

Welcome

- Participants are currently in listen-only mode.
- You can communicate with other attendees or the host in the **Chat Box** and seek technical assistance if needed.
- You can type questions about the material presented in the **Chat Box** section.
- Today's webinar may be **recorded and shared**. Please keep this in mind when sharing information and experiences during the webinar.
- We understand this topic will generate many questions. However, due to the limited time we have, we may not get to every question in the Chat Box. Please keep your questions broad. We are unable to provide responses to questions that apply to personal or very specific circumstances.





Supporting Spanish-speaking Families as they Learn About Special Education

Tips on Engaging with Spanish-speaking Families



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www.congresofamiliar.org

How many of you have children?

Sleepless nights/sleep deprivation

Having patience

Getting children to clean their teeth properly

Dealing with an ill child

Finding a babysitter

Getting children to do their homework

Encouraging your children to concentrate and work hard at school

Tackling bullying

Tantrums

Getting a baby to sleep through the night

Getting child to sleep at night

Constantly worrying

Keeping an eye on your child 24/7

Bed-wetting

Setting routines and being consistent

Remembering to fill in all school paperwork

Keeping on top of the household chores

Getting children to eat the right foods

Potty training

Sibling rivalry

Juggling childcare

Getting a toddler to stay in bed

Trying to keep your children from spending too much time in front of a computer/TV screen



Barrier: Language

- Language
- Language variations
- Interpreters



Barrier: Special Education Language

- IEP
- FAPE
- LRE
- 504 Plan
- OT
- PT
- SLP
- Early Intervention



Barrier: Parent/Teacher Perceptions

- The number of Hispanic students enrolled in schools are expected to climb.
- Teachers in charge of their education are predominantly white and middle class.
- Parents report feeling ignored, disrespected, judged, and discriminated against.
- EXAMPLE: “It is hard to get much info from the parent. I think it must be a cultural thing with his parent.”



Barrier: Level of Education

- Data from the 2010 Census confirms that only 66.7% of Hispanics age 25 and older had a high school diploma or more compared to 93.3% for non-Hispanic whites.
- High rates of illiteracy among some Hispanic parents.
- Parents feel limited in their ability to contribute in positive ways to their children's education.
- Feelings of frustration and helplessness.
- Overwhelmed with feelings of intimidation and embarrassment.



Barrier: Limited Knowledge of How Systems Work

- Hispanic parents in the United States regard education as very important. They have high educational aspirations and expectations and genuinely want their children to succeed.
- Unfamiliar with the differing parental roles and expectations of the American school system.
- They are unaware that being parents of Special Education students guarantees them certain rights.
- This generates a great deal of confusion and frustration.



Barrier: Socioeconomic

- Economic hardships hinder their involvement in their children's education.
- Need for parents to work multiple jobs to meet these needs of their children.
- Long hours and inflexible work schedules.
- Childcare and transportation are other commonly cited reasons that pose significant problems for Hispanic parents.



