male or female when entering adulthood?

### Step 3

*Acknowledge that you respect the family's opinion and explain why your cultural beliefs are different.*

**For example:**

- What does your culture believe about having a disability? We believe...
- What does your culture believe about education, employment, or community participation? We believe....

### Step 4

*Share with the family how the team can support the family's culture beliefs.*

**For example:**

- We would like to discuss how we can compromise regarding....
- Are there any goals or ideas offends your family's beliefs?

## Partnership Suggestions from Informal Community Networks

1. Become familiar with the culture by visiting the organization and interacting with the families
2. Bring families together to share concerns, stories, and learn from each other's experiences
3. Identify and partner with organizations who already have a trusting relationship with CLD families
4. Access organizations that have similar missions (e.g., grandparent organizations, siblings groups, hospitals, etc...)
5. Access places where people typically visit and trust (i.e., post office, clinics, social service offices)
6. Identify a liaison within FBO who can bring information to members, particularly in non-English speaking organizations
7. Programs, workshops, and seminars for families must be consistent
8. Use all forms of media to reach families
9. Go to places where families frequently visit to disseminate information (i.e. hospitals, health fairs, health departments and other government agencies who serve families)
10. Use siblings as a resource
11. Contact cultural social groups or societies
12. Create practical Power Point presentations where parents could interact and learn

