#### Working with Parents of Exceptional Children & Community Agencies Webinar

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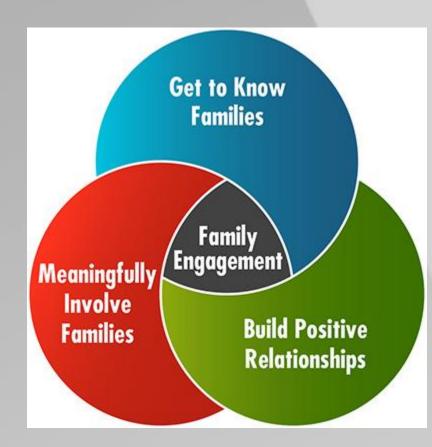


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#### Family Engagement









### Learning Objectives

- Understand the importance of family engagement
- Understand how educators engage families
- Understand how to engage your child's teachers
- Identify practical ways to build positive relationships and create opportunities for families to be involved in ways that they want



# **Children with Special Needs**

#### Include



- Gifted and talented children
- Children who are linguistically or culturally different from the mainstream
- Children who are at risk for school failure because of poverty or other social conditions



#### **Children with Special Needs**

#### Include



- Children with health and medical conditions that may impede their success in school
- Children with disabilities



# WHITEWATER Children with special needs need

#### accommodations

- Children with health and behavior issues may receive accommodations under a 504
  Plan of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act
- Gifted and talented children may receive accommodations based on their school district's policies for gifted and talented children or through differentiation of instruction by their classroom



#### teacher



# whitewater Children with Special Needs need

#### accommodations

- English language learners may receive accommodations from specially trained ESOL teachers
- Children living in poverty may benefit from Title I funding of their school.
- But children with diagnosed disabilities must be provided with special education services under IDEA









- Zero rejection.
- Nondiscriminatory and multidisciplinary evaluations.
- Free appropriate public education.
- Least restricted environment (LRE).
- Procedural due process.
- Parent and student participation.



# **Classroom Family Engagement**

- Teachers possess the beliefs and mindsets to effectively engage families.
- Teachers and families have trusting relationships and meaningful two-way communication.
- Teachers engage families in constructing goals together, monitoring progress, and supporting learning.



#### whitewater Classroom Family Engagement

- Parenting
- Communicating
- Volunteering
- Learning at Home
- **Decision-making** ullet
- Community Collaboration







# WHITEWATER Culturally Responsive Engagement

- Let's shift our thinking about classroom family engagement
- Traditional methods of family engagement within schools (e.g., parent-teacher associations, volunteering in classrooms, sending written communication home in backpacks) often are not successful at engaging families from nondominant cultures.



- Understand how people of different ethnicities and cultures view disability itself (e.g., as a stigma, particularly as pertains to mental illnesses or developmental disabilities; as a gift or blessing). Even if they do not agree, it is essential that educators respect those views to build effective working relationships.
- Learn about the individual family's values and their expectations and priorities for their child's educational needs.
- Recognize where there are differences in perspectives regarding the educational system and services.



#### whitewater Culturally Responsive Engagement

- Build trust and empathize with families
- Provide adequate resources
- Know students' friends, actively model positive behavior
- Use a cultural insider.
- Embracing families' individual narratives



# WHITEWATER Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) students

- Include sexual identity and gender identity or expression as a protected category in district and school policies
- Include LGBTQ issues and themes in school curricula



#### parents

- Share information with caregivers regarding school successes and challenges regarding academic, emotional, and behavioral concerns
- Connect the student and family with community resources and services that address the particular needs of children with incarcerated parents
- Advocate for children with an incarcerated parent with other school support staff
- Collaborate with school-based mental health professionals



# **Building Trust Through**

- Friendliness
- Optimism
- Patience
- Sincerity and honesty
- Tact
- Responsiveness
- Openness to suggestions
- Respect for each family's strengths, culture, language, and ability to make decisions for their child.



# **Building Trust**

- Be available and responsive
- Maintain confidentiality
- Recognize that families may have different perspectives



#### WHITEWATER WISCONSIN WISCO

- Handout includes state family engagement resources & family support organizations
- I want to highlight a few here





#### Wisconsin Statewide Parent Educator Initiatives



- Their coordinators are parents of children with disabilities
- They work for CESAs through a DPI grant
- They help families navigate special education services
- <a href="http://wspei.org/contact/">http://wspei.org/contact/</a>



#### WI FACETS



- The federally funded Parent Training and Information Center for Wisconsin
- They provide information on special education and IEPs and referrals to agencies and resources, parent support groups, parent and youth leadership development, and trainings. <u>https://wifacets.org/contact-us</u>.

### WHITEWATER Disability Rights Wisconsin

#### disabilityrights wisconsin

- A private non-profit organization designated by the Governor
- DRW is part of a national system of federally mandated independent disability agencies
- Has staff who can provide legal advocacy
- <u>https://disabilityrightswi.org/con</u> <u>tact-us/</u>



#### WI Family Ties



- Statewide
- Run by families
- Focus on emotional, behavioral and mental health supports
- They provide "Parent Peer Specialists" who can help families access services
- <u>https://www.wifamilyties.org/co</u> <u>ntact/</u>



#### In Summary

- Family engagement is essential in the process of determining the best educational setting for children with disabilities
- Helping families negotiate the complex process of identifying children with special needs and the legal procedures involved in making a placement is an important task for educators





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#### Resources

Flamboyan Foundation. (2011). *Classroom family engagement rubric*. Retrieved from <u>http://flamboyanfoundation.org/wp/wp-</u> <u>content/uploads/2014/04/Classroom-Family-Engagement-</u> <u>Rubric-V4-VF.pdf</u>

Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network. (2014). *Get the facts: Realities of LGBT students*. Retrieved from <u>http://www.glsen.org/article/get-facts-realities-lgbt-</u> <u>students</u>



#### Resources

- Youth.gov. (n.d.). *Tip sheet for teachers (pre-K through 12): Supporting children who have an incarcerated parent*. Retrieved
  - from <u>http://youth.gov/sites/default/files/COIP\_TipSheet-</u> <u>Teachers\_508.pdf</u>