FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE

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INTRODUCTION

The chapters in this volume represent a number of different methods of engaging families in early childhood education. This includes ideas for curriculum, environment, professional education, and method of interaction. A major evolution in the work of these family educators is in the recognition that relationships are extremely important to making family involvement work.

Kim and Taylor look at how to prepare preservice teachers to work with families. They collected data from preservice teachers in an immersive course on family involvement. They found that preservice teachers in an immersive environment showed more gains in attitudes toward family involvement than students in a traditional classroom. Given the general level of feelings of inadequacy of preservice teachers toward working with families, these types of experiences could provide a new model of training preservice teachers.

Gilbert, Harte, and Kinne describe the bornlearning Academy which is a curriculum they have developed to work with expectant mothers in connection with public schools. The bornlearning Academy is a series of workshops to help families better understand their role as their child's educators. Survey data from family participants indicate that the program has had success in changing family member beliefs and interactions.

Hallam, Han, Vu, and Hustedt describe the role of home visits as a form of family engagement. The program Promoting First Relationships (PFR) is described as a family engagement strategy rooted in attachment theory. This chapter also describes the process of training coaches to implement the strategy.

Pratt, Taylor, Huisstede, and Gaias describe a case study of a library project to develop programing for families with young children. This project has some preliminary data that indicate it is successful in promoting literacy and family involvement. This chapter also discusses different models of library promotion of family involvement.

Moinolmolki, Gaviria-Loiza, and Han look at the role of family involvement with immigrant families. As mentioned in several chapters, the current model of family involvement emphasizes the skills and strengths that families bring to the relationship rather than their deficits. This chapter

discusses some areas of language and culture and how those might impact the development of relationships.

Czik and Lewis look at assessment practices for dual language learners and how families can improve the effectiveness of assessment. There is a discussion of the barriers to school success for dual language learners as well as the importance of family involvement. They argue for the inclusion of parent interviews in assessment of language and academic development.

Virmani, Wiese and Mangione also describe the importance of relationship building with culturally and linguistically diverse families. They emphasize the importance of attending to the quality of emotional connections within between staff and families and families and children. They suggest reflective practice as an approach to engaging families in authentic exchanges that honor families' cultural and linguistic resources.

Sawyer, Manz, Martin, Hammond, and Garrigan discuss a program for supporting family involvement with Latino families. They discuss how for linguistic minority families there is a preference for involvement in the home rather than in the school. Project TAPP (Teachers and Parents as Partners) seeks to build on the "funds of knowledge" that families bring with them to the education context.

John A. Sutterby
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