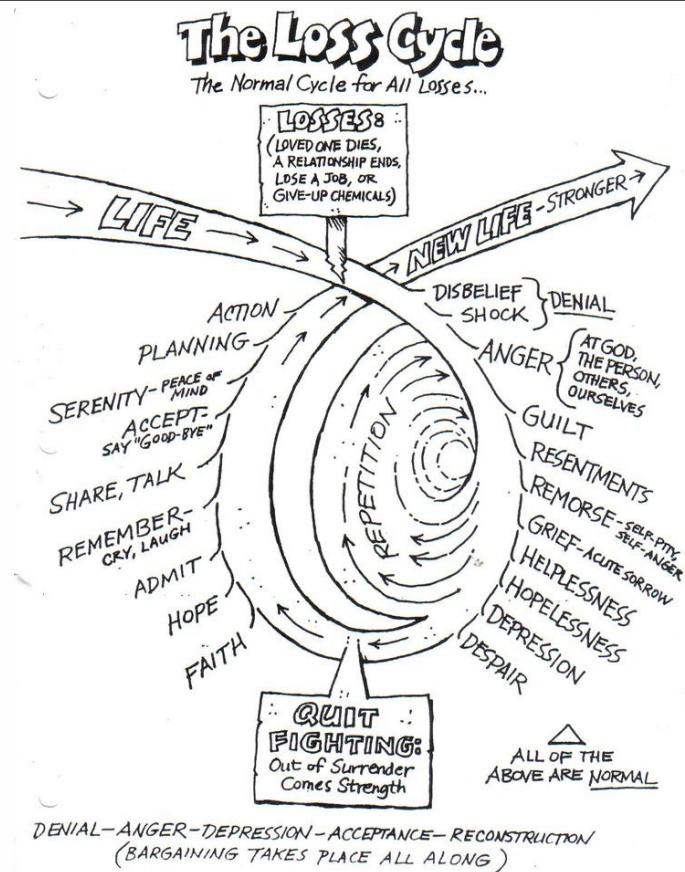
Barrier: Family Structure

- The “traditional” family.
- Single mothers living with their children.
- Lack of natural supports.




Barrier: Dealing with the Diagnosis

- Denial
- Sadness
- Grief
- Lost of hopes and dreams
- Feeling lost
- Overwhelmed
- Relieved
- Anxious
- Sad
- Unsure
- Weight loss or gain
- Social withdrawal
- Sleep difficulties
- Low self-esteem
- Loss of interest in daily activities





Other Implications

- Limited advocating skills
 - Families have a high level of respect and will not question authority
 - Not knowing what types of questions to ask
- 

Common IEP Mistakes

- Having the IEP meeting without the parent
- Not providing an interpreter or providing an interpreter that is not well versed in Special Education
- Forcing families to sign the IEP the day of the meeting
- Not providing the documents in their language in a timely manner



Let's not make assumptions

- Avoid stereotypes at all cost.
- Parents who don't follow through.
- They know their rights.
- Families don't care about their children's needs and services they receive.
- Don't assume that parents are simply "uninvolved and disinterested" in their child's education or have other priorities.
- Did the parent really understand what was said/discussed?



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Too many things on their plate



- Prepare for and attend IEP meetings
- Speech therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Set up transportation
- Track progress of the IEP goals
- Scheduling ABA therapy
- Securing ILS/SLS services
- Find specialized doctors and make appointments
- Find specialized dentist for appointments
- Help with homework
- Manage medications
- Prepare for and attend IPP meetings
- Track down your Service Coordinator at the regional center
- Understand what agency provides what
- Etc.....

Ways to be helpful



- Districts should be culturally sensitive and knowledgeable about the challenges of Spanish-speaking families
- Listen and learn
- Be flexible
- Less terminology and jargon
- Avoid acronyms or explain what the acronym stands for
- Parents can't ask for a service or support if they don't know about it.

Ways to be helpful



- A lot of times the blame is put on the parent because they're not asking for a service and support.
- Ask questions without being condescending
- Offer to help/brainstorm
- Be patient: parents can't retain all the information. Repetition can be helpful
- Create a warm, safe, and inviting environment where parents will feel welcomed
- Remind parents of their rights

Ways to be helpful



- Encourage parental feedback
- Always have resources in their language available
- Be familiar with FRCs or advocacy agencies in your area and refer families frequently.
- Provide guidance, mentorship, and support to parents from other parents who have had similar experiences.
- Encourage support group participation.
- Share trainings and information that come across your desk.

Hold that
thought.....





The Arc@School En Español



- New section on TheArcAtSchool.org
- Spanish-language resources focused on:
 - General Overview of Special Education (IDEA)
 - Parent' Rights
 - Early Intervention
 - Individuals Education Programs (IEP)
 - Section 504
- Translation of The Arc@School's Special Education Advocacy Curriculum





Questions?



Thank you!

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