



Practical Tips for Working Effectively with Culturally Diverse Families of Young Children

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Today's Webinar

- ▶ Scheduled from 11:45am to 1:00pm
- ▶ NOTE: If you are unable to listen to the Webinar through your computer speakers, you may dial into the Webinar using the following toll free number:
 - Phone Number: 1-866-951-1151
 - Conference Room number: 3252262
- ▶ Participant phone lines are muted.
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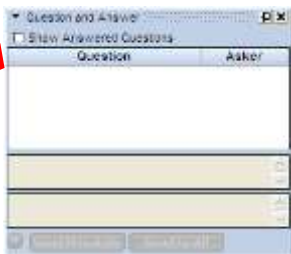
Today's Webinar

- ▶ A link to the on-line evaluation survey will be emailed after the presentation today
- ▶ Please complete evaluation surveys by June 25. Certificates of Attendance will be emailed in return the week of June 28
- ▶ If participating as a group, select one person to email bziemke@pacer.org a list of group participants after the presentation concludes today
- ▶ The Webinar will be archived in 4 to 6 weeks



Optional: Question and Answer

1. Type your question in the white box
2. When text is entered, a "send" option will activate
3. Click send
4. Senders of questions are anonymous and will not be identified



Barb Ziemke, moderator

- Parent Advocate and Trainer for 8 years
- Coordinator of PACER's SPDG Parent Outreach Project
- Parent of a son with a developmental disability
- Experience as a preschool teacher; facilitator for local Early Intervention Coordinating Committees; parent involvement coordinator for University of Washington's Center on Human Development and Disability Child Development Clinic.
- Parent and advocacy representative on Minnesota's State Special Education Advisory Panel



Hassan Samantar

- Parent Advocate and Trainer for 4 years
- Parent of a child with a health impairment
- Advisor to Somali parents
- Translates materials into Somali
- Conducts workshops for professionals on culturally sensitive issues
- Serves on the Interagency Early Intervention Outreach Committee



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Bonnie Jean Smith

- PACER Parent advocate, trainer and Multicultural specialist for 11 years
- Former member of MN Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Member of the Monitoring and TA Review System team for the Federal Adm. on Developmental Disabilities
- Evaluator for MN Council for Quality
- Experience as educator and director at Phillips Community Initiatives for Children, Early Learning Center
- Author of **"How Big is the Fly; Asking the Right Question."**



• Parent of two children with developmental disabilities

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Jesús Villaseñor

- Multicultural Specialist, Parent Advocate and Trainer at PACER for 14 years
- Member of the Diversity Advisory Committee of the Minnesota Department of Education
- Formerly on the Minnesota Special Education Advisory Panel; LEP/IEP Cultural Advisory for the National Center on Educational Outcomes; Board of Directors, Hispanic/Latino Leadership ; the "Success By Six" Cultural Dynamics Committee of The United Way and as a National Field Reviewer for Cultural and Linguistic Appropriate Services Institute (CLAS)



• Parent of adult child with a learning disability

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Dao Xiong

- Parent advocate and trainer at PACER Center for 17 years
 - Provides information and resources for Southeast Asian American families of children through workshops, personal assistance and written materials.
 - Participates with many organizations in an advisory role.
 - Came to the United States as a refugee 30 years ago
 - Parent of 7 children, including an adult daughter with a mild cognitive disability
- Has extensive involvement in school settings



Serving Diverse Families

Presenter: Dixie Jordan

Dixie Jordan is a nationally certified cultural competence trainer. She is board member of the National Federation of Families. Dixie served as a parent advocate and project coordinator for more than 25 years at PACER, and has conducted more than 600 trainings, presentations, and keynotes nationally.



Why pay attention?

Between 2005-2015 in Minnesota:

1. Nonwhites will grow 35%
2. Whites will grow 7%
3. "Hispanic Origin" will grow 47%



By 2015:

- 19% of children under age 15 will be nonwhite
- 5% of people over age 65 will be nonwhite

Not all diverse immigrants are non-white:

- Russians total more than 12,400; 84% arrived in 1990's
- 2,300 students speak Russian at home
- Other Eastern Bloc immigrants include those from Belarus, Ukraine, and other Republics

Why pay attention?

Research indicates that there is no significant difference in parents' interest in their children's success based on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, or cultural background





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Culture: More than meets the eye

Visible Culture:

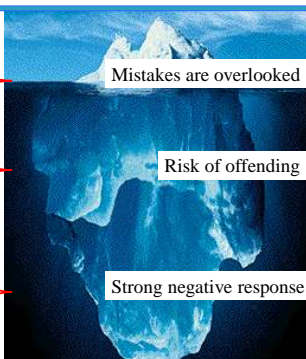
Foods, language, music, celebrations, dress, etc.

