

Addressing the Needs of Children of Immigrants: *Opportunities for State Policy and Early Childhood Advocates*



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Key Findings From CLASP's Research

- Low-income immigrant families face many of the same barriers accessing child care and early education as all low-income families.
- Immigrant families face additional barriers, for example related to language, culture and immigration status.
- “Immigrants” are not a homogeneous group.
 - There are no “one size fits all” solutions to improve access for immigrant families.

Key Findings From CLASP's Research

- Immigrant families face multiple barriers accessing early care and education, related to:
 - Awareness
 - Accessibility
 - Responsiveness



What's Needed?

- Increase responsiveness to diverse children, families, and providers.
- Build capacity to address the needs of diverse children and providers.
- Ensure that definitions of quality are inclusive of all children and families.
 - Incorporate new standards of quality.

New Approaches

- Attention to the needs of immigrant families infused throughout all policies, standards, and content.
 - Include immigrant communities in the design and development of early care and education programs and policies.
- Collaboration with immigrant-serving organizations
 - Important to find immigrant “leaders” to serve as bridges to communities.
 - Use cultural mediators.

Awareness: Strategies That Work

- Targeted outreach and education in immigrant communities
 - Dissemination of translated materials in accessible formats.
- Increasing bilingual staff and interpretation/translation services
 - Including dedicated funding



Accessibility: Strategies that Work

- Targeted programs in immigrant communities
- Increase supply of child care through contracts/grants
- Expand bilingual staff capacity in state/local agencies
 - Create language access plans
- Improve language access to licensing and professional development systems
- Community-based support networks for FFN caregivers in immigrant communities

Responsiveness: Strategies that Work

- Measures of cultural/linguistic competence in QRIS, supports for programs to meet standards
- Recruit and support a culturally and linguistically diverse workforce.
- Training on ELLs and cultural competency for early childhood professionals at all levels
- Provide access to comprehensive services
- Review all standards/policies for attention to cultural competence and diversity

Recommendations for State and Local Policymakers and Advocates

- Conduct local assessments to understand the demographics of local immigrant populations and to determine unmet need in service provision.
- Provide targeted resources for cultural mediators, bilingual staff, outreach and education
- Support immigrant providers' access to licensing, professional development, and training opportunities.
 - Include community-based training in multiple languages and financial supports.
 - Recognize credentials and degrees from other countries.
- Contract directly with immigrant-serving organizations to provide child care services.

Recommendations for State and Local Policymakers and Advocates

- Incorporate cultural and linguistic competency in existing program and content standards.
- Encourage collaborations between early education programs and community-based organizations, including immigrant-serving organizations.
- Examine all policy and funding opportunities for supporting culturally and linguistically diverse children.

Financing and Policy Opportunities for Best Practices

- School districts use Title I funds to support ELLs, including in community-based child care.
- Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds, including quality funds, can be used to increase cultural and linguistic competence of early childhood programs and improve access for immigrant and language minority communities.
 - Consumer education initiatives
 - Direct contracts with child care providers serving diverse children
 - Training, resources, and technical assistance for providers
- Even Start family literacy programs have shown positive outcomes for ELLs.

Financing and Policy Opportunities for Best Practices

- Use new federal opportunities to encourage collaboration between early care and education programs and immigrant serving organizations and to address needs of immigrant families.
 - Early Childhood Advisory Councils
 - Early Learning Challenge Fund
- Advocate on behalf of immigrant families with state subsidy agencies, Head Start programs, early intervention programs and other state and local early childhood programs



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Additional resources from CLASP at www.clasp.org,
including CLASP DataFinder at www.clasp.org/data.