



Family Voices Inc.

Part III Working with First Generation Latino Families: Family Hierarchy and Gender Issues

In traditional Latino families there is usually a clear hierarchy with the oldest male as head of household, and he makes all the important decisions for the family. Initially, if it is in keeping with agency policy, service providers should ask to speak first with the head of the household. Explain your role and the purpose of your visit to this person. If you wish to speak with other members of the family, you will need to ask the head of household to do so.

If the visitor is a woman, she may have more success in her interactions with the male head of household if she treats him respectfully, for instance, by letting him ask many of the questions. The head of the household's dignity and, by extension, the dignity of the entire family is impacted by interactions with others. If a visitor disregards the hierarchy, he/she may experience delays or difficulty working with the family. For instance, a mother may say that she has to speak with her husband about an issue. While it may appear to be a stalling tactic, it is not; she really must consult her husband. On the other hand, the mother may fall silent, let down by the visitor's failure to involve the father.

When joining with the family, it is important to:

Avoid assumptions. Take the time to find out about each family's beliefs and values.

Show respect, particularly of the elderly. Try and talk to the male head of household first.

Actively engage the father/head of household by asking for his opinion/decision.

Be clear, firm, sincere, and polite; be yourself.

Learn Spanish if you can. Simply making an effort is a sign of respect. Learning a greeting is a good place to start.

Recognize the importance of family. Devote the time and energy necessary to meet as many members of the family as you can. Be ready to help families maintain their traditional family system.

Don't let language or cultural differences throw you off from what you know about helping people.

Acknowledge that you may make mistakes, because you don't know their culture. Let them know you are open to learning about their culture and welcome their help.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE NETWORK

In early summer 2004 Parent to Parent of Vermont (P2P VT), home of Family Voices of VT, in collaboration with some key staff members of the Vermont Children's Hospital at Fletcher Allen Health Care (FAHC), opened the Parent to Parent Resource Room on the Baird Five pediatric floor. The Parent to Parent Resource Room is available to parents and family members when their children are hospitalized. Envisioned by Joanne Barton, RN (Baird 5 Care Coordinator) and Tracy Wagner, RN while they were attending the first international Institute of Family Centered Care Conference in Boston a few years ago, the Resource Room is a quiet place where parents can go to relax, read, communicate by email and get resources. In Tracy's words, "While we were there (Boston), we were brainstorming how to improve our Hospital's family centered care practices, and we decided that P2P VT needed space on the unit. We knew we might face some challenges, but planned to forge ahead. Joanne moved from her office into mine, which left a tiny room open. There was some concern about confidentiality, better use of space, competition with the Ronald McDonald room, etc., as we anticipated, but our theme was 'It's right thing to do', over and over again." Meetings with hospital administration ensued, furniture was donated by local merchants, books, resources and decorations were provided by P2P, and P2P staff went through the standardized hospital volunteer staff training. Open day and night, the Resource Room has a phone, computer and a recently updated library. Parents have commented on how helpful it is to have a place to go. What a testament to people who have a dream and bring it to fruition!



ReCap of FV Talk

This information is a summary collected from Family Voices Talk listserv

Resources, News, & Stories

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-0511290157nov29.1.3882694.story?ctrack=1&cset=true>
Article about the mistreatment of Native Americans in a South Dakota school district over behavioral issues.

<http://www.thefloridacatholic.org/articles/051111/051111-orlando-wheelchairchef.htm>
Wheelchair chef publishes cookbook to raise funds for people with disabilities.

http://www.kaisernetwork.org/daily_reports/rep_hpolicy_recent_rep.cfm?dr_cat=3&show=yes&dr_DateTime=11-28-05#33964
New Illinois law will require hospitals to report 24 types of inexcusable medical errors

http://www.ndep.nih.gov/diabetes/pubs/Youth_NDEPSchoolGuide.pdf
The National Diabetes Education Program developed this guide to educate and inform school personnel about diabetes, how it is managed, and how each member of the school staff can help meet the needs of students with the disease.

<http://www.childhealthdata.org/DesktopDefault.aspx>
The Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative (CAHMI) is pleased to announce the Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health. This resource is a free, easy-to-use website that puts national, state, and regional survey findings right at your fingertips!



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**There are only two lasting bequests
we can hope to give our children.
One is roots; the other, wings.**

--Hodding Carter

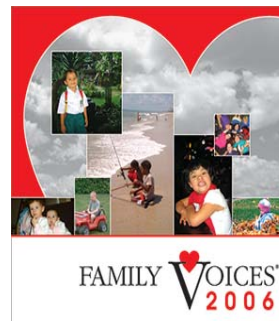
GIFTS

Want a way to celebrate a special person? During this holiday season, please consider asking friends and families to make secure, on line donations to Family Voices and Families Helping Families, Family Voices' Hurricane Relief Fund. Donations may be sent directly to: Family Voices, 2340 Alamo, SE, Suite 102, Albuquerque, NM 87106. To learn more about how you can help and how financial gifts are used, please visit our website at www.familyvoices.org.



WEBSITE

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) works to advance the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, health and civil rights of the Hispanic population of the United States. For more information, please visit their website at <http://www.lulac.org>



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