Understood rules:

Courtesy, time, conduct across situations

Unconscious rules:

Communication (human interaction). Includes voice tone, verbal/non-verbal, touch, eye contact, etc.



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What we see is not simply what we look at but how we interpret what we look at. Interpretation is influenced by culture as well as experience, and can affect our relationships with those who have a different interpretation



Others may not place the same meaning on what they see

Checking perceptions often with others builds partnerships

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Communication

A continuum of preferences

- Direct / indirect
- Formal / informal
- Decision-making
- Eye contact
- Deference (showing respect)
- Physical proximity
- Touch



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A continuum of preferences

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Focus on the family

➤ What if you went to dinner in a stranger's home – someone you had never met? Would you:

- Know if they like wine with dinner?
- Know if they dress informally or formally for meals?
- Know if they pray before eating?



➤ How would knowing these things help you?

The more we know about all families, the more likely we will be able to avoid breaching important boundaries

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Meeting with parents

- ❖ Call parents before any meeting or visit to answer any questions they may have about services
- ❖ Be sure to carefully explain confidentiality to parents, and remember that fear, for some parents, is natural
- ❖ Think about what strategies you might use to ensure that parents understand what is discussed



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Meeting with parents

- ❖ No phone? Send information via mail
- ❖ Explain the purpose of any meeting and its expected outcome
- ❖ Explain who, if anyone, will participate and their roles



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Meeting with parents

- ❖ Find the best days and times of day to ensure that parents are able to attend
- ❖ Be sure not to schedule any parent meetings or events on cultural or religious holidays (in some Muslim homes, parents may need a break during a meeting for scheduled prayer time)



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Meeting with parents

- ❖ Remind parents that they may invite anyone of their choosing to your meeting
- ❖ Recognize the importance of community elders, spiritual leaders or healers that families use for guidance and direction
- ❖ Some of these people may participate in developing goals for the child and family



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Meeting with parents

Greet each family personally



- ❖ Share a bit of personal information about yourself
- ❖ Talk to both parents (unless the family has expressed another preference)
- ❖ Invite and expect that extended family may be present at meetings, either relatives or non-relatives

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Meeting with parents

Explain your services carefully



- ❖ Explain what services your agency offers
- ❖ New immigrant parents in particular cannot be expected to know systems or terminology – so be careful with language!
- ❖ Invite questions. Repeat more than once

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Meeting with parents

Help the family to understand their role in services



- ❖ “Parents as experts” may be a concept that takes time for families to fully understand
- ❖ “Getting along” may take priority for some parents over expressing their opinion, when their opinion is different from the provider or the team

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Meeting with parents

Be sensitive to emotional states



- ❖ Be sensitive to the family’s emotional state as you decide the issues that brought a child to your services
- ❖ Expect some families to say that everything is fine; acknowledge this and build trust into the relationship so that the parent is able to later hear what you have to say

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Meeting with parents

- ❖ Many diverse families show respect through offering food or refreshments to guests
- ❖ If you meet in a family’s home and are unable to accept, share this information before the visit in an informal way
- ❖ You may also bring something, like bottled water, so that the family sees that you have what you need



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Meeting with parents

Be sure to ask if the family wants an interpreter

- ❖ Ask whether a family prefers written information in English or their primary language
- ❖ Have information available in a variety of languages
- ❖ Do not ask family members to translate for the family – if at all possible!



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Ending a meeting

- ❖ **Explain** what will happen next for the young child and the family
- ❖ **Encourage** parents to call with questions or concerns – and give them contact information
- ❖ **End** on a positive note!
 - Praise child or family strength
 - Thank parents for their participation



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Strategies for working with families

Reinforce the value of parent participation

- ❖ Help parents to understand how highly their role is valued
- ❖ Talk about a structure for reaching agreement if parents are not happy with services
- ❖ Honor the knowledge of families – and use it whenever possible



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Strategies for working with families



- ❖ Some parents may be reluctant to have their child receive services and fearful of what will happen to their child
- ❖ Take the time needed to work on the relationship so that parents are comfortable with you and services
- ❖ Allow enough time in the process for families to make decisions in a way that makes sense to them

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Strategies for working with families

- ❖ Many families fear being judged for their home, dress, or skills
- ❖ Sometimes families ARE judged, and it shows up in reports
- ❖ If you provide home visits, meet in a setting determined by parents the first time
- ❖ Many families are wary of strangers in their home, and some may even be wary of meeting in an office. Build trust!



