

# Making the IEP Process More Inclusive: Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Families

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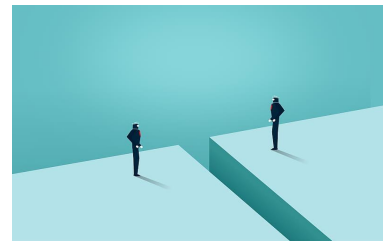
# Objectives:

After this session, participants will:

1. Identify existing barriers that culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) families experience when engaging and collaborating in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process.
2. Identify current practices and resources that support CLD families in the IEP process.
3. Be able to implement the recommended practices within their educational setting to help increase the participation of CLD families in the IEP process.



# Barriers to Collaboration for CLD Families: Impacting Advocacy-Resistance & Power Struggle



Parents have experienced the following while trying to advocate for their children (Goss, 2017):

- Parents felt fear to advocate for their children
- Parents felt that the school was resistant
- Children were bullied by school staff
- Parents were charged with trespassing
- Parents did not feel welcomed to participate



## Barriers to Collaboration for CLD Families (cont.)

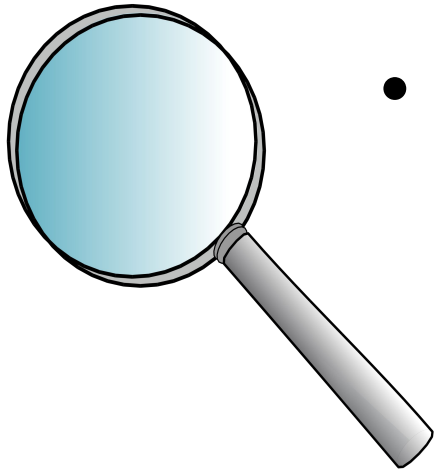
Burke and Goldman (2018) also examined the barriers that prevent families from continuing to advocate for students with disabilities by interviewing graduate advocates working with CLD families.

### Barriers identified:

- **Disempowerment (perceptions)**
- **Service delivery from schools**
- **Language**



# Understanding the IEP Process: Procedural Safeguards



- Pearson et al. (2019) argue that CLD families require more support when it comes to understanding the overall IEP process.
- Burke and Goldman (2018) also found that there are certain procedural issues that impact the overall level of parent involvement and understanding within the IEP process.
  - Brief version of procedural safeguards




# High Leverage Practices

McLeskey et al. (2017) identified three high leverage practices that support the collaboration of parents in special education:

**High Leverage Practice 1:** Collaborate with professionals to increase student success.

**High Leverage Practice 2:** Organize and facilitate effective meetings with professionals and families.

**High Leverage Practice 3:** Collaborate with families to support student learning and secure needed services.

- **Can using these practices increase the opportunity for CLD families to participate more in IEP meetings?**
  - **How can educational teams implement these practices within their educational settings to make their IEP meetings more inclusive of all families?**
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# Practices that Promote CLD Family and School Professional Collaboration

- **Cultural Awareness and Competence (cultural liaisons)**
- **Family Engagement Opportunities (parent centers/support groups)**
- **Family Input**
- **Language/Interpretation Services**



# Understanding Diversity (Cultural Awareness and Competence)

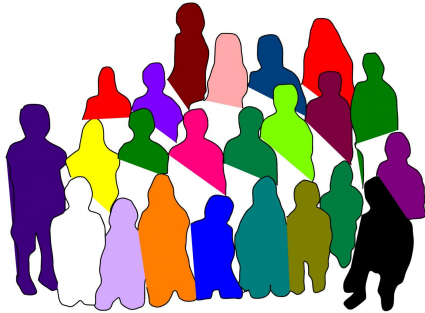
- It is important to be able to acknowledge:
  - Different gestures
  - Attitudes
  - Beliefs





