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ABSTRACT

The Center for Parent Education at the University of North Texas conducted a case study based on parent involvement training sessions offered in the spring of 1997 at Tomas Rivera Elementary School, Denton, Texas. The study involved low income English- and Spanish-speaking Hispanic parents whose children were considered high-risk students. The primary goal of the program was to enhance the educational achievement of children and youth through encouragement of parental involvement in the education of high-risk student populations. A target group of seven parents participated in either an English-speaking or Spanish-speaking group, both of which met for six sessions. The theoretical foundation for the sessions' content was based on Joyce L. Epstein's model of six types of involvement necessary to construct a bridge between school and the family. Conducting parent-involvement training in Spanish was a key element to the success of the program. Parents were able to gain empowerment, communication, and advocacy skills by being allowed to speak about their childrens' education in their native language and in a peer-group environment. Lack of Spanish-language translation in PTA meetings and other examples of interaction between family and school were identified as hindrances to parental involvement. A follow-up project was also implemented to enhance the previous training. (An appendix lists the program agendas for each of the six sessions. Contains 11 references.) (JM)

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A Case Study: Parent Involvement Training with Hispanic Parents

A Report from Tomas Rivera Elementary School

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A Case Study: Parent Involvement Training with Hispanic Parents

A Report from Tomas Rivera Elementary School

With funding from the ARCO Foundation, parent involvement training was conducted during the spring of 1997 by the Center for Parent Education at the University of North Texas. The training was held at Tomas Rivera Elementary School, Denton, Texas, and involved English- and Spanish-speaking parents whose children were considered high-risk populations. The school enrollment is predominantly low-income and Hispanic. The sessions were conducted by Dr. Arminta L. Jacobson, Associate Professor; Dr. Jane B. Huffman, Assistant Professor; and Maria Rositas and Yamile Quintero, graduate research assistants. A discussion of the rationale, goals, objectives, theoretical foundation, population, methodology, learnings, conclusions, follow-up, and recommendations are included in this paper. Additionally, a follow-up program is described and discussed.

Rationale

In 1991 the National Commission on Children recommended that federal, state, and local governments, in partnership with private community organizations, develop and expand community-based family support programs to provide parents with knowledge, skills, and support they need to raise children. In Ready to Learn: A Mandate for the Nation, Ernest L. Boyer (1992) called for an optional parent-education program to be made available in every school. He maintained the goals would be to empower parents, to help them to learn more about child-rearing, and to build a bridge between the home and school. In The Basic School, he includes “parents as partners” as essential building blocks.

In 1994, the Carnegie Corporation Task Force on Meeting the Needs of Young Children recommended that communities provide more community-based education about the

responsibilities of parenthood, and advocate for directing state and local funds to initiate and expand community-based parent education and support programs for families with infants and toddlers.

Project Goals

The primary goal of this program was to enhance the educational achievement of children and youth through encouragement of parent involvement in the education of high-risk student populations. Other goals were: to promote a long-term intergenerational change in parent involvement, to encourage minority parents as leaders in school, to increase student growth and retention, and to promote a better quality of life in the community.

Project Objectives

The project was implemented in Tomas Rivera Elementary School by establishing a target group of seven parents. This group was considered as high-risk parents due to the following characteristics: they were minority, they had a low-income status, some of them were single-parents, and some of their children had school-related problems. Of the seven members, six were Hispanics born out of the United States (Mexico and Colombia) who migrated to the United States. The other was an American citizen with a Mexican-American descendent. The general objectives of this training were to:

- Review literature related to parent involvement and high-risk parenting.
- Plan a parent-involvement leadership program through the use of parent focus groups.
- Design parent-involvement leadership training modules.
- Orient administrators, faculty, and selected staff to the leadership program.
- Train parents with some specific skills as proposed by Joyce L. Epstein's model (Epstein,

Coates, Clark Salinas, Sanders, & Simon, 1997) which included: communicating, parenting, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community.

- Conduct research to determine factors related to parent involvement.
- Evaluate parent involvement behaviors and attitudes.
- Recognize parent and teacher participation in the program.
- Organize parent and teacher committees to plan continuation of the program.
- Report on the program to encourage replication.

