

Supporting Latino families of children with disabilities: Impacting outcomes

Maribel Hernandez, Community Education Specialist, Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, University of California, Davis

After a diagnosis, parents need information and support from a trusted source and in a language they can understand to learn to navigate community systems and access appropriate services, and to provide the best possible treatment and care to help their children reach their full potential and become active and valuable community members. It is the UC Davis CEDD's commitment to these families to help educate and prepare their children for a successful life.

UC Davis CEDD & the Latino Community

The families we interact with are primarily immigrants, mostly from Mexico. Most have no medical coverage, cannot speak English, and often do not understand a new diagnosis. These families need not only a good translator, but someone who can help them understand their child's disability and help them navigate available options and resources.

When we speak of the Hispanic community, it is important not to generalize the perception of disability. A person's perceptions effect the way s/he faces challenges and prepares to become part of a team that can make informed decisions and positive outcomes. Our responsibility at the CEDD is to try to ensure that ALL families have the necessary information and sufficient understanding to make informed decisions.

Parental Objectives

Learn and Understand Parent Rights and Responsibilities. When parents understand their rights, they can be active members of the team, using their advocacy skills to make decisions to help determine appropriate supports for their child.

Ask Questions. Sometimes professionals forget that families are not familiar with terminology and acronyms.

Communication within the Team. Team members need to work together to determine what is in the child's best interest.

Make Informed Decisions. Parents have to make decisions every day. They need to be informed and understand their choices. They need to be able to review recommendations and provide input to create **SMART** goals based on their child's particular needs and likes.

Benefit from Evidence-Based Practices (EBP). When families understand EBP, they can help their children practice skills on a daily basis.

Our Projects

Video Modules (English and Spanish). In an effort to raise awareness and foster knowledge of living with developmental disabilities, in general, and Regional Center services, in particular, we are developing two series of informational videos.

Autism Distance Education Parent Training (ADEPT). The ADEPT on-line training series in English and Spanish focuses on behavioral skills training for parents of children with autism.

<https://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/mindinstitute/centers/cedd/adept.html>

Resource Center. We provide parent-to-parent support and access to resources within the MIND Institute, at the UC Davis Medical Center, and in the community. We have staff who are bilingual in English and Spanish.

<https://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/mindinstitute/resources/index.html>

Technical Assistance. Technical assistance to state agencies and community organizations on how to take part in effective outreach in the Latino community and on efforts to reduce health disparities. Projects include partnering with community leaders and organizations to engender disability awareness and the importance of early intervention.

Sibling Workshops are opportunities for school-age siblings of children with disabilities to obtain peer support and education within a recreational context. Facilitators are bilingual/bicultural (English and Spanish), and most have a family member with a developmental disability.



Vamos a Platicar (Let's Talk). A 6-week series for parents to share experiences and to learn about their child's diagnosis and specific needs and how to help them achieve their full potential.

Padres para Padres. A support group of Spanish-speaking parents of children with disabilities.

Screening at Mexican Embassy to identify potential health or developmental problems in infants and young children who may need a health assessment, diagnostic assessment or educational evaluation.

Conference. In collaboration with the Alta California Regional Center, CEDD will host a one-day, Spanish language conference for parents in the spring of 2019.

Website: Centro para la Excelencia en Discapacidades del Desarrollo. In an effort to reach the Spanish community, our website offers video clips, videos, and links to information and projects, in Spanish. <https://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/mindinstitute/centers/cedd-spanish.html>

CEDD's Spanish Facebook Page provides links to information, trainings, workshops, conferences, and activities in the community for children with disabilities and their families. <https://www.facebook.com/CEDDCentroParaLaExcelenciaEnDiscapacidadesDelDesar>