Supporting Culturally Diverse Families of At Risk Youth During the Transition to Adulthood

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Why the Urgency?

http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=6528566n

What’s so Important about Family Involvement?

A New Wave of Evidence (2002). www.sedi.org/connections

Thinking about Adulthood….

• What do you consider to be a successful adult life for students with whom you work?

• How should families be involved?
## Cultural Base for Education

What is the Culture of Education?  
How do we get parents involved?

### School Practices are KEY

The strongest, most consistent predictors of parent involvement at home and school are the specific school programs and teacher practices that encourage and guide parent involvement

Dr. Joyce Epstein, Johns Hopkins University

http://www.dropoutprevention.org/webcast/11-engaging-families-pathway-college

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### What do I mean by Culture?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture is……</th>
<th>Culture is NOT………</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share a custom that is unique to your culture  (family, community, work)</td>
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</table>

### Culture refers to…

- Knowledge, concepts, and values shared by members of a group through systems of communication
- Common beliefs, symbols, and interpretations that shape human behavior in generally predictable ways
- Gender, Ethnicity, Race, Class, Language, Exceptionality, Religion, Geography, Age, Learning Style
- Not static, cannot be determined by ethnicity alone, and is not a “risk factor to be lessened or reduced” (Barrera & Corso, 2003)

**Interaction between People in a Given Environment**

Dimensions of Culture: How might these Impact Family-School Engagement

- Gender
  - Lower employment rates
  - LGBT
  - Gender expectations

- Language
  - ELL
  - Appropriate assessments

- Socioeconomic Status
  - Negative experiences in school
  - Working multiple jobs

- Geography
  - Rural/Remote
  - Urban

- Religion
  - Underutilized resource
  - Influences decisions

Let’s Compare:

Let’s Compare: Distributing Educational Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>CLD Families</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mailings</td>
<td>Preaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brochures</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Informal Programs</td>
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<td>Flyers</td>
<td>Religious Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calendars</td>
<td>One-on-one</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>Family/Clan gatherings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>Parent support groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>Radio</td>
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<td>Educational Fairs</td>
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</table>

Let’s compare- Defining Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>CLD Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal requirements</td>
<td>Home-centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal process</td>
<td>Community cares for their own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Adult outcomes</td>
<td>Supports from within family/clan/tribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Embedded within family</td>
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</table>

Let’s compare- Adulthood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>CLD Families</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Interdependent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Familialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postsecondary Education</td>
<td>Rites of passage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Living on own</td>
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</table>


Let’s compare- School Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>CLD Families</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Attend school meetings</td>
<td>• “Recursive cycle of disengagement”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Homework</td>
<td>• High regard for education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School Functions</td>
<td>• Perfunctory involvement (say yes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parent-Teacher Conferences</td>
<td>• Lack of respect from school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Paperwork</td>
<td>• Don’t understand legal issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Visiting school</td>
<td>• Reliance on community networks not schools</td>
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CLD Family Involvement during Transition

• Families want their child to be as capable and self-sufficient as possible
• Families seek majority of support from informal and community networks
• Families view certain transition activities as highly important
• Families priorities for involvement differ from professional priorities (family and culture)
• Report more negative experiences than Euro-American families
• Parental influence leads to more positive outcomes
• Caring professionals who were honest, clear and knowledgeable & shared information and listened to families made a difference
• Strong partnerships promotes cultural understanding & responsiveness in transition planning


Pause and Reflect

• What have we discussed thus far?
• What did you learn?
• What do you still want to know?

The Family as a Mobile

In a mobile, all the pieces, no matter what the size or shape, can be grouped together and balanced by shortening or lengthening the strings attached, or rearranging the distance between pieces.

So it is with a family. None of the family members is identical to any other; they are all different and at different levels of growth.

As in a mobile, you can’t arrange one without thinking of the other.

Family Systems Framework

Family Characteristics
- Description of the family
- Personal characteristics
- Special challenges

Family Life Cycle
- Stages and Transitions
- Changes in Characteristics
- Changes in Functions
- Changes in Life Roles

Family Interaction
- Extended Family
- Marital
- Parent-child
- Siblings

Family Functions
- Affection
- Self-esteem
- Economics
- Daily care
- Socialization
- Recreation
- Education
- Spiritual functions

Changing Characteristics of Families: What does it mean for us?
- What are our current expectations for families to be engaged in School?
- Do we expect families to meet our expectations?
- Do we need to rethink how we meet with families?
- Does the changing composition of families impact our assumptions about educational outcomes?

Family Interactions
- Extended Family
- Marital
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- Siblings

Family Functions
- Economic
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- Affection
- Education
- Spiritual functions

Family Life Cycle

Independence → Later in life → Developmental

Launching → Partners → Unexpected

With Adolescents → With Small Children

Cultural Reciprocity

The awareness of cultural differences, then recognizing that the way we act and what we believe can be different than how other people act or what they believe (Kalyanpur & Harry, 2012).

Where do we go from here?

- How do I connect?
- Where do I start?
- Will I offend someone?
- What do I say?
- Do I have the knowledge?
- Am I uncomfortable?

Posture of Cultural Reciprocity

(Kalyanpur & Harry, 2013)

Steps to Cultural Reciprocity

Kalyanpur & Harry 1999

Step 1: Identify the cultural values embedded in the professional interpretation of a student's disability and special services

Step 2: Find out whether the family recognizes and values the professional assumption or view differs from yours

Step 3: Learn about the Families & Their Communities, the basis of the professional assumption

Step 4: Through discussion and collaboration, set about Acknowledge & Respect Cultural Differences professional interpretation and services to the family's value system

Reach Mutual Goals

Pause and Reflect

• What have we discussed thus far?
• What did you learn?
• What do you still want to know?