Theoretical Foundation

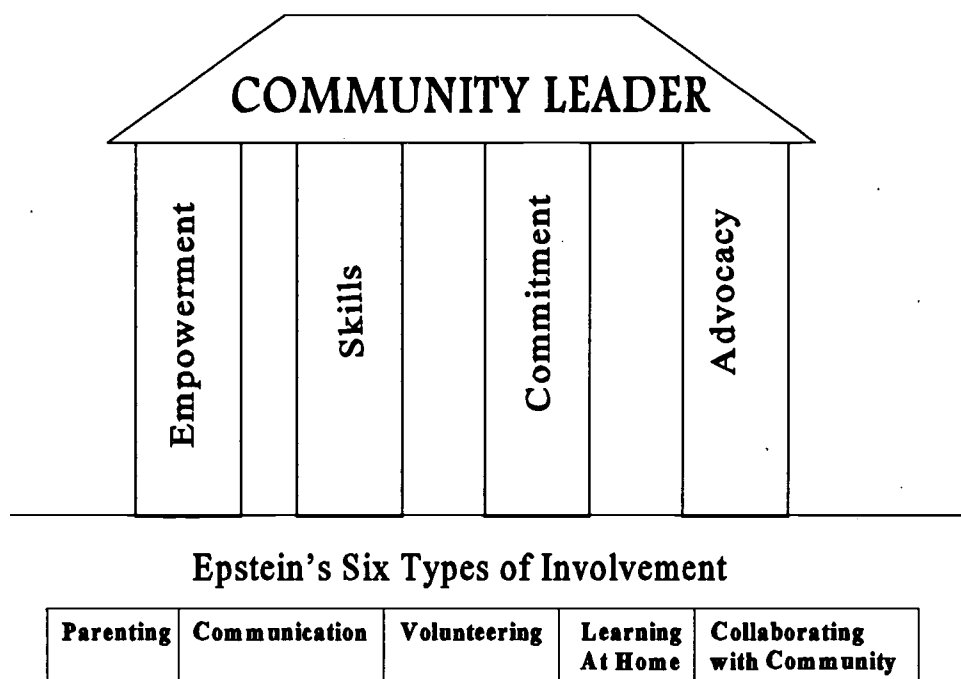
The foundation of the model is Joyce L. Epstein's six types of involvement. Epstein's model proposes six different skills and activities necessary to construct a bridge between school and the family:

- **Parenting:** Assist families with the parenting tasks and support necessary to promote adequate development at home and at school. This includes educating school staff in an understanding of the different family systems which make up the school community.
- **Communication:** Promote effective communication loops between school and families to monitor children's progress.
- **Volunteering:** Promote the involvement of families at school activities to support school and student academic development.
- **Learning at Home:** Provide information and ideas to families to help them with homework.
- **Decision-making:** Include families in child- and school-related decision making by involving them with school-related committees.

- **Collaborating with the Community:** Coordinate families, school, and community agencies in order to construct a strong support network.

These types of involvement foster four essential characteristics of the community leader: empowerment, different skills, commitment, and advocacy (see Figure 1). According to this visual depiction, our goal was to foster the development of school and community leaders from student high-risk populations by giving the parents information and motivation through Epstein's six types of involvement.

Figure 1



One of the goals of this program was to promote a better quality of life in the community. To achieve that goal, four levels of parent development evolved: (a) development of group identity, (b) bridging schools and families, (c) establishment of parents' groups, and (d)

family/community involvement.

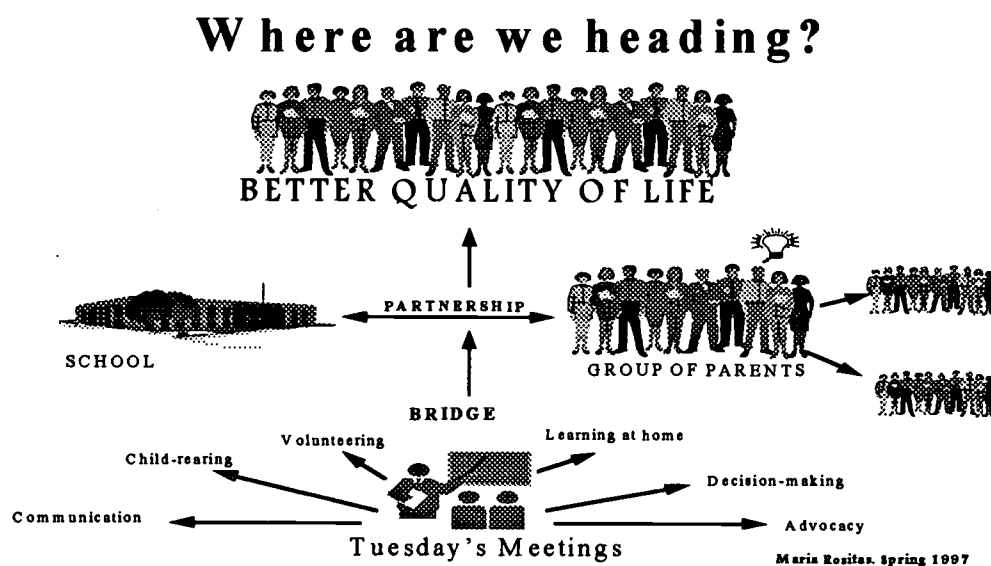
The first level was the development of group identity. This was achieved when the parents acquired different skills learned while attending the weekly meetings of the program. The theoretical foundation and curriculum were followed according to Epstein's model. In this first level, a sense of group and commitment was targeted. When the group identity was reached, there was a beginning of a bridge between schools and families.

