Family Engagement Strategies for all Languages and Cultures

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Trusted Sources

Books by Karen N. Nemeth are being used in thousands of early childhood education classrooms.

Learn More
The End

And so, in conclusion...
Family engagement for all languages and cultures depends on your ability to be open to changing our attitudes and practices.

Now...
Let’s talk about the strategies that will get you there!
Parent involvement?
Parent engagement?
Parents as partners?

We’ll take this discussion one step beyond!
Why are you interested in family engagement?

POLL #1
Today’s three goals:

1. To understand the families
2. To have the families understand you
3. To engage the families as partners in their child’s education
What are your goals?

1. You want to understand all of the families but....
   - They speak a different language
   - They do things that seem strange to me
   - They act like they don’t care
   - They are not responsible
Considerations for families when you don’t understand:

- Different language
- Different dialect
- Different culture
- Different expectations of their role in their child’s education
- Different past experiences with schools
- Individual differences in temperament, communication skills
Considerations for families when you don’t understand:

• **Believe** they want the best for their child – but they may not agree with you

• **Believe** they are not having an easy life and you may not know the challenges they’ve faced

• **Believe** that there is no one book on “cultural awareness” that’s going to help you relate to each individual family
Strategies for Goal 1

- Digital translators with voice capabilities:
  - GoogleTranslate
  - iTranslate
- Telephone interpreter services
- Live certified interpreters
- Siblings as last resort
Resources for Goal 1
50 Strategies for Communicating and Working with Diverse Families (3rd ed.) 2013 by Janet Gonzalez-Mena
Strategies for Goal 1

• Building rapport across language barriers can only happen with time spent together. Try these:
  – Show a picture of their child and listen to how they talk about it.
  – Show an interest in learning how to say some of their words so they’ll slow down and help you.
  – Spend time with individuals during field trips, class visits, or special events.
Strategies for Goal 1

Borrow from Powerful Interactions
by Judy Jablon, Charlotte Stetson, and Amy Dombro

www.powerfulinteractions.com

(It’s all about the relationship!)
Strategies for Goal 1

Understanding cultural differences:

The Culture Quiz by Judie Haynes
http://www.everythingesl.net/downloads/culture_questions02.pdf

Not for ESOL Teachers (2nd ed) Eileen Whelan Ariza
Just remember...
Knowing where a family came from is just one step on the path to getting to know who they are!
Strategies for Goal 1

- Immigrant families are not like you:
  - They did not go to American schools
  - They did go to schools that built different expectations
  - They are more likely to live in poverty
  - They are likely to have family stress factors now or in the past
Strategies for Goal 1
Poll #2
Strategies for Goal 2

If you want families to understand you....

You have to say less... and make it count!
Strategies for Goal 2

- Say less
- Simplify language
- Use standard recognizable phrases, colors, headings
- Use pictures
- No slang or lingo
- Multiple modes for the important things
Strategies for Goal 2

- Say less
- Simplify language
- Use standard recognizable phrases, colors, headings
- Use pictures

Think: adult versions of short notes, sentence frames and rebus messages
"When parents are unable to talk to their children, they cannot easily convey to them their values, beliefs, understandings or wisdom about how to cope with their experiences. They cannot teach them about the meaning of work, or about personal responsibility, or what it means to be a moral or ethical person in a world with too many choices and too few guideposts to follow. What is lost are the bits of advice, the consejos parents should be able to offer children in their everyday interactions with them. Talk is a crucial link between parents and their children: It is how parents impart their cultures to their children and enable them to become the kind of men and women they want them to be. When parents lose the means for socializing and influencing their children, rifts develop and families lose the intimacy that comes from shared beliefs and understandings." Lilly Wong Fillmore (1991)
What happens when people just pour information on you?
Strategies for Goal 2

- Change communication from One Way to Two Way
Two-Way Communication with diverse parents

- Photos
- Facebook/website
- Texts
- Email
- Phone call/voicemail
- Other parents!
Strategies for Goal 2

Q. Why does social media work?

A. Because it’s SOCIAL!

Think of information you send home as the start of a conversation
Strategies for Goal 2

- Gathering and Using Language Information that Families Share

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
Who knows the child’s home language best? Their FAMILY!
Strategies for Goal 3

Helping families get involved as partners in their child’s learning...

Starts with listening and responding
Goal 3: Helping families support language and literacy at home

• Research shows conversations are key
• Reading books is good – talking WITH children ABOUT books, stories, and poems is better
In this month’s issue, you’ll discover in Spanish and English:
• how Jack and Isabella find their missing friend, Lola,
• how Jake learns to skate,
• what happens when Spot encounters snow,
• how to play a circle game, and
• other fun puzzles, poems, stories, and games.

