

SCHOOL READINESS

PERSPECTIVES OF IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

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Outline of Presentation

- 1) Introduction/Background information
 - Method (brief summary)
 - Data (Immigrant Statistics)
 - Social class and education in the context of this presentation
- 2) Culture as a reference
- 3) Common practices, expectations and values about education for immigrant families
- 4) Perspectives on working with and on behalf of immigrant families
- 5) Conclusions/Final Comments
- 6) Discussion

Systematic

Equally Developed

Ethnocentric

Arbitrary

CULTURE

Dynamic

Powerful
Influence on
Behavior

Shared

Symbolic

Influences Perceptions

Exists at
Many Levels



PRACTICES AMONG IMMIGRANTS THAT REINFORCE AREAS OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- Attachment practices
 - Singing to their children
 - Carrying and holding them
 - Contact with several attachment figures
 - Nurturing responses
 - Encouraging exploration of the environment

PRACTICES AMONG IMMIGRANTS THAT REINFORCE AREAS OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Early learning opportunities

- Settings where language development occurs
- Conversations with members of the family
- Story telling, conversations with open-ended questions
- Mathematical notions.

PRACTICES AMONG IMMIGRANTS THAT REINFORCE AREAS OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- Practices of social acceptance
 - Demonstrating good manners
 - Contributing to family efforts
 - Respect to elders

EXPECTATIONS FOR IMMIGRANT PARENTS ABOUT SCHOOLS

- Strict discipline
- School will take care of academic formal instruction
- Participation in schooling is limited to certain activities
- Children should go to school at five years of age
- *Of concern: School and Canadian values are going to affect their children's values and beliefs*

VALUES ABOUT EDUCATION FOR MANY IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

- High level of motivation for academic success
- Education brings a sense of pride in the family
- Education is both a “family value” and an “asset” for the family

PERSPECTIVES ON WORKING WITH (AND ON BEHALF OF) IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

- Early intervention programs for immigrant families with children under six years of age
- Preschool and kindergarten initiatives or programs
- Importance of schools *being ready* for the immigrant child
 - Funds of Knowledge (Moll, 1992)

CONCLUSION AND FINAL COMMENTS (1)

- There is a need for our schools to:
 - Continue to promote acceptance of differences and effective communication for children of diverse cultural origins who are starting kindergarten
 - Gain more knowledge about specific practices on how parents of cultural minorities interact with children that support learning

CONCLUSION AND FINAL COMMENTS (2)

- Build on the strengths that diverse children bring to schools
- Have a greater connection between early intervention programs for ethno-specific communities and schools

CONCLUSION AND FINAL COMMENTS (3)

- There is a need for school boards and policy makers to:
 - Recognize the importance of professional development for teachers and staff in culturally sensitive practices.
 - Recognize that asking more effort from teachers/administrators requires the envisioning of a larger perspective.

References

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**“ IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO
RAISE A CHILD”**

AFRICAN SAYING....