When this bridge was established, the development moved to its second level: the establishment of a partnership between school and families. In this second level, a trusting relationship between parents and school staff was the main objective. Teamwork between these two groups fostered benefits at school and also benefits within the families. The school had more support and participation from parents, which can lead to fewer drop-outs, more academic achievement, and more involved students and families. Parents had a sense of trust in the school, felt important in school-related matters, and, by having this feeling of acceptance, they began to spread the word and advocate this program to other parents. A support network between parents and school developed. This was specially important in the Hispanic community, because, according to Toro (1997), allocentrism, or the value of social networking between families in the modalities of kinship networks (nuclear and extended families), linkpersons networks (friends and neighbors), and aggregate networks (agencies or civic organizations), is very important for families to be committed and truly involved with a project.

This sense of allocentrism helped parents to move to the third level: the establishment of more groups of parents working to achieve a better education for children, and also advocacy for their needs and rights to have a better quality of life (see Figure 2). This promoted a strong

community and empathic feeling by allowing families to organize and plan to look forward to the future. In the last level, the family/community involvement, families were capable of organizing and getting involved with the school and with community support agencies.

Figure 2



An

extensive literature research about parent involvement was conducted. The researchers reviewed 90 references about the topic and 22 documents from the world wide web. Specialized research articles as well as two surveys were ordered from the Center on Families, Communities, School and Children's Learning from John Hopkins University. These were classified in different subtopics: high-risk population, minorities, parent involvement and achievement, parent involvement and teachers and parents, programs and policies, and others. Also, different books were consulted, which are available at the Willis library at the University of North Texas. Videos about involving parents in education and in multicultural schools were ordered from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and previewed.

Characteristics of the Population

At the Tomas Rivera Elementary School 70 percent of the school population were Hispanic students. This school receives Title I funding and makes sincere efforts to involve more Hispanic parents within the school community.

For training purposes and to attract more parents, two groups were formed. In the first group, three English-speaking single-mothers gathered with Dr. Jane B. Huffman and Dr. Arminta L. Jacobson. As the training process developed, two of the three mothers attended, and by the last two sessions just one mother attended. The mother understood Spanish, but had difficulty speaking it. She eventually joined the Hispanic group.

In the second group, seven Hispanic parents attended the first session, six the second, and five the rest of the training (four from the original group and one spouse member added). A member from the English-speaking group joined the last two sessions. The main reason the rest of the parents stopped attending was a lack of transportation. Members of this group were married, except for one who was divorced. Four were Mexican immigrants and one migrated from Colombia. One male attended. His wife later joined the group. The group facilitator was Maria Rositas, a Mexican graduate assistant at the Center for Parent Education.

Methodology

A meeting was held with Tomas Rivera's principal early in February 1997 to introduce this training. The principal was interested in the proposal and allowed the program to begin February 11, 1997, on the same night as a PTA Open House meeting. The Parent Involvement Coordinator contacted the parents by phone calls and home visits, and the graduate assistant posted posters in both languages at the school to remind parents about the meeting. Meetings were canceled during

spring break and Passover, because all of the Hispanic parents attended the Catholic church.

Seven meetings were held at Tomas Rivera's library, led by Maria Rositas. The group of Hispanic parents met from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. The English speaking group, led by Dr. Jacobson and Dr. Huffman, met from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. One characteristic observed in the Hispanic group was that they arrived in clusters: at 6:15 p.m. we had one mother; at 6:30 p.m. two more members, and by 7:00 p.m., the last two. Members from the English-speaking group usually arrived on time. These differences were due to cultural customs. Latinos tend to have a different perception of time of arrival; and it is not impolite or rude to be late. Tolerance in punctuality is a cultural trait.

The objectives of the initial meeting were to get acquainted and to assess the parents' needs by using the focus-group technique. During the rest of the sessions a specific topic from Epstein's model was introduced and discussed. The agenda of each session is included in Appendix A.