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Strategies for working with families

- ❖ In many families, it is better not to initiate a handshake unless the parent extends their hand first (belief system may affect physical contact)
- ❖ Try to start and end any meeting as scheduled (parents may not want to interrupt, even if they have something else to do)



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Strategies for working with families

- ❖ In some Asian families, both Western and Eastern medicine will be used
- ❖ In Native American families, traditional healing practices are often combined with Western medicine
- ❖ When parents use massage, smudging, cupping or other healing practices that are common in their culture, consider these interventions in your service plan, if you have one.



Or, acknowledge differences in a positive way

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Strategies for working with families

Understand child rearing practices across cultures

- ❖ Play: sand, mud, water (valuable sensory experience or a messy consequence?)
- ❖ When do children begin independent toileting?
- ❖ Expected age for first steps?
- ❖ Do children wear shoes when learning to walk?



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Strategies for working with families

Understand child rearing practices across cultures

- ❖ When does a child first use words?
- ❖ Is early language encouraged?
- ❖ Sleep: how long, where?
- ❖ When do children stop nursing or using a bottle?
- ❖ When do children eat solid foods?
- ❖ When do children feed themselves?
- ❖ How independent are other children in the family?



Interdependence is not a problem behavior!

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Strategies for working with families

Ask about how parents perceive their child and the child's future

Parents may have:

- ❖ Different images of their child than you carry
- ❖ Different beliefs about their child's success as an adult
- ❖ Different thoughts about services would be useful
- ❖ Different expectations for the child receiving services --or for all their children



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Strategies for working with families

Ask about learning differences for the young child who has delays

- ❖ What could other children in the family do that this child cannot do at the same age?
- ❖ If parents had a dream that came true for their child, what would the child be doing differently?



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Strategies for working with families

Open-ended questions encourage conversation:

- ❖ "I really want to be helpful. Is there anything I should learn about your community or culture that would help me do a better job with your child?"
- ❖ "Help me understand what resources you have found helpful in your community?"



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Strategies for working with families

Check frequently for understanding:

- ❖ Questions like “Do you understand?” may receive a “yes” response, even when parents do not understand
- ❖ Try: “Do you think this sounds right, or.....?”
“Can you tell me what you think of this idea?”
“Do you know what to do next?”



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Hassan Samantar

- ▶ Take time to get to know each other through informal conversation
- ▶ Be prepared to address language challenges with interpreter and family
- ▶ Recognize differences in expectations for development and age-appropriate skills



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Bonnie Jean Smith

- ▶ Each family has a different culture even when they have the same ethnicity.
- ▶ Share about yourself and why you are an Early Childhood educator
- ▶ Provide contact information in multiple ways
 - Refrigerator magnet
 - Post card
- ▶ Refer only to confirmed, available resources



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Jesús Villaseñor

- ▶ Hispanic/Latino families have many different levels of acculturation
- ▶ Establish trust through good communication
- Plan what you are going to say, then cut it in half!
- ▶ Discuss meeting with interpreter ahead of time
- ▶ Be prepared to address confidentiality



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Dao Xiong

- ▶ Consider differences in view of disability, emotions and communication styles
- ▶ Expect that families will seek help and resources in different ways
- ▶ Respect the home environment

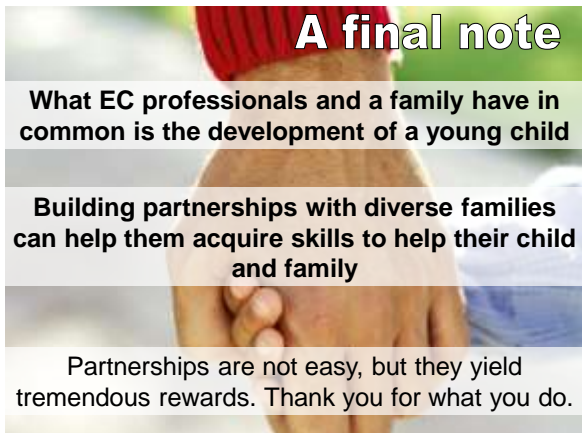


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Why pay attention?

Research indicates that there is no significant difference in parents' interest in their children's success based on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, or cultural background





A final note

What EC professionals and a family have in common is the development of a young child

Building partnerships with diverse families can help them acquire skills to help their child and family


Partnerships are not easy, but they yield tremendous rewards. Thank you for what you do.

Thank You for Attending!

- Please complete evaluation surveys by June 25.
- In return, Certificates of Attendance will be emailed the week of June 28

Questions? Barb Ziemke 952.838.9000 or BZiemke@PACER.org

Note: We will attempt to answer as many questions received as possible, but may not be able to answer all questions during the allotted time.



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