Children learn a lot about language by moving their bodies. Your actions while talking and reading stories also help your child understand the words you say. Non-verbal communication is especially helpful to children who are learning in two languages. This month, High Five Bilingüe™ provides many opportunities to help your child connect what they hear in English and Spanish, with what they do.
For Families
Welcome to ¡Colorín Colorado! ¡Bienvenidos!

This bilingual section was created just for parents and families to provide you with the information you need to help your child become a good reader and a successful student.

Research shows that it's vitally important for children to have a good start in reading. Reading is the key to success at school and in life. And because you are your child's first and best teacher, what you do at home — even before your child goes to school — is what will help him or her become a skilled and confident reader.

When you click below, you'll find simple, but powerful ways to help your child become a successful reader. There are fun reading tips and activities, suggestions for choosing books to read with your child, ideas for getting involved at your child's school, and much, much more.

- What you can do at home
- Helping your child succeed at school
- Building Strong Parent-Teacher Partnerships
- Let's read: Fun reading tips, activities, and more!

We hope that you enjoy exploring the Colorín Colorado website. Feel free to print out and use any of the information you find here. And most of all, enjoy reading with your child — you can find many great recommended books in the Books & Authors section. As the late, beloved Celia Cruz said, "Reading is a carnival!"

Sincerely,
Every individual is rooted in **culture**

Multicultural Principle 1

For more information, contact us at: ncclr@bankstreet.edu, 1-888-246-1975 or ncclrinfo@edc.org, 1-855-494-0331.
English language versions

The Benefits of Being Bilingual

Cognitive

Social-Emotional

The Gift of Language

For families

Language is one of the most important gifts you can give your child. But how do you get it?

The answer is simple: speak your language with your child or home every day.

Let's hear language together!

No language is ever too simple for young children. They are actively learning the meanings of words and phrases every day. Even if you don't know the exact word, you can teach them about the meaning of language by asking them what it means.

What are the benefits of using your home language?

Children learn better when they are familiar with their home language. They are more likely to enjoy the language and are more likely to learn it when they are used to it.

Children learn to use language in a variety of situations. They learn to use language in a variety of situations. They learn to use language in a variety of situations. They learn to use language in a variety of situations.

El lenguaje en el hogar

El lenguaje en el hogar

For families

Language at Home and in the Community

Language at Home and in the Community

El lenguaje en el hogar

El lenguaje en el hogar

For families

Spanish language versions

Las ventajas de ser bilingüe

Ventajas: Visión General

Cognitivas

Socio-emocionales

El don del lenguaje

Para las familias

El lenguaje en el hogar y en la comunidad

Para las familias

El lenguaje en el hogar y en la comunidad

Para las familias
Strategies for Goal 3

- Don’t just keep sending stuff home!
Strategies for Goal 3

Effective Parent Engagement for DLLs is...

- Personal
- Respectful
- Mutual
- Ongoing
- Meaningful
- For school and for home
Remind is a free, safe, easy-to-use communication tool that helps teachers connect instantly with students and parents.
Helping families support language and literacy at home

- Research shows conversations are key
- Reading books is good – talking WITH children ABOUT books, stories, and poems is better
Diary

Post news Add media

Abby Downing (5 more)
11-18-2014 9:34 am

Reading workshop is one of our favorite times of day!
Strategies for Goal 3:

- TWO MINUTE DAILY VIDEOS IN ENGLISH AND IN SPANISH
- REAL PARENTS, REAL KIDS, REAL LIFE SETTINGS
- TRACK USAGE WITH DATA REPORTS
Engaging parents from different languages and cultures

If you want parents to come to school:

- ask them for help
- give them something THEY need
- don’t try to “fix” them!
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.
Poll #3
But... researchers find many ineffective strategies:

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

- Family engagement must be a shared responsibility, and must be:
  - Systemic!
  - Integrated!
  - Sustained!
BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT!
Examples for Goal 3:

- Avance - making toys together
- New Brunswick - learning English and creating books for their children
- Cookbook project
- Family fix-up day

DIVERSITY TEAM
New book out March 2015

In It Together: How Student, Family, and Community Partnerships Advance Engagement and Achievement in Diverse Classrooms

by Debbie Zacarian and Michael Silverstone
Get this movie - or the trailer
And so, in conclusion...

Family engagement for all languages and cultures depends on your ability to be open to changing our attitudes and practices.

Now...

You know that it’s all about building relationships, one family at a time!
We all
Smile
In the
Same
Language

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