The teaching techniques used during the sessions were: presentations, questions, study cases and discussions. Hand-outs in both languages were given in each session. Icons were used extensively, because some of the parents were unable to read (Appendix B). Child care and refreshments were offered at each session.

Learnings

The information obtained from the focus-group assessment helped in designing the training modules. During the training modules, empowerment and advocacy were two of the main skills that parents learned and practiced. Empowerment was promoted strongly due to the focus-group information. Parents reported that they believed they were valuable members of the school

community and that their ideas were important. They expressed a feeling of acceptance and validation from the first meeting and throughout the sessions. Additionally, a sense of trust and commitment was developed and encouraged during the session. It also was determined that Hispanic parents needed more time for their meetings, since they socialized at each meeting. They talked more and in a more familiar way than the English-speaking parents.

Some of the factors identified in focus groups as barriers to Hispanic parents included language barriers, transportation, working schedules, and feelings of poor self-worth and acceptance. An explanation of these factors follows.

Language barriers: There were just a few school staff members who spoke Spanish. Some mothers were willing to volunteer at school, but there was no one who could explain to them what they were supposed to do. A Spanish-speaking staff member was identified in the school's cafeteria. One of the mothers of the Hispanic group started volunteering by making popcorn. She commented during our "Volunteering Modules" that some of the outcomes of being a volunteer were the opportunity to meet her daughter's friends and "rivals," and promotion of a sense of pride in her child because "my mother is the one who is doing popcorn." Every time this mother needed something, the Spanish-speaking staff member helped her by translating.

This communication problem also was evident in that parents were not willing to participate in the PTA meetings. No one translated during these meetings, and parents commented that they did not know why they were applauding. They did not vote, because they did not know what decision they were about to take. A meeting was held with the principal to discuss this issue. Her goal of not having a translator was to encourage parents to learn English. It was agreed that a newsletter in Spanish will be given to Hispanic parents to let them know about the PTA meetings.

Also, two PTA representatives will start working on the possibility of having a translator during the meetings, but those who require translation will need to be seated where the translator is.

Giving the parents parent-involvement training in Spanish was a key element in the success of the program. The parents were able to express their ideas, frustrations, and future actions in relation to the school in their own language. This made them realize the power and influence they can have in the education of their children. They are more active and plan to have a “Tamales Sale” in the fall to fund some materials for the school.

Hispanic parents have a great potential as leaders and advocates, but their lack of English-language proficiency made it difficult for them to be involved with the school and with the Denton community. During the “collaboration with the community” session, Ms. Rositas invited leaders from the community to share information with the parents. The community resource services invited were: Cook Children’s Pediatric Clinic, Denton Christian Preschool, Denton County Health Department, Denton United Way Information and Referral Helpline, West Texas Legal Services, North Texas Child Care Management Services, and Early Childhood Intervention (ECI). These presentations allowed the parents to know more about the community and to ask questions about specific problems. For example, a Hispanic mother had a problem with a long-distance telephone company and, by having a lawyer as a guest, she was able to know where to go and what to do to resolve this problem. Translation was necessary, but she now has information that can make her life easier, and she can share this information with other Hispanics who need it.

Transportation: Some of the parents did not have cars, lived far away from school, or were afraid of walking because of gang problems. Carpooling was a solution for two of them, but still there were some who were unable to attend because of the distance to the homes of other members of

the group or to the school.

Working schedules: Working schedules did not allow some of the parents to get involved during school hours. The volunteer coordinator attended the “Volunteering” session and gave the parents choices of volunteer work for some activities held during weekends or on special occasions.

Feeling of self-worth and acceptance: These Hispanic parents initially had an attitude of low self-esteem. This was not statistically measured, but was appreciated in some conversations and behaviors. Sometimes they felt helpless or frustrated because of the poor social support system they have in this country. For the Hispanic culture, social support systems are vital and usually provided by relatives and friends. The parents attending the classes organized themselves into a group and called themselves “Union Hispana: Esperanza del Manana” (Hispanic Union: Hope of Tomorrow). The group provided that sense of support and familiarity needed by members. They called to remind each other about the meetings; and when one of them was absent, they called to see what was wrong.

