TIPS FOR WORKING WITH HISPANIC, LATINO AND SPANISH SPEAKING FAMILIES

DISABILITY IS NATURAL!

To work with the HLSS community it takes time to build trust but it is worth the extra time and effort in the long run both for families and professionals. Thank you for supporting the HLSS disability community!

➢ Consider cultural meaning of disability to the individual family. Ask how disabilities are viewed in their ethnicity.

➢ Communicating the diagnosis – positive vs negative: Families appreciate when diagnosis is delivered in a positive way. IE at child’s birth, congratulations on your new baby. Delivering diagnosis later as well. The way the diagnosis is delivered and explained makes a huge impact on the HLSS families.

➢ Reflection/understanding questions to parents vs. yes/no questions when providing a diagnosis or any type of evaluations– ask the family to summarize their understanding (interpreters can especially help with this!)

➢ Open ended questions – please don’t ask yes/no questions. Many parents will say yes because that is what they think you want to hear, regardless of whether they really understood.

➢ Learn about the services available to kids who aren’t born here!
  ○ May receive services through Early Intervention (EI) and Community Centered Boards (CCB) up to 18 if they meet eligibility (Colorado – check your state.)
  ○ Stay in school until age 21 if they are on IEP. (IDEA)

➢ Providing Resources – we know from research that during the first 6-12 months of diagnosis both parents are experiencing grieving in different ways. HLSS families will not activate initially to be proactive to contact resources provided. Instead of just providing the resources:
  ○ Warm handoff of referrals vs “here is the info – call”.
    ▪ Get permission to make the referral to the community resources they need most – especially after initial diagnosis up to year.
    ▪ Referrals to help for those families grieving.

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➢ Point out parent’s strengths and encourage them that they are the most knowledgeable about their child. This helps HLSS moms and dads gain efficacy as a parent (any parent with a loved one with different abilities!).

➢ Utilize community support parent agencies that serve The HLSS disability community. IE In Colorado, El Grupo VIDA, Thrive Center, Family Voices and PEAK Parent Center. Medical professionals don’t always have time to provide some of the needed time and support parents need, so use the parent/family entities to help you. These organizations education families on how to work with systems which will help you!

➢ “Non-compliant parent” – HLSS family dynamics are different based on cultural experience. A person may be considered non-compliant but there may be family issues to consider. Make sure to learn some of the family dynamics. In the HLSS community, many never arrive on time to events, appointments, etc. Be sure that families understand the consequences of not making an appointment (IE it will delay the evaluation). Reminder calls/texts work very well.

➢ Please don’t use family members to do the interpretation. Remember that there are different Spanish language dialects and grammar usage depending on where the family is from. Try to ensure that interpreter is providing interpretation in as general and basic Spanish for families to understand.

References
Jeanette M. Cordova, B.S.; Eric J. Moody, Ph.D., 2015, Culture & Community: Building Partnership to Serve Spanish-speaking Families Living with Autism El Grupo VIDA; JFK Partners at University of Colorado School of Medicine.


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