Models of Family-Community-School Engagement

How can we build partnerships with families to improve student engagement, promote dropout prevention and facilitate success through life?

What do we know about CLD family-community-school connections?

• Most families have high expectations
• CLD families are actively involved in child’s schooling
• School outreach and family involvement is often inconsistent
• Barriers to CLD family involvement are intransient
• Impact of family involvement on improved academic achievement
• Interventions to strengthen family-community-school connections require complex interactions


School-Family-Community Engagement….

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<thead>
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<th>Engagement is NOT.....</th>
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What works??

Parents are more likely to become involved when they:

- Understand they SHOULD be involved
- Know they are CAPABLE of making a contribution
- Feel INVITED by the school and their children

(Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2004)


Poll

http://www.polleverywhere.com/multiple_choice_polls/zy0X5DWFzcEOkdV
Beating the Odds… in NYC
Four Key Areas of Practice

1. Academic Rigor for All Students
2. A Network of Timely Supports
3. A Culture of College Access
4. Effective Use of Data

Network of Timely Supports
- An adult mentor available to every student, is key contact for families
- Advisories inform students and families how to reach academic and career goals
- Academic and technical courses coordinated with higher education requirements
- Timely, short-term interventions allow students to catch up quickly
- Strategies improve students’ test-taking skills

Culture of College Access
- All students/families exposed to college
- Parents involved in planning and supporting goal of attending college
- Information on required tests/courses, aid, admissions, and colleges given in 9th grade
- Community members, graduates, and college reps show students/families value of college
- “College office” gives information, application help, and college counseling

BTO Parents: Key Partners
- 9th grade summer bridge program welcomes whole family, sets goal of 4-year college
- Advisory system/adult mentor main contact for families to monitor progress
- Data shown on what’s needed for college
- Exhibits of student work, window on classroom
- Parent nights, workshops, and assistance with financial aid applications
- College fairs and trips to colleges
Connecting Family Engagement to Student outcomes

http://www.polleverywhere.com/multiple_choice_polls/KcAWrQvMfKzWuomV

BTO Community: Key Partners

- Community colleges offer classes for students
- Community groups provide mentors to students
- Local employers offer internships and advice
- Colleges host visits, send reps to college fair
- Local professionals interviewed by students
- Alumni return to speak with and coach students
- Local organizations provide service-learning
- Community members tutor and volunteer

Garton Elementary

- **Shared Responsibility**
  - Compact
  - SPIN Team
  - Parents on school-wide discipline plan committee

- **Staff, Student & Parent Buy-in**
  - Survey of parents, students and staff
  - Tied to student academic outcomes
  - Grade level meetings

- **Creating a Welcoming Environment**
  - Home visits
  - Parent workshops
  - Culture fair (16 languages spoken)
  - Curriculum nights
  - Parent Activity Nights

Other Real Examples!

- Using volunteers to call, email, door hangers, distribute flyers about P-T conferences

- Family coordinator held a Fall Family Academy

- Parent liaisons:
  - Build relationships with families
  - Train educational staff
  - Attend P-T conferences
  - Teach families how to use online student tracking systems

Strategies to Enhance Education & Cultural Reciprocity

- Seek out Informal Social Supports
  - "cultural brokering" liaisons who can negotiate solutions acceptable to CLD families
  - Visit informal cultural networks
  - Offer workshops @ ICNs for families using culturally responsive methods

- Empower families
  - Provide culturally responsive information
  - Collaborate with extended family members
  - Learn about how families support education at home & in community

- Enhance cultural competence
  - Know your own world view
  - Learn about your families
  - Acknowledge and respect cultural views
  - Develop mutual goals


Critical Elements of Family-Community-School Engagement

- Building Relationships among Families, Schools and Communities
  - Adopt formal school- and district-level policies
  - Demonstrate active & ongoing support from principal
  - Honor families' hopes and concerns
  - Acknowledge commonalities and differences
  - Strengthen school staffs' capacity to collaborate with CLD families (cultural reciprocity)
  - Provide supports to help immigrant families understand US educational systems
  - Make OUTREACH a priority! Not Random Acts of Family Engagement
  - Recognize it will take TIME to build trust


Critical Elements of F-C-S Engage... cont.

- Help Families to Strengthen Student Achievement
  - Provide training & resources (e.g., Home Learning Kits)
  - Help families to use specific communication & in-home supports (tutoring, supervising, encouraging)
  - Support students' involvement in range of school- and community-sponsored extracurricular activities
  - Help low-income families obtain needed supports and services for safety, wellbeing, health.
  - Support families to learn to navigate the systems


Poll

http://www.poll everywhere.com/multiple_choice_polls/1p5Evun5aQA15h
Welcome family members to the school!


Where does your School Stand?

Family Engagement Resources
http://www.dropoutprevention.org/modelprograms/get_programs.php?effstrat=5
Resources

- The SEDL National Center for Families and Community Connections with Schools  [http://www.sedl.org/connections/](http://www.sedl.org/connections/)
  - Family Engagement for High School Success Toolkit & Webinars
  - Family Involvement Model Programs Database:  [http://www.dropoutprevention.org/modelprograms/get_programs.php?effstrat=5](http://www.dropoutprevention.org/modelprograms/get_programs.php?effstrat=5)
- National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE)  [http://www.ncpie.org/](http://www.ncpie.org/)