Also, the parents were struggling with their child-rearing practices because their children, especially the preteens, reportedly were having cultural identification struggles. Parents wanted to educate their children according to the Hispanic culture, but their children were resisting these efforts because they were living in the United States. Additionally, peer pressure was hard on these offspring because group acceptance was obtained by joining gangs. These children were not “Mexicans” or “Americans.” They were what Santiago Ramirez (1977) and Octavio Paz (1962) called “Chicanos.” During this process of acculturation, children were learning English, and their parents spoke Spanish. Some comments that these children made to their parents were: “I have this meeting at school; but because you do not know English, I don’t want you to go because you

are not going to understand anything.” This type of comment made parents feel rejected and hurt.

Such feelings were causing parents to use authoritarian parenting styles in which shouting and the lack of choice were the traits. In the Epstein “Parenting Module,” the information reflected the different parenting styles, experiences, and the outcomes. One of the mothers commented that when she was mad about something it was like “having the devil inside.” The facilitator encouraged her to use self-control and use better communication skills (like the ones presented in the “Communication Module”).

She later reported that her daughter had a problem at school and that she reacted in a calm manner. Her daughter was so glad about her mom’s reaction that she told her mother she initially was afraid to tell her mother about the problem because of the mother’s strong temper; but because of the mother’s calm reaction, the daughter felt more confident to discuss the problem.

During this training, staff members and teachers were involved in the process. The parent involvement coordinator, as well as her assistant, attended some of the meetings. The PTA president knew about the program, and a PTA representative attended the graduation ceremony. During this session, concerns and issues about the involvement of the Hispanic population at school were discussed. A suggestion about conducting a survey among Hispanic families to gain information about their needs, as well as to learn the best way to communicate, was encouraged strongly. A Spanish-speaking Hispanic teacher was involved during the “Learning at Home Module.” She gave some tips about how parents can cooperate with the teachers at school. Her professional as well as personal advice impacted the parents, because she was one of the main advocates in the community for Hispanics. The principal was involved by attending the first

meeting and in conferences with Dr. Jacobson and Ms. Rositas.

An effort to obtain qualitative information through surveys (Epstein, et al, 1997), and to measure involvement by parents and the perception of this by teachers, was made, but there were not enough survey references for reporting purposes. Only thirteen teachers and two parents returned the survey. A post-evaluation was not conducted because of the low response by the population. Some suggestions to avoid these types of incidents include (a) having parents fill out the survey at the first meeting, (b) contacting each teacher and reminding them about returning the survey, (c) giving a specific deadline to return the instrument, and (d) follow-up with the surveys not returned.

Conclusions

During the implementation of the first series of parent involvement classes, the following objectives were achieved:

- A literature review was conducted. As a result, the personnel at the Center for Parent Education compiled a list of resources that can be used by professionals and practitioners in future projects.
- A parent focus group was used to design the training modules. The focus group served as an assessment tool, and also helped to develop empowerment among and trust by parents from the first meeting.
- Training modules were tailored to the specific group needs following Joyce L. Epstein's model. During the training, participation and orientation was structured to involve teachers, administrators, and staff from the school as well as community leaders..
- A volunteer-parents committee was organized to plan a "Tamales Sale" and support Hispanic

parents. A liaison relationship between the volunteer coordinator, the PTA president, and the parents was established.

In summary, parent empowerment and advocacy was fostered in these parents, and as a result, these parents volunteered at school, organized committees to support the school, and spoke out on the problems they have with their children at school

Follow-Up

A continuation of these meetings began immediately with a new six-session program. This program, "Becoming a Love and Logic Parent," a curriculum developed by Foster Cline and Jim Fay (1997), was chosen based on the expressed interests of the parents. These meetings also were held at Tomas Rivera Elementary School's Library and were conducted by Yamile Quintero. Meetings started April 22, 1997, and the schedule was the same so the group process was not disrupted. Invitations to the community were distributed to appeal to a greater audience of parents.

Six Hispanic parents attended the meetings, including one couple from Colombia, one single mother from Guatemala, one divorced mother from Mexico, one married mother from Mexico, and one Mexican-American mother. From the group established at the previous Parent Involvement Program, four female mothers returned (one with her husband), and a new female joined the group.

The topics covered during each of the sessions included: Raising Responsible Kids, the Love and Logic Formula, "C" Stands for Control Shared, "O" Stands for Ownership Problem, "O" Stands for Opportunity to Think and Make Decisions, and "L" Stands for Let Consequences Do Teaching. Handouts and audio-visuals in Spanish were used.

- Raising Responsible Kids.

In the first session, the schedule and the objectives of the program were introduced. A group activity introduced every member of the group, and expectations about the program were assessed. Parents learned the importance of preparing their children for the real world by learning “The Four Steps to Responsibility” and how to involve their children in this technique. They also learned the importance of modeling behaviors in their children’s learning. Hand-outs were given about the topics for each of the sessions, the goals of the program, and “The Four Steps to Responsibility.” The assignment for the week was to practice these four steps.

