

We Are Involved, Just Ask Us How!

A Culturally Responsive Needs Assessment for Latino Fathers with Children in Head Start

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Background

- Federal grants for Head Start, an early childhood education program, specifically require that providers include male caretakers in their parent education efforts.
- Despite high engagement with raising children at home (Fagan, Newash, & Schloesser, 2000; Roubinov, Luecken, Gonzalez, & Crnic, 2016), fathers of children enrolled in Head Start often receive fewer services and less staff attention than mothers, due in part to staff biases (McAllister, Wilson & Burton, 2004).
- 90.8% of participants Volunteers of America of Greater Los Angeles (VOALA) Head Start participants belong to Hispanic minority groups.
- A culturally-responsive, qualitative research project was needed to address barriers to male caretaker participation while taking into account the cultural context of the population that VOALA Head Start serves.

Culturally Responsive Process

Establish a Collaborative Process

- Rodríguez-Campos and Rincones-Gómez (2012) describe a collaborative evaluation model that emphasizes the need for marginalized groups to understand the evaluation process.

Our Steps

- In staff focus groups, we mapped out the entire evaluation process and where staff fit in.
- In father focus groups, we took special care to explain the goals of the evaluation and express how important the point of view of male caretakers is to the process.

Culturally Responsive Process

Affirm Cultural Identity

- Rodriguez, Schwartz, Lahman, & Giest (2011) suggest creating an environment that affirms cultural identity.

Our Steps

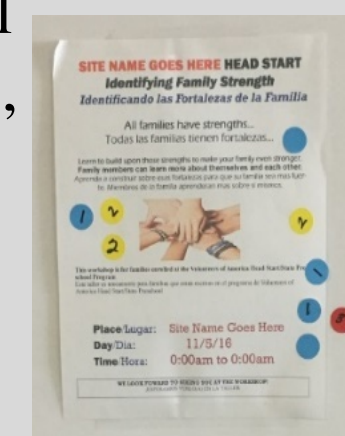
- Conducted focus groups bilingually, with a diverse facilitator team.
- Offered foods originating in LatinX cultures when possible.

Cultivate an Environment for Reflection

- Contemplating personal assumptions is a key component of cultural competence (SAMSA, 2014; Dray & 2011).

Our Steps

- Evaluators identified coding themes based on attribution theory (Weiner, 1985) to highlight staff and evaluator assumptions and contrast them to the assumptions fathers make about themselves.
- Evaluators encouraged a reflective attitude via techniques such as “reflective listening” (Cook, 2012).
- Fathers were asked to rank three bilingual event flyers using sticky dots (c.f. Azzam, Evergreen, Germuth, & Kistler, 2013). This activity provided space for male caretakers to explore *why* they hold preferences for certain events.



“I mean, if you really want to be involved with your kid, you will... sometimes I go to work and I’m really tired, I’m exhausted, and I might fall asleep, I get up and I try to make it at least ten minutes, twenty minutes... she seeks attention too, and as tired as I am, I give it to her, you know?” - Father

Findings

- Overall, the focus groups were incredibly successful. Participants were engaged, communicative, and were happy to share their thoughts and experiences.
- There was some evidence that staff biases may be interfering with male caretaker participation.
 - For example, fathers reported receiving photo copies of flyers, rather than the high-quality originals provided to mothers. This left fathers feeling that they were of only secondary importance.
 - Fathers generally felt that they were provided with less information than mothers.
- Fathers expressed interest in opportunities to interact with their kids in a community context. Integrating academic activities with interactive community activities may satisfy both father and staff interests.
- Participation may be limited by medical and other logistic barriers. Head start may be able to address these directly by providing community clinics and adjusting scheduling.