# Family Engagement Opportunity

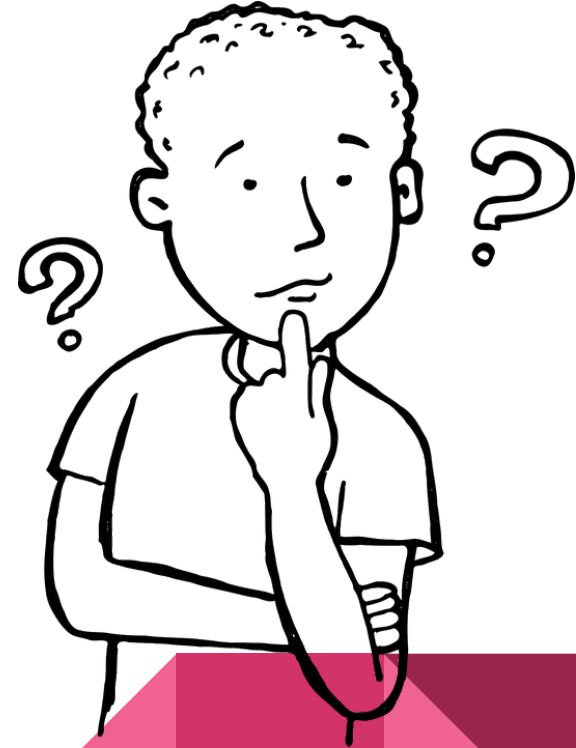
- Parent Centers
- Parent Support Groups
- Family Centered Activities



# Increasing Parent Participation

Think about the following:

1. **What resources does your educational agency offer for CLD families to participate within your educational agency?**
2. **How does your educational agency ensure that families coming from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds participate in the IEP meetings?**



# Ways to Communicate with Families to Gather their Valuable Input

- Phone Calls
- Input Forms
- Home Visits



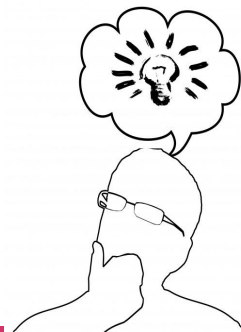
# Family Input




Strategy	Importance/Benefit
Phone Calls	Phone conversations can go a long way and allow educators to better understand the parent's concerns as well as allow them to document important information that will help with creating a better plan to support the student.
Input Forms	Providing parent input forms may allow parents to communicate in their own language as well as allows them to express their concerns and or make comments before the meetings.
Home Visits	Home visits may help build rapport between the family and the school as well as can send a message to parents that educators are willing to take that extra step to reach them to obtain their valuable input.

# Interpretation Services?

- Does your educational agency contract interpreters for educational meetings, IEP meetings, etc.?
- Are the interpreters trained in educational content? Are they culturally competent to work with CLD families?
- How soon does your district request interpretation services for an IEP meeting?
- Does your district have interpretation services for multiple languages? What are the languages?



# Language Services/Interpretation Tips

1. Provide the interpreter with important information before communicating with the family (e.g. acronyms and or terminology) that the interpreter may not be familiar with.
  2. Allow for the interpreter to have close proximity when meeting with the parents to allow them to speak directly to the parents.
  3. Speak in a normal tone and at a steady speed to allow the interpreter to understand the information. This allows the interpreter to communicate the information the way that it is meant to be communicated.
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# Making the IEP More Inclusive for CLD Families

- The ultimate goal for educational systems should be to be able to create a plan for the student while working collaboratively with the family. The family is who most of the time is the expert when it comes to their children and what they need.
- As such, it is important to:
  - Implement practices that can support educational stakeholders in increasing participation of CLD families in the IEP process.
  - Make families feel appreciated and welcomed in the educational setting.
  - Provide families with enough time to prepare their input before meetings, whether this is done by calling them, completing parent questionnaires, and/or home visits.



# Final Thoughts



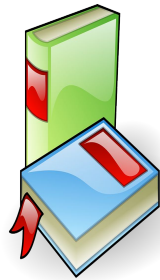
- Families should feel welcomed and encouraged to advocate for their children.
- Families should be given the opportunity to engage in the IEP process from beginning to end.
- Parents should be able to understand this process by having the opportunity to understand their rights and what being part of the IEP team means.
- Parents should be provided with trained interpreters who know the terminology used in IEPs and who are able to communicate the information to the family in a way that makes sense.





# References

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Thank you for listening!!!