- The Love and Logic Formula.

Parents learned the Love and Logic process and the “COOL” formula in the second session. A mini- lecture about how to parent and grandparent in an easier way also was explained. The hand-outs given were about “The Formula COOL” and “10 Hints for Good Parenting”.

- “C” Stands for Control Shared.

In this session, the first step of the COOL formula was introduced. Parents learned how to conduct positive discipline at home by sharing the control with their children. Also, how to give control through choices was explained. A mini-lecture about how to discipline toddlers and adolescents was covered. Exercises and role playing allowed the participants to practice the concepts. A hand-out about “Magic Phrases for Stating Choices” was given. The assignment for the week was to give choices at home.

- “O” Stands for Ownership Problem.

In this session an evaluation about the assignment was made to help parents know what their

strengths and weakness were. Some confusion among the parents was observed in this session because this technique is not very common in the Hispanic culture. This experience suggests that this could be a technique to focus on in future programs. Parenting styles and their outcomes in a child's growth, deciding who is responsible for a problem, and guiding children to solve problems on their own were explained using the lecturing technique. A hand-out in "Solving Problem Techniques" was given. Finally, the book Boleto para el exito (1997), was distributed to make parents more familiar with the topics discussed in this program. The book, written in Spanish, explains some of the techniques through stories and examples.

- "O" Stands for Opportunity to Think and Make Decisions.

In this session, some questions about the book were addressed. Parents participated with great interest and were very motivated by the content of the book. Having the book helped them to understand some of the aspects that already were taught in previous sessions. Parents in this session learned limit-setting and the importance of using "thinking words" instead of "fighting words." An exercise was performed to practice this technique. Also, a lecture in "Peer Pressure" was presented. A hand-out listing "Fighting words vs. Thinking Words" was given to the parents.

- "L" stands for Let Consequences Do Teaching.

In this last session the parents learned the difference between consequences and punishment, and between empathy and anger. The mini-lectures for this session were "Anger: When it is Appropriate" and "Logical Consequences." This was the closing session, and an evaluation of the program and detection of needs in areas related to children and family issues was conducted. Finally, refreshments brought by program participants were shared during the

graduation party.

The teaching techniques used were mini-lectures, case studies, discussions, modeling and role playing. The materials included overheads; hand-outs, which were collected at each session by each member to make his or her own portfolio of information; and the book Boleto para el exito, published by the Cline and Fay Corporation. Giving this book to parents was very meaningful for them, and they read it in advance for the sessions.

As a result, this parenting training promoted positive interaction and participation from the parents in all the sessions. From the evaluation of assignments from the book, it was concluded that the parents internalized the concepts and were able to discuss them during each session. They were active by asking questions and helping each other to find positive solutions to their specific cases.

One of the most difficult areas for the parents to understand was how to give choices to their children. This was related to the authoritarian parenting style that the Hispanic culture often used. Consequently, it becomes more important to work on this topic in the future.

During the sessions, the facilitator observed some of the parents' most significant needs, doubts, and expectations. The group was concerned about how to talk and give skills to their children in topics related to sexuality and adequate communication skills in their family environment. The parents also were concerned about how to handle marital problems and how to improve relationships within the extended family. It was suggested that this curriculum could be used as a guide when implementing new programs to help the parents identify and deal with many of their needs.

Recommendations

Information gained from the two series of classes suggests the following recommendations for future projects that target parent involvement and parent education at school:

- Prepare school administrators, staff, and teachers for the process of advocacy and empowerment in which parents will be involved. Preparing administrators, staff, and teachers will help to convey a sense of acceptance to parents.
- Advocate for an attitude that Hispanics are valued even though they do not know English. Hispanic parents' self-esteem needs to be enhanced so they can feel empowered and motivated to start new actions that can make their lives less stressful. The Hispanic community has a lot to offer; but first, they need to feel valued and important.
- Use Spanish as a first contact. Some Hispanic parents do not attend meetings because of the language barrier. Spanish is a key element to success, in addition to the sharing of cultural values.
- Hispanic members value social support and need to develop alternate support systems since their extended families are in their country of origin. These parent meetings are viewed by them as an important and new social support. Leaders might enhance this sense of "familiarity," but within the code of ethics of those professionals who work with families.
- Be flexible with time. During the meetings, schedule the agenda in order that you: (a) start with content that would be nice to know; then, (b) when all members have arrived, discuss the content that is mandatory to know; and, finally, (c) discuss the activities that require decision-making, because by this time all will be tuned into the group process and content.

