



# Keys To Working With Diverse Families

## What is a family?



We all come from families.

Families are big, small, extended, nuclear, multi-generational, with one parent, two parents, aunts, uncles, and grandparents.

A family can be as temporary as a few weeks, as permanent as forever.

Our families create neighborhoods, communities, states, and nations.

Each family has strengths and qualities that flow from individual members and from the family unit.

**A family is a culture onto itself, with different values, and unique ways of realizing dreams; together, our families become the source of our rich cultural heritage and spiritual diversity.**

**Research indicates that...**

## Just about...

**A**LL families care about their children, want them to succeed, and are eager to obtain better information from schools & communities.

**A**LL teachers & administrators would like to involve families, but many do not know how to go about building positive and productive programs and are fearful about trying.

**A**LL students want their families to be more knowledgeable partners about schooling and are willing to take active roles in assisting communication between home and school. However, students need much better information and guidance about how they can conduct important exchanges with their families about school activities, homework, and school decisions (Epstein, 1995).



A project of The Florida Partnership for Parent Involvement

Center of Excellence ♦ Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute ♦ Florida's Children's Forum  
Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters ♦ Hillsborough County Head Start ♦ Hillsborough County Even Start

Understanding what constitutes a family & knowing what research tells us about families as partners, provides us with a foundation for identifying basic **KEYS** to working with **ALL** families.....



### KEY #1 SURVEY...

Your families and find out what each member's strengths and qualities are... Then find out the challenges and concerns they face as members... Your family and you have now created a framework for developing a **meaningful** family involvement plan, tailored to the family's culture, and that helps them realize **their** dreams!



### KEY #2 INVENTORY...

Your resources! What materials or strategies do you have? What school resources, personnel, and/or community agencies do you know that are culturally responsive that you can connect with this family to meet their challenges?

You may have to do some digging!  
Maybe more information on the families ethnic or cultural background would prove useful!



### KEY #3 COMPILE...

Compile a list of strategies and/or materials you will need to add to your resources. If you have knowledge of a community resource beyond the scope of your school, don't forget to include phone numbers and addresses. You may have to make an initial contact with the agency for them, especially if they do not have a phone or speak English. Network with your colleagues, and professionals in your community. Many community agencies have created directories of family services and are eager to provide you with a copy.



### KEY #4 IMPLEMENT...

Your family centered plan! Keep your families informed and include them every step of the way. Deliver information in a timely manner.

This may take a phone call, a note home, before or after school meetings, a home visit, or an informal chat at a local cafe near their home!

For more information contact:



**The Center for Parent Involvement** (FCPI) was funded by the U.S. Department of Education; Goals 2000, Educate America Act from 1994-1999. Guided by an advisory board of parents and professionals, the FCPI's goal was to tap the power of parents.

The FCPI gathered information on parent needs, coordinated the information, and created a series of resources organized by theme, including fact sheets for parents and professionals, "Beyond the Basics" resources, and resource identification lists. Many of the resources have been translated into Spanish language versions, and every effort has been made to preserve the meaning and flavor of the original English documents. This series of materials provides a wealth of current information for both parents and providers; the complete set of resources can be obtained in PDF format on the Department of Child and Family Studies Website at [www.fmhi.usf.edu/cfs/dares/fcpi](http://www.fmhi.usf.edu/cfs/dares/fcpi). The staff of the FCPI are hopeful that their work will continue to help children get ready to learn for many years to come.

The series' themes include:

- Family Empowerment
- Parent Involvement
- Parenting Support
- School Readiness
- Violence in the Lives of Children
- Transition to Kindergarten

The Center was one component of a project led by Hillsborough County Center of Excellence in collaboration with the Department of Child & Family Studies at USF's de la Parte Institute and the Florida Children's Forum. Other project partners include HIPPY (Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters), Hillsborough County Head Start and Hillsborough County Even Start. For more information about these projects, call 813.974.4612.

Parent Involvement, Provider Tip Sheets, #10: Keys to Working With Diverse Families

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