CG: Teacher

Nat sound meeting..… “So when the children come in the first day of school…”

“The meetings we have, it keeps the line of communication open with the families, with our supervisor, to the family services.”

Nat sound meeting…. “I didn’t think of that, that’s a good point…”

“Being a teacher, one of the things I like to do is to let each child know that they are special, that if you speak a different language it’s OK and to also let them know they should be proud of their background and where they come from.”

“It’s amazing how quickly with them being so young they can grasp the language.”

“What parents are telling me is that once they start to gravitate to speaking English they don’t want to speak Spanish at home. So I explain to them I need for you to speak Spanish and English, not just English. I need you to speak Spanish too.”

“It’s not just educating the child, but also the parent as well.”

“When they realize we have these different services where we can direct them to different programs, then that starts recruitment. Oh we’re part of the Gunston Head Start program and I’m taking this class, I’m taking that class, why don’t you go and sign up and get your child on the waiting list.”

“And then it comes to the end of the year, they’re like, we thank you so much we never thought this would be the outcome.”

“In the beginning it may start off a little slow but at the end you find yourself talking to parents, they’re teaching you different things, you’re learning different things that you didn’t know about different cultures, and before you know it’s just like you’ve become a salad, you know you had different things added together.”

CG: Donyell Trapp

CG: Meeting the Needs of Hispanic Children

Building Block 4

Narrator:

In the last part, we took a look at how the Hispanic family functions as a circular unit and how Head Start teachers, caseworkers and administrators expand that circle of warmth.

But Head Start also prepares children to begin to climb the American educational ladder and it is a system that focuses on individual achievements.

While there are many social, developmental and health issues that that have a particular impact on Hispanic children and their ability to learn—a discussion of the needs of Hispanic children begins with a question. Have you created an environment where Hispanic children can learn and, if not, what do you need to do to create that environment?

CG: Culture in the Classroom

Nat sound … "This is an instrument from Brazil…"

Narrator:

There is more to bringing culture into a classroom than hanging some pictures on the wall or celebrating a holiday.

It's a year round effort that is focused on everyday. And, its an attitude on behalf of staff to be accepting, open and willing to bring culture into the classroom, to share.

CG: Carol Bellamy, Education Manager

"I even like to see family pictures of each child's family and some materials they might have that represent their culture in the classroom. That makes children feel very safe and very secure."

CG: Lydia Zapata, Preschool Program Trainer

"The culture is very much a part of who a child is and they're coming to us at a young age, three and four, or in the case of Early Head Start even younger, and when they find themselves in the classroom it's a new experience away from their families and if you go in and there's nothing that reminds you of home or that you can make a connection with I think it's difficult on a child's social, emotional development and their self esteem."

Narrator:

And how your teachers approach language, is probably the greatest predictor of how well and how quickly new immigrants will learn.

CG: Rebeca Valdivia, Ph.D., Center for Child and Family Studies

“Research has continuously and consistently showed that children who have a stronger development and foundation in their home language are able to achieve higher mastery of academic English which is the goal for all children in US schools.”

CG: Home Language

Nat sound classroom w/Eng. and Spanish teacher

Narrator:
Program Performance Standards require that services support a child’s home language, as well as, the acquisition of English. There can be different ways to accomplish both requirements.

In some, where a majority of children speak Spanish and there are Spanish-speaking staff, a bilingual classroom environment has been created.

At this inner city Head Start, the Hispanic community has been growing for many years— parents have joined the staff as second language experts and many have gone on to teach. Bilingualism has become a way of life.

But at this suburban Head Start, 20 miles away, the Hispanic community has just begun to grow.

In a short period of time, this Center enrolled 40 Hispanic families but only 6 staff members are Hispanic. While working on increasing Hispanic staff, the Center’s education director has been working with teachers showing them techniques they can use to support the home language.

CG: Bob Stechuk, Academy for Educational Development

“The Head Start Program performance standards and the research literature are clear and consistent. We want to do whatever we can to support a child’s continued development of their home language while facilitating their acquisition of English.”