APPENDIX A
Program Agendas

FOCUS GROUP PLANS
TOMAS RIVERA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM
FEBRUARY 11, 1997

- Director's Responsibilities:** Dee Hatchell contacted key parents and staff by phone calls, home-visits, etc.
WE NEED TO CLARIFY FUNCTIONS (CHILD CARE, REFRESHMENTS, ETC.)
- Bring:** Sign-in sheets and bio-sheets
Questions
- Assignments:** Dr. Armintha Jacobson (Interviewer)
Dr. J. Huffman (Recorder)
Maria Rositas (Interviewer of Hispanic Parents)
Yamile Quintero (Recorder of Hispanic Parents)

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

- 7:30PM Presentation and introduction. What is the group for? When are we going to meet? Rules.
- 7:35pm What are some of the causes that parents are not involved in their children's education?
- 7:40pm What are some of the parents concerns in relation to their children's school and education?
- 7:45pm What are some of the parenting skills that you consider important to help your children achieve at school?
- 7:50pm Who is more involved with children's school issues and why?
- 7:55pm How can school communicate more easily with you?
- 8:00pm How can you communicate more easily with school?
- 8:05pm If a training program is going to be conducted, what kind of learning environment do you prefer?
- 8:10pm What will it take to parents/teachers/ staff to participate in this training (Time, day, place)
- 8:15pm Actually, do you know or are involved in a program that suggest how to participate in school's issues?
- 8:20pm What are the easiest ways you can get informed about this program?
- 8:25pm What can you do to spread the information to the rest of the community?
- 8:30pm How do you usually get informed about what happens in the community? (Tv, radio, books, etc.)
- 8:35pm Closing

TOMAS RIVERA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM
SESSION 1: COMMUNICATION
FEBRUARY 18, 1997
Maria Rositas

OBJECTIVES:

1. Practice a different way of communicating with their children.
2. Explore the different ways they can communicate with school and choose one that is the best for them.

MATERIALS:

Poster board

Name tags

Folders with hand-outs (phone-directory, class, parenting issues).

TIME-LINE

6:00pm Prepare refreshments and materials

6:30pm Decide name for the group and presentation of the activities of the session

6:35pm Group activity "Finding the pair".

Objective: Ice-breaker, use of non-verbal communication.

Method: Each one will receive a slip of paper with a name of an animal. Using just gestures (no sounds) they will try to find their pair. One of them will not have a pair in purpose. Explore their feelings about this type of communication, their reaction when they found their pair and the feeling of the one that was alone. *Animal's names: elephant, butterfly, donkey, horse, eagle(alone).*

6:45pm. **Communication**

A) With their Children

* Explain what active listening is. (Give hand-out)

* Explain "I-messages".

* Role-playing with each

7:15pm. B) With the School

* Explain the guidelines to an effective communication. (Give hand-out)

* Discuss the different ways that school communicate with them

* Discuss the BEST way that school can communicate with them

* Discuss the BEST ways that they can communicate with school

7:45pm. Selection of parent education issues

*Brainstorm of issues.

*Selection of the most important for the group.

7:55pm Closing

TOMAS RIVERA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM
SESSION 2: PARENTING
FEBRUARY 25, 1997
Maria Rositas

OBJECTIVES:

1. Explore the different parenting styles
2. Set goals for their children.
3. Review solving-problem strategy
4. Discuss different issues of parenting: sexuality, drugs, etc.

MATERIALS:

Name tags
Hand-outs

AGENDA:

- 6:00pm Prepare refreshments and materials
6:30pm Follow-up about communication issues.
6:35pm Discuss different parenting styles (Hand-out: "Los ninos aprenden lo que viven")
7:00pm Discuss problem-solving steps
7:15pm Set goals for their children (Hand-out: "El futuro de nuestros hijos")
7:30pm Give information about specific issues of parenting: sexuality, drugs, teenagers, etc.
8:00pm Closing

TOMAS RIVERA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM
SESSION 3: VOLUNTEERING
MARCH 11, 1997
Maria Rositas

OBJECTIVES:

1. Discover in what point they are in the volunteering process
2. Know what are the opportunities of volunteering at this school
3. Consider the advantages of volunteering for students, parents, and teachers
4. Figure out the characteristics of a good volunteer

MATERIALS:

Name tags
Hand-outs
Special guest: Volunteers coordinator

AGENDA:

