



Parental Involvement Among Hispanic Parents



Parental Involvement

- ▶ Research shows that parental involvement increases students' academic achievement
- ▶ “the academic achievement of low-income students, in particular, seems to improve as parent involvement increases” (*Educational Research Newsletter*, n.d., p. 7).

Lack of parental involvement continues to be the “biggest problem facing public schools” (Enterprise City Schools, n.d., p.1).



What is Parental Involvement?

- ▶ Work in pairs to come up with a definition
 - ▶ Create a group definition for entire staff present
 - ▶ Post group definition on chart paper
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Definition/Discussion

- ▶ NCLB defines parental involvement as:
 - ▶ "the participation of parents in regular, two-way and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities" (US Dept. of Education, 2004, p. 9).
 - ▶ How does this definition compare to your group definition?
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Benefits of Parental Involvement

“Regardless of family income or background, students whose parents are involved in their schooling are more likely to have:”

higher grades and test scores

attend school regularly

have better social skills

show improved behavior

adapt well to school



Benefits of Parental Involvement (Cont.)

- 
- more positive attitudes toward school
 - improved classroom behavior
 - higher self-esteem
 - less absenteeism
 - greater student motivation
 - increased communication between parent and child



Discussion

- What are some of the ways parents of ELLs have been involved in their children's education in your classroom?
 - What are some of the benefits you have noted in your own classroom when parents are more involved?
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Hispanic Parents

Hispanic parents are less involved in their children's education than non-Hispanic whites.

- ▶ What do you attribute the lack of parental involvement among Hispanic parents to?



Barriers to Parental Involvement Among Hispanic Parents



Unfamiliarity with the American school system



Parent/Teacher Perceptions



Language



Level of Education



Feeling Unwelcomed



Socioeconomic



Family Structure





Unfamiliarity with the American School System

Hispanic parents “struggle to navigate aspects of a system they are unfamiliar with, and that sometimes fails to “speak their language.”

- ▶ Hispanic parents are oftentimes unfamiliar with the differing parental roles and expectations of the American school system
- ▶ do not know how they can contribute in positive ways to their children's education
- ▶ are unaware that being parents of ELL students' guarantees them certain rights, such as the right to an interpreter, and the right to have materials sent home translated in their language, that places them in a position to be better advocates for their children

Hispanic parents often feel a sense of helplessness about their ability to contribute to their children's education.

Parent/Teacher Perceptions

There is oftentimes disagreement on what constitutes parental involvement parent.

Parents

Home-based involvement

- providing nurturing, teaching values and instilling good behaviors.

Teachers

School-based involvement

- Being physically involved in the school; attending parent/teacher conferences, fund raising, etc.

Parent/Teacher Perceptions (Cont.)

Hispanic parental involvement is often influenced and dictated by cultural beliefs and “by traditions of respect for authority (respeto).”

- ▶ Cultural beliefs limit direct school involvement to instances of misbehavior by their children or when educators invite them to come in
- ▶ Believe that it is primarily the school's responsibility to educate their children and their job as parents to educate them in the home by instilling good morals, for example.
- ▶ Don't question teacher's decisions regarding their children's academic for fear of being disrespectful
- ▶ Regard teachers and schools as **“the experts”**



Parent/Teacher Perceptions (Cont.)

- ▶ Cultural misunderstandings between educators and parents can leave the parents feeling a disconnect between their culture and the American school culture, which can unintentionally affect and hinder Hispanic parents' efforts to become involved (Carlise et al., 2005).
 - ▶ Although views regarding parental involvement may be influenced by culture and traditions, educators may view this lack of parental engagement negatively, and erroneously assume that Hispanic parents are simply “uninvolved and disinterested” in their child’s education (Floyd, 2005, p. 127).
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Language

most salient barrier to parental involvement

- ▶ cannot as effectively help their children with homework or easily communicate with school personnel
- ▶ can produce tremendous fear, embarrassment, frustration, and intimidation in Hispanic parents, leaving them to feel disempowered to participate in any decision-making affecting their children's education (Guzman, et al., n.d.).



Limited Education

Only 66.7% of Hispanics age 25 and older had a high school diploma or more compared to 93.3% for non-Hispanic whites

- ▶ Parents with low levels of educational attainment often feel limited in their ability to contribute in positive ways to their children's education, leading to feelings of frustration and helplessness (Guzman, et al., n.d.). These feelings are heightened as children move up in grades.

Feeling Unwelcomed

An unwelcoming school environment makes it difficult for Hispanic parents to become involved.

Parents are often left feeling:

- Ignored
- Uncomfortable
- Intimidated
- Disrespected
- Judged
- Discriminated against
- Unwanted in their children's school

“The effects of these negative attitudes against them creates an uncomfortable environment and results in the absence of Latino parents’ participation in schools” (Guzman, et al., n.d., p. 9).

Socioeconomic

More than half of Hispanic families, 62%, face extreme economic hardships.

- ▶ time constraints due to work demands (long hours and inflexible work schedules) not only affect school-based involvement (attending parent/teacher conferences and school events, etc.), but it also places limitations on the time parents can spend on home-based activities (reading, helping with homework, etc.).
- ▶ becoming involved in school often has to take a backseat to losing a day's pay, and possibly even their jobs
- ▶ Childcare
- ▶ Transportation

Family Structure

Nearly half of Hispanic children, 42 %, lived in single-parent homes in the year 2014 while only 25% of non-Hispanic white children lived with one parent.

- ▶ children who live in households where there are two parents achieve higher academic gains and educational attainment than those children living with only one parent.
- ▶ The children in intact homes (two-parent families) tended to have parents who were more involved in their academics and have higher expectations for them than did single parents.
- ▶ children who lived with only parent believed their parents had lower school expectations for them compared to reports from children who lived with both parents.
- ▶ The children in single-parent households also reported less monitoring of homework by their parents compared to their counterparts living in intact families.



Family Structure (Cont.)

- ▶ children who live with only one parent are more likely to be raised in low-income households than children who live with two parents, which puts them at greater risk of academic failure
- ▶ It is difficult enough for Hispanic parents to become involved in their children's academic when there are two parents in the home due to the constraints of work, time, childcare, and transportation brought on by their economic hardship, these concerns are magnified in single-parent homes where the lack of support and resources are even more limited.



What Can Schools Do to Increase Parental Involvement Among Hispanic Parents?

- ▶ While parental involvement improves student outcomes, variations in culture and/or socioeconomic background affect how families are involved.
 - ▶ Any reforms and efforts aimed at increasing parental involvement among Hispanic parents should account for factors that dissuade parents from becoming involved, such as the barriers discussed in this presentation (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).
 - ▶ Research shows that given the unique obstacles Hispanic parents face, both traditional (school-based) and non-traditional approaches (home-based) should be taken.
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Table 4. Traditional and Non-Traditional Approaches to ELL Parental Involvement

Traditional	Non -Traditional
Assists families with parenting and childrearing skills, and with creating home conditions to support learning.	Develops reciprocal understanding of schools and families.
Communicates with families about school programs and student progress with two-way communications.	Situates cultural strengths of family and community within the school curriculum.
Includes recruiting efforts to involve families as volunteers and audiences.	Provides parental education that includes family literacy and understanding school community.
Involves families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curricular-linked activities.	Promotes parental advocacy that informs and teaches parents how to advocate for their children.
Includes families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through councils and organizations.	Instills parental empowerment through parent-initiated efforts at the school and community level.
Collaborates and coordinates with the work and community-based agencies, colleges and other groups to strengthen school programs.	Implements culturally and linguistically appropriate practices in all aspects of communication.



Thank You!

Final Thoughts or Questions?

