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Culturally Responsive Engagement with Families of Children with Disabilities
- Facilitating Meaningful Collaboration

December 2017

This resource guide, which is one of four in a series on this topic, includes current research and other articles pulled from literature and the Library’s educational database service for schools, programs, service providers and families to enhance understanding of multiple perspectives and the development of collaborative partnerships between education professionals and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to better support the involvement and participation of parents in the education of their children with disabilities. It should be noted that it does not represent the full scope of resources and information available on this topic nor serve as an endorsement of any particular resource.

Introductory Article:

Collaboration with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families: Ideal Versus Reality


This review identifies research-based definitions of ideal collaborative relationships between special education professionals and culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) families of children with disabilities, examines research on actual collaboration with such families, and makes recommendations regarding improvement of such collaboration. The main sources of literature are research and opinion publications in peer-reviewed journals and books by leading scholars. The review concludes that barriers to the implementation of ideal practices include deficit views of CLD families, cross-cultural misunderstandings related to the meanings of disability, differential values in setting goals for individuals with disabilities, and culturally based differences in caregivers’ views of their roles. Recommendations for change and improvement focus on personnel preparation and on implementing existing models of effective practice.

To learn more:

For access to additional educational resources available through the SERC Library from its electronic journal database service and topical research LibGuides as well as in-person from the various instructional, assessment and other collections, please consider becoming a Library member. Membership is free and you can join online by following the link provided below.


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List of Sources:


Links to Information

Biculturalization: Developing Culturally Responsive Approaches to Family Participation

Caregiver Engagement: Advancing Academic and Behavioral Outcomes for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students in Special Education

Demystifying the IEP Process for Diverse Parents of Children With Disabilities

Developing a Framework for Reducing the Cultural Clash Between African American Parents and the Special Education System

Developing Collaborative Partnerships With Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families During the IEP Process

Facilitating the Meaningful Participation of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families in the IFSP and IEP Process

Fostering Collaboration With Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families of Children With Moderate to Severe Disabilities

Investigating Parent and Professional Perspectives Concerning Special Education Services for Preschool Latino Children

Question-Asking and Advocacy by African American Parents at Individualized Education Program Meetings: A Social and Cultural Capital Perspective

Strategies to Involve Families of Latino Students With Disabilities: When Parent Initiative Is Not Enough