CG: Support the Home Language:

Narrator:

There are many ways you can
support a child's home language
and these include;

CG: Learn as many words
Sing and play games in Spanish
Bring in cultural items
Play a Spanish story tape
Teach language learning starts at birth
Promote the benefits of learning
two languages

Learn as many Spanish words as you can and ask parents for key phrases.

Sing in Spanish and learn to play Hispanic games;

Have parents bring in objects from home, like food boxes to be used in the play area;

Play a tape in the home language or have a parent or librarian read aloud;

Encourage parents to speak Spanish aloud to
their infant;

And, express enthusiasm about the benefits of being bilingual.

Nat sound children… "one, two three…"

Both English and Spanish speaking children enrolled in Head Start have an opportunity to learn a second language.

Nat sound children "'cuatro, cinco, seis…"

It is an opportunity too valuable to pass up.

Nat sound kids: "Yeah!"

Zapata:

"Having that background, that culture it makes a person richer. I got to know my grandparents

even though they lived in Mexico and I was here.
I wouldn't have been able to do that if I only spoke English because they only spoke Spanish and I would have lost some of who I am."

CG: Special Needs Challenges

Nat sound teacher with child … "Grande, big and little.""

Narrator:

One of the challenges of teaching English to children who speak a language other than English is identifying when there is developmental delay. A similar challenge is faced when you suspect a child has a social or emotional disorder. Is it truly a disorder or is the child simply suffering from stress that can develop when no one else speaks your
home language.

CG: Vicki Greening, Disability Specialist

"The amazing thing to a lot of our specialists in the field, and I'm talking about speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists and physical therapists, and probably some of our cognitive therapists, also, they were not aware that a lot of the characteristics they were concerned about were developmentally appropriate."

Narrator:

Vicki Greening is a disability specialist who has traveled the country conducting workshops on how
to do assessments and evaluations on children for whom English is a second language.

Greening:

"For years, I would have speech language pathologists who would tell me. 'You need to work on that." He is constantly going from Spanish to English. I really believe that we in early childhood have an opportunity here. We have an opportunity to educate those people that are not aware of the perfectly normal sequence of gaining a second language."

CG: Disability Programs

Appropriate assessment and evaluation
Considers concerns of parents
Conducted in child's home language

Narrator:

Greening says a good disability program starts with appropriate assessment and evaluation, considers the concerns and observations of parents and is conducted in a child's home language.

This Head Start Program in upstate New York has a large Hispanic community. They've noticed that families with a special needs child often want to keep that child at home, thinking that only the family can properly care for a child with a disability.

CG: Karen Rhinehardt,
Disability Program Specialist

"If we know of a parent with a child with a disability keeping the child at home we may encourage another family to talk with them to help them understand the process, and also they can come to the center and observe a classroom so they know their children are fully included and that they are kept safe which may be a concern."

Narrator:

Once the child is enrolled in the program, their team approach combines observations in the classroom with parent input and ongoing assessment by teachers.

And, when it comes time to explain findings and options, the parent is invited to the meeting and is given time to absorb the information.

CG: Karen Rhinehardt, Disabililty Specialist

"The disability process is a complicated one for children of any culture, families from the American culture, often have difficulty understanding the process, so if you can imagine a family from another country, who doesn't speak the language or has limited English would have even more difficulty in this country understanding and accessing disability services."

Narrator:

As you serve the disability needs of Hispanic children you will come up with challenges along the way.

Rhinehardt:

"One more challenge with the Hispanic culture is that the fathers are the main decision makers, and in American culture, educators often work with just the mothers. And so in identifying children with disabilities we work with the mothers and the mothers often say well I

need to go home and talk with the father and they go home and talk with the father, but because they are not fully understanding of the process, the father says, ‘no we don’t need that.’”

CG: Marsha Riggio, Program Director

“We have a male involvement program getting our other dads involved to say, ‘look I know what you are going through, this is difficult, maybe it’s nothing, but let’s just see, let’s just do this.’ And it takes a lot of that coaching.”

