

Strategies for Success in Local Early Childhood Parent Outreach Activities Among Diverse Cultures

1. Identify multicultural population centers in your locality.
2. Identify key leaders within each of those communities.
3. Call and request the opportunity to meet in person to communicate the purpose and goals for an outreach effort to help children and families in their community. Explain how the leaders can be involved as partners. Example: Displaying brochures in a visible location.
4. Whenever possible, enlist the help of parents of young children from the culture to accompany you and communicate the need with community leaders. To locate parents to accompany you, check with the local IEIC (Interagency Early Intervention Committee), and ask for referrals from ECSE (Early Childhood Special Education) staff or from advocacy organizations, such as PACER.
5. When parents are not available to come with you, ask families for permission to use their family stories with photos when communicating with community leaders.
6. Invite the leader to collaborate with you in developing an outreach strategy that makes sense for the particular community.
7. Ask for help in identifying other potential partners within the community. It will be particularly helpful to enlist the help of individuals who speak the language and work for health, education, and social service organizations.
8. Determine specific locations and methods to disseminate outreach materials. (Please see php c-133, "Potential Community Partners and Locations.") Consider community celebration and event calendars in your planning. Enlist the help of identified partners to distribute materials.
9. Order or download the PACER/ Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) outreach materials by contacting PACER Center. Use a label or stamp to add your local contact information to the back of the outreach brochure.
10. Plan follow-up activities for parents who indicate the need for more information.

Tips:

- Be positive and proactive. Regardless of availability of formal services, families benefit from being connected to other families, to disability organizations, and other informal resources. Establishing a need for services is often necessary for acquiring additional funding.
- Dedicate appropriate staff to the outreach effort. While expertise and experience in early childhood intervention is important, the ability to communicate in the language and understand the culture of the community may be more essential for initial outreach efforts.
- Recognize that families may very likely need someone to help them navigate the process. Have contact information available that refers them to community and advocacy resources, such as PACER. If possible, identify the name of a specific person for whom they can ask.