"Communicating with Families in Head Start- 21st Century Techniques to Enhance Family Involvement

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Language Castle LLC is the one-stop resource for everyone who teaches young children who speak different languages.
Poll #1
- Communicating with the parents is more important than ever

- Families are harder to reach

- Plenty of options for reaching them - but that doesn’t always make your job easier!
Poll #2
National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness

The National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness (NCCLR) provides the Head Start community with research-based information, practices, and strategies to ensure optimal academic and social progress for linguistically and culturally diverse children and their families.

For more information, contact us at: ncclr@bankstreet.edu, 1-888-246-1975 or ncclrinfo@edc.org, 1-855-494-0331.
Gathering and Using Language Information that Families Share

One-third of the children in Early Head Start and Head Start are Dual Language Learners (DLLs). Recent research provides insights into dual language development and key ways
Language background: one, two, or more
Dual language development: simultaneous or sequential
Language dominance
Home language experiences
English language experiences
Individual characteristics of the child
Research base

- Head Start’s Family Engagement in Transitions series:

- Harvard Grad School of Ed project: Family Involvement Network of Educators
  http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/informing-family-engagement-policy

- NAEYC’s Engaging Diverse Families Project
  http://www.naeyc.org/familyengagement/about
Informing Family Engagement Policy

- How Harvard Family Research Project informs policy
- Harvard Family Research Project’s policy work
  - National Coordination Center for the Parental Information and Resource Centers
  - The National Family, School, and Community Engagement Working Group
  - National Policy Forum on Family, School, and Community Engagement
  - Policy recommendations
  - Harvard Family Research Project’s accomplishments to inform policy
  - Policy briefs and publications

How Harvard Family Research Project informs policy

Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) offers policymakers and education advocates the research base to develop effective policies that promote family engagement as a strategy to achieve student success. HFRP catalyzes new ideas to create pathways for families to promote the cognitive, social-emotional, and healthy development of children from cradle to career.
Study of low performing elementary schools found 4 essential supports:

- Instructional guidance
- Teacher professional capacity
- School climate
- Parent, school, community connections
But... researchers find many ineffective strategies:

- “Random acts of family engagement”
And now findings show that

- Family engagement must by a shared responsibility, and must be:
  - Systemic!
  - Integrated!
  - Sustained!
Technology options

- Text message
- Voicemail
- Email
- Website
- Specialized software
- Blog
- Facebook group
- Google
- Twitter
More options

- Video sharing
- Skype
- Facetime
- Posting information videos on website
- Email newsletters
- Online surveys
- Drawings, awards for ideas.
Poll #3
Which to choose?

- It depends...
  - You have to get to know your families and what reaches them best.
  - But – the answer is almost always going to be more than one
Red flags

- Talking at people and wondering why they don’t listen
- Major concerns about negativity – what does that tell you?
- Rewarding high performers - when others are doing the best they can.
- Student of the month - or other counter-motivational methods.
http://1.usa.gov/V6LGUB
Head Start Family Engagement Simulation professional development tool
First Phase

(B)
Recording Session
Audio cassettes of
Los elefantes / The Elephant Song
Spanish & English
Second Phase

(B) Enriching the classroom library
Moms returning the book to the classroom library with the recorded cassette.
singing the Elephant song. We want you to come back and sing us another song.

Genesis
Examples of tech use

- Message of the day
- Question of the day
- Teams and committees
- Staying connected over breaks
- Using Skype during school day
- First week phone call
Q: What is a book report?  
A: It should be a Conversation!
If you want people to be engaged,

- You have to listen more than talk
- You can’t be ruled by fear
- You have to interact
- You have to relate to them as individuals.
- Just...
  – Put yourself in their shoes!
Making communication manageable...

- Different languages
- Different literacy levels
- Different dialects
10. Say less!!
9. Simplify
8. Say what you mean - exactly. (Remove lingo, slang, acronyms, idioms)
7. Be careful about using .
6. Share translations with neighboring programs.
5. Pay certified translators for important documents
4. Not all bilingual people are suitable translators
3. Ask parents, staff, and volunteers to participate as reviewers
2. Use sentence patterns.
1. Use all media. Ask volunteers to help.
THE FOLLOWING **PREVIEW** HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR
APPROPRIATE AUDIENCES

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