- 6:00pm Prepare refreshments and materials
- 6:30pm Welcome
- 6:35pm Screening instrument: "Volunteering process" (Give hand-out)
Objective:
Explain the volunteering process identifying implicit attitudes and recognize the stage on which the participants are.
- 7:00pm Special Guest: Volunteers coordinator
Objective:
Parents will meet one of the key persons at school with whom they can start offering their volunteering services. We are going to serve as a liaison between school and our parents. The speaker will concentrate in the following areas:
- * What is a volunteer.
 - * What volunteering activities this school has.
 - * How can full-time working parents can be volunteers.
 - * How do they recruit volunteering parents.
- 7:30pm Advantages of being a volunteer at school: Outcomes for parents, teachers, and students. (Give hand-out)
- 7:45pm What are the characteristics of a good volunteer?
Objective:
Find out the characteristics by brainstorming of the group
- 8:00pm Closing

**TOMAS RIVERA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM
SESSION 4: LEARNING AT HOME
APRIL 1, 1997
Maria Rositas**

OBJECTIVES:

1. Know the adequate environment at home so children can learn
2. Know how they can help children with assignments and projects according to the grade they are attending
3. Find out how they can motivate and support children to learn.

MATERIALS:

Name tags

Hand-outs

Special guest: Teacher from lower (1,2,3) and upper (4,5,6) elementary grades.

AGENDA:

6:00pm Prepare refreshments and materials

6:30pm Welcome

6:35pm Continue the discussion about volunteering outcomes for the parents, teacher and children.

7:00pm Special Guest: Teachers from different grades

Objective:

Parents will meet with the teachers so they can know what are the teachers' needs about assignments and projects that the parents can fulfill at home. The teachers will talk about how can parents support, help, and motivate children at home. Each teacher will talk from his developmental perspective so we will have lower and upper grade needs.

7:30pm Tamales Sale Organization.

Yolanda (volunteers coordinator) will work with parents to organize this sale.

Parents will experience working as a group and making contact with key elements from the school community to make a project.

7:45pm Preview of next week session: Decision-making

8:00pm Closing

TOMAS RIVERA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM
SESSION 5: DECISION-MAKING
APRIL 8, 1997
Maria Rositas

OBJECTIVES:

1. Know the process to solve a problem and how to make decisions based on the facts.
2. Apply the process of decision-making to a real life problem between school and families
3. Integrate all the topics discussed during all the sessions as a closing.

MATERIALS:

Name tags
Hand-outs

AGENDA:

- 6:00pm Prepare refreshments and materials
- 6:30pm Welcome
- 6:35pm Review the steps to make a decision and solve a problem.
- 6:45pm Apply these knowledge to a real life problem
- Objective:
Give the parents an example so they can have a foundation for future generalizations.
- 7:35pm Tamales Sale Organization.
Yolanda (volunteers coordinator) will work with parents to organize this sale.
Parents will decide roles, place to make the tamales, etc. They will start the process of working as a group
- 7:45pm Organization of closing celebration.
How many persons in total (with their families)
What agencies are going to come.
- 8:00pm Closing

TOMAS RIVERA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM
SESSION 6: COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY
APRIL 15, 1997
Maria Rositas

OBJECTIVES:

1. The parents will know some of the different organizations from which provide family services.
2. Establish a bridge between family, school, and the community.
3. The parents will know these services so they can refer someone they know: neighbor, friend, someone in the family.
4. Make a closing about the program and graduation ceremony

MATERIALS:

Name tags
Guests
Refreshments
Diplomas

AGENDA:

- 6:00pm Prepare refreshments and materials
6:30pm Introduction
6:35pm Presentation of different organizations
Objective: The parents will know the different resources that they can use in the community
- *Cook Children's Pediatrics Clinic
Cinthia Sallee and Alejandra Fuentes
 - *Denton Christian Preschool
Ms. Dominga Tovar
 - * Denton County Health Department
Liza Hinojosa and Maria Garibay
 - * Denton United Way Info and Referral Helpline
Diane Shenberger
 - *West Texas Legal Services
Sandra Farahani
 - * North Texas Child Care Management Services
Jane Krhovjak
 - *Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)
Tricia Eason
- 7:35pm Introduction: Yamile Quintero and "Padres Inteligentes y Amorosos"
7:40pm Graduation ceremony and closing
Guests:
- * Dee Hatchell (Parent Involvement Coordinator, Tomas Rivera Elementary)
 - * Donna Meinecke (PTA Association, Tomas Rivera Elementary)
 - * Dr. Arminta Jacobson (University of North Texas)
 - * Ms. Maria Rositas (University of North Texas).

APPENDIX B

Hand-outs

References

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