Culture Counts:
How to Effectively Engage Parents from Different Cultures

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Discussion topics

What are family support programs?

Why focus on black and Latino families?

What are barriers to family engagement?

How does culture play a role in successful programs?

What should policymakers and program developers know?
What are family support programs?

**Programs that strengthen family functioning:**

- Provide resources so parents can support themselves and, in turn, provide enriching environments to children
  - Integrated into early care and education
- Recognize parents’ crucial role
  - Address factors (e.g., poverty, limited education) that prohibit parents’ ability to meet children’s needs
- Two generational approach (e.g., Head Start)
- Programs need participants’ active engagement to be successful
Why focus on black and Latino families?

• Increase in diversity of children by 2050
  • Black (18%)
  • Latino (30%+)
• Parenting programs are less likely to provide benefits to minority parents
• Blacks and Latinos are less likely to access and utilize services
• Black and Latino families more likely to live in poverty, lower parental education, and unsecure employment
• Culturally relevant programs produce stronger outcomes
What are barriers to engagement

Kazdin, Holland, Crowley (1997)

• Structural barriers (lack of time)
• Attitudinal barriers (perception of value of program)
• Cultural barriers (mismatch in cultural beliefs)

• Black and Latino immigrant families perceive more barriers (involvement at school, Turney & Kao, 2009)
• Attitudinal and cultural barriers more difficult to address
Cultural considerations

• Engagement influenced by cultural sensitivity of program
• Parenting values and beliefs vary by culture
  • Black: extended family networks assist in childrearing
  • Hispanic: *respecto* (obedience, deference, decorum, public behavior)
• Cultural considerations increase cultural validity of the program’s goals, procedures, and outcomes
  • Incorporate during inception of program
  • Adapt existing programs
Culturally-informed Programs

ParentCorps
Parenting interventions that includes core set of behavioral strategies (e.g., positive reinforcement) as well as culturally-informed approaches

Abreindo Puertas (Opening Doors)
Parenting education program created in Spanish, incorporates culturally relevant activities (e.g., loteria, dichos)
How to adapt existing programs

**Phase I**
Align program content with participants’ culture(s), and needs

**Phase II**
Complete an initial adaptation of materials and strategies;

**Phase III**
Finalize and field test adaptations

Source: Culture Counts
Other cultural considerations

• Frame services to align with culturally-specific goals and issues:
  • Name and advertise services (e.g., to avoid stigma)
  • Biculturalism: strategies that are consistent with cultural approach to parenting and acceptable within mainstream
• Provide services in primary language of target group
• Some evidence for “cultural match” between parents and program staff
Considerations for policymakers

• Promote a shared understanding of what is meant by family support and parent engagement

• Support partnerships with community-based organizations to engage parents

• Foster a culturally- and linguistically-diverse workforce

• Call for rigorous research on evidence-based practices
Considerations for program developers

- Employ a collaborative approach to program design
- Develop culturally-informed parenting frameworks
- Offer multiple opportunities for engagement
- Address any structural, attitudinal, and cultural barriers
- Perform thoughtful adaptations to programs
- Revisit cultural considerations often
Thank you!

¡Gracias!

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