

## What is Family Engagement?

Family engagement is an interactive process involving professionals, families, and children in developing and maintaining a positive goal-oriented relationship (National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (NCPFCE), 2011).

Principle Two of the International Consensus Statement “A goal of FCEI is the development of balanced partnerships between families and the professionals supporting them. Family-provider partnerships are characterized by reciprocity, mutual trust, respect, honesty, shared tasks, and open communication” (Moeller, et al., 2013, p. 432).

Paramount to this partnership is that service providers “recognize the diversity within cultural groups (i.e., spiritually, views on health and disability, child rearing, help seeking, and family structure)” and seek support when their own cultural background differs from the cultural background of the family. (Moeller, et al., 2013, p. 432).

There is a growing body of evidence that links family involvement in d/Dhh early intervention programs with later positive outcomes

## Cultural Humility

Professionals should strive to develop cultural competence in order to establish meaningful relationships with families by:

- reflecting and assessing your own cultural identity and beliefs,
- being aware of the cultural perspectives and views of the community with whom you work,
- learning about a specific culture including contrasting and similar values and beliefs, and finally, acknowledging and respecting differences (Lynch, 2011).

Furthermore, it is important for professionals to consider moving beyond cultural competence to embrace cultural humility.

Cultural humility is a lifelong process that focuses on personal self-reflection to not only acknowledge one's own biases, but to also continually move beyond a basic understanding of culture and realize we are never done learning (Trevallan & Murray- Garcia, 1998)



## Early Intervention Deaf Multilingual Learners (DML) Parent Engagement Barriers

### Language and Communication

- “When a family speaks a language other than English, parents’ abilities to interact with the interventionist may be noticeably limited by language barriers as well as restricted in more obscure ways by cultural differences” (Weiber & Quiñonez-Sumner, 2016, p.78).
- Recent research has shown that a growing number of families from CLD backgrounds with children who are DMLs desire their children to be bilingual.
- Professionals should encourage families to use and foster the development of both languages.

### Cultural Differences

- It is not simply using the same language but understanding the cultural differences in views of disability, child-rearing practices, playtime behaviors, and cultural resources that may improve the relationship (Bowen, 2016; Weiber & Quiñonez-Sumner, 2016).
- Professionals who are not culturally attuned may overlook language learning opportunities in and outside the home.
- In order to optimize parent engagement and child outcomes, intervention must be provided within the framework of the family’s specific culture.

## Ways Professional Support DML Families

### Cultural Brokers

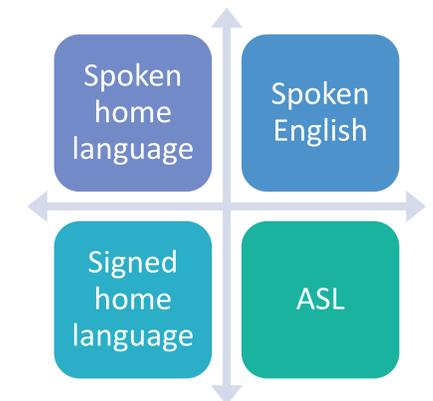
- The best approach to meet the needs of diverse families is to employ CLD providers.
- However, in the absence of qualified professionals, it is important to have skilled oral language interpreters and cultural brokers involved in the early intervention process.
- In early intervention, cultural brokers serve as a bridge between the parents and the professional to bring an understanding of the cultural practices to the early intervention process.
- These individuals need more than linguistic proficiency in both languages; they also need “culturally based communication strategies” (Bowen, 2016, p. 39) to support family engagement during early intervention services.

### Culturally-based Strategies

- Culturally based strategies indicate a knowledge of values, beliefs, and child-rearing practices of both cultural groups as well as an understanding of traditional and indigenous wellness and cultural medical practices.
- This includes using culturally appropriate songs, nursery rhymes, games, books, and activities within the family’s daily routines and understanding and respecting the family’s beliefs, values, and traditions (Weiber & Quiñonez-Sumner, 2016)

## Communication Choices

Parents of children who are DMLs have many complex choices regarding communication options used by the child and family including:



## References

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- Wieber, W. B., & Quiñonez-Sumner, L. (2016). Promoting immigrant parents’ engagement in early intervention through culturally and linguistically responsive service delivery. *The Journal of Early Hearing Detection and Intervention*, 1(1), 78-86.

## For more information

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Sandy.bowen@unco.edu