

Session #: A-4

Title: Supporting Immigrant, Limited-English Families

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Norma Garza, Senior Advisor, U.S. Department of Education

Michael Jett, State Child Care Administrator, California

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

Pilar Torres- Centro Familia

Barriers to Quality Child Care and School Readiness (Montgomery County, MD)

- Access- related to lack of transportation, resistance to government services, not enough licensed providers, illiteracy, lack of entitlement, frontline workers not sensitive to cultural differences.
- Affordability- non-traditional jobs do not satisfy subsidies documentation requirements, families can't afford quality care even with subsidy, catch 22 of subsidy employment requirement.
- Housing- multiple dwellers, space regulations for regulated child care programs, landlords not allowing licensed family child care in units.
- Public Awareness- informal means of communication within community are very powerful but often misinform clients
- Cultural Values- formal child care does not exist in home countries, traditional values promote use of informal/unregulated care, trust is the most important for most families (do they know the provider?), families choosing FFN care, immigrant families value privacy and find some services as very intrusive, child care not top priority, trying to survive.
- Accountability- is the goal to be as inclusive as possible with the provision of care or as exclusive as possible? Local service delivery offices are not being evaluated.

Solutions and best practices:

- Community- based child care management services to assist families who need support.
- Utilize informal communication in positive way- train women as 'child care promoters' to inform the community about good child care practices (have them complete early childhood training). Involve ethnic media in campaign.
- Set up standing task force to meet and act as advocacy voice.
- Advocate for adequate funding, extend subsidies to undocumented children.
- Use more 'Personalism'- limit use of voicemail, train front-line staff to take services out to community.
- Do not reinvent the wheel-encourage collaboration between various community, faith-based and other groups.

- Collect appropriate data- release data in usable form, collect ethnicity in child care subsidies data, track placement of non-English speaking children
- Identify key points of entry to disseminate information about early childhood education (public libraries, adult ESOL classes etc)
- Connect with other groups working on these issues.
- Support current licensing regulations
- Increase representation of immigrant stakeholders

Mike Lopez- National Center for Latino Child and Family Research

Improving the Access and Responsiveness for Culturally and Linguistically diverse families

Latino Child Care/Early Education Utilization Patterns

- Prior research has found differences in utilization and patterns of child care services across different racial/ethnic groups
- Latino families less likely to use center-based programs
- Latinos more likely to utilize family child care
- Less attention paid to variation by SES factors

2006 National Poll by Tomas Rivera Policy Institute: Importance of Pre-K to Latinos:

- 96% of Latinos believe pre-k is important for 4 year old children
- Reasons that Latino parents don't enroll children in pre-k include: don't know about programs in their community, can't afford it, pre-k schedule is not convenient, want the children to stay with another family member.

Cultural preferences:

- Parental roles and expectations- clear distinction that schools are the educators
- Other potential influences- 'Law of obligatory schooling' in Mexico, so there is a tradition of early preschool for some immigrant groups

Availability:

- Where are the families and where are the programs

Accessibility and Cost:

- Outreach and recruitment efforts
- Cultural and linguistic barriers
- Staffing and workforce considerations

In LA county:

- 61% of 4 year olds are Latino
- 44% of kindergartners are English Language Learners

Addressing the Needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families (ECLS-B data)

Key Findings:

- Children's cognitive and motor development were more strongly associated with

parent's report of frequency of their language and literacy activities with their children and observations of parent responsiveness to their children's emotional cues.

- There were no differences in cognitive and motor competencies between Latino children and their white peers at 9 months of age when pre-existing differences in SES were taken into account.
- Few differences in parenting behaviors exist across ethnic groups, however Latino families are less likely to read books and share stories with their children than parents from other backgrounds.

Implications:

- Clearly support the need to target and increase the frequency of language and literacy activities in the home for Latino families.
- Need to support parent's knowledge about bilingual language development and broaden their perspectives related to parenting roles.
- Also important to support the use of language and literacy activities in the home, regardless of whether family members speak in English or Spanish.

Michael Jett- State Child Care Administrator, CA

- Serve a lot of immigrant limited English families
- 475,000 first graders in CA
- 52% of these are Hispanic or Latino
- 85% of ELL kids speak Spanish
- 41% of Latino kids were proficient in English at first grade level

Programs and Policies:

- Have had quality standards since the 1980's
- Funding mechanism established in the state
- Have large welfare to work voucher certificate program
- Have three family literacy programs
- Statewide CCR&R services- many have bilingual staff
- Center-based program for migrant workers' children- special allocation for migrant services and centers
- Migrant alternative payment program- 5 counties in central valley where families can get a voucher and take that with them as they move
- Quality initiatives- infant, toddler learning and development guidelines, resource guide on preschool English learners, teacher observation,
- Created CA preschool network

Norma Garza- Senior Advisor, U.S. Department of Education

- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores in reading- showing progress but still need to narrow the gap

- 68% of low-income 4th graders cannot read at proficient level

Good Start, Grow Smart Principles

- Inclusion- include all populations
- Implementation
- Systemic approach
- Child focused

Early childhood initiative focused on ELLs:

45% of US children younger than 5 are minorities

70% of Head Start and Early Head Start children come from families who speak a language other than English and only 16 percent of Head Start programs serve English only children.

Goals of Early Childhood ELL Federal Interagency Workgroup:

- Analyze current status of federal programs serving ELL children (ages birth to 5), educators and families, to assist in providing coordinated high quality program services across interagency research agendas.
- Analyze the current status of federal efforts in research on ELL children, ages birth to 5 to inform coordinated interagency research agendas.
- Engage in partnerships to support children, families, programs and communities of ELL children (institutes of higher education on how to meet the needs of young LEP/ELL children, emerging cohort of scientists who are trained and qualified to contribute to field of education science, increased access to high quality culturally and linguistically relevant books)

Web Resources:

Reading Rockets

Coloring Colorado

Dept of Ed publications

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

- Concerns around SIDS and cultural practices of licensed providers of having babies sleep on their stomachs. How do you address these issues with providers?
- When it comes to addressing cultural beliefs and practices- can't be based only on the training and licensing requirements, need to look more systemically at how to engage local media, ethnic media, public service announcements, doing a skit for providers

KEY POINTS

- Need to tailor services to particular communities and identify ways to reach providers and parents.
- Support parents' knowledge about bilingual language development and provide appropriate books and resources.
- Need to engage local media, ethnic media, and key stakeholders in reaching out to parents and providers.
- Need better understanding of complexity of child care and early education service utilization dynamics.