Nat sound workshop… “Last but not least, connect all the dots…”

Narrator:

As Greening says during her workshops, serving children with special needs is an on-going process and when there is an obstacle, if you put your attention to it, there will be a solution.

CG: Early Dental Intervention

While many other service areas will benefit from your skills at overcoming obstacles, those skills are particularly needed when developing a good oral health program.

Providing oral health care has always been a challenge for Head Start programs and it is of particular importance now.

CG: Francisco Ramos-Gomez, Dentist

Gomez:

“Early childhood cavities, is a big epidemic among Latino children, 50 percent of children under the age of 5 already have some sort of cavities in their mouth.”

Narrator:

Dentists and hygienists say many immigrant Hispanic families operate in a survival mode and it’s all they can do to get food on the table let alone convince a child to brush their teeth. That’s why it is particularly important for programs serving Hispanic children to have a good oral health plan that includes:

CG Good Oral Health

Age appropriate dental visits
Fluoridated toothpaste
Positive Learning Environment

Daily dental hygiene (CFR 1304.23 (b)(3))

Regular visits, which begin before children are a year old and can take place at the center, ideally in a child's home language; application of fluoride varnishes effective in reducing tooth decay; and, a learning environment that extends to staff and parents and promotes daily toothbrushing and oral health care that begins when children are infants.

CG: Valerie Orlando, Oral Health Consultant

"Dental disease is highly preventable. In fact 100% of dental diseases are preventable. But they are not simply or uniformly preventable. Which, to explain that a little bit, it's not like chicken pox or like polio or like a disease that can just have a vaccine and be finished. It's an ongoing thing we need to monitor and we need to continually work with throughout the lifecycle. And that's why establishing this dental home for a child in the first formative years is so critically important."

CG: Nutrition and Exercise

CG: Children Three and Under Overweight
Hispanic 25%
National 17%

Narrator:

Obesity has also hit the immigrant community hard. A new study shows 25 percent of Hispanic children three and under are overweight compared to 17% for children nationwide.

CG: Sonia Cotto-Moreno, Dietician

"The way to turn around the current trend of obesity epidemic in children is to support and promote physical activity in all aspects of Head Start services."

Nat sound… "Let him push himself up…"

Narrator:

Sonia Cotto-Moreno works with many Head Start families to improve eating habits and increase exercise. She says it is particularly difficult because new immigrants often do not live near supermarkets but only have access to convenience stores that typically sell foods higher in salt and fat and offer little, if any, produce. And some families live in neighborhoods unsafe for children to play, making outdoor exercise difficult.

Moreno:

"One of the ways that early Head Start programs and Head Start programs can start impacting obesity is by starting at a young age. By incorporating physical activity curriculum for infants, toddlers, preschoolers that includes the staff, that includes parents and families so that they start developing that healthy lifestyle."

Nat sound … "Tie your bandana around your neck, 'cause we're gonna be cowyboys. Get on your horse, pick up that leg, ohhh…"

Narrator:

Moreno says you don't need to buy expensive curricula as long as you have a well thought out plan

Nat sound…. "See how easy it was to get some physical exercise, everyone has to catch a breath right…."

CG: Nutrition and Exercise

Teachers as role models
Starts with infants
Parent workshops
Culturally diverse

that: Teaches teachers to be role models; starts with infants; involves parents with workshops that teach them how to increase kid's physical activity and gives them indoor options, and is culturally diverse and interesting.

Moreno says it is important to get children outside daily, if possible on equipment that promotes motor skills. She says you can find lots of material on-line and there are many good books and videos that teach nutrition and emphasize the importance of balancing the food you eat with physical activity.

Nat sound teacher training

"How to support physical activity at home and with your children…."

Moreno says healthy eating and exercise will result only if Head Starts make exercise and good nutrition a priority.

In this series we have taken a look at how the Hispanic community in the United States is changing and what that means to your service area. We've also learned what some of the needs are for Hispanic Head Start families and children.

One of the reasons Head Start has been so successful for more than 40 years, is that it is a locally run program sensitive to the varying needs of the communities it serves.

If the Hispanic community is not being served in your area, take the next step and give a Head Start to all children.