Children, Families, Schools, and Communities [Revised Edition]

CHILDREN, FAMILIES, SCHOOLS, AND COMMUNITIES [REVISED EDITION]

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INTRODUCTION

At [Holyoke Community College](#) in Holyoke, MA, I have been fortunate to teach a course entitled EDU 113: Children, Family, Schools, and Community. My students are interested in the field of Child and Family Studies, often talking about career pathways as a Child Life Specialist, Early Childhood Educator, Out-of-School-Time Coordinator, School Counselor, or Family Engagement Coordinator. Each semester that I teach this course, I am reminded about the immediate need to share an understanding of culturally sustaining collaboration that strips down hierarchies between children, family, schools, and communities and, instead, centers around a common framework of the whole child.

Children, Families, Schools, and Communities is introductory text in the field of Child and Family Studies. It provides a lens for understanding the evolving definition of "family" through socially constructed and ecological theory frameworks. It promotes strategies for culturally sustaining and deeply collaborative relationships between families, schools, and communities through the use of home-grown advocacy strategies based on community-driven data. Children, Families, Schools, and Communities is an adapted OER text from Rebecca Laff's and Wendy Ruiz's [Child, Family, and Community](#).

About the Author(s)

I am an Educator, Instructional Designer, and Researcher committed to educational equity and strategies of Universal Design for Learning. I specialize in teaching coursework in education policy, inclusionary practice, Universal Design for Learning, and culturally responsive pedagogy.

I began my career as an Americorps VISTA Volunteer, working as a Teacher and Technology Coordinator at an alternative GED program. From there, I moved into community-based work in the field of out-of-school time. And, from there, I began my career in the community college system where I worked as an out-of-school-time coordinator, TRiO Student Support Services Director, Grant Manager, Education Faculty, and Department Chair of Education. Those early professional experiences provided me with insight about the role of Youth Development, trauma-informed teaching, and family-school partnerships for effective pre-service teacher training. I most recently worked as the Associate Director for the [Center for Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship at Springfield College](#) where I focused on Instructional Design and digital

pedagogy. I currently work at the [University of Massachusetts at Amherst](#) as an Educational Developer with [Instructional Design, Engagement, and Support](#).

I am thankful for chapter contributors, including Dr. Sara Scribner, Assistant Professor of Special Education at [Plymouth State University](#), and Brianna Dickens, Associate Director of the Academic Success Center: Disability and Accessibility Services at Springfield College for lending their voices and expertise. Dr. Sara Scribner holds a PhD in Special Education, Disability Studies from the [Syracuse University School of Education](#). She works extensively as an advocate for families of children with exceptionalities and is considered an expert in training teachers on inclusive practices. Brianna Dickens is finishing up a doctorate in Special Education.

I am excited for contributions from EDU 113 students at Holyoke Community College from Summer 2023, Fall 2023, and Summer 2024! Students piloted Version 1 of this text, offering me substantial feedback for improvements and additions. They also wrote case studies and new Pause & Reflect questions. Their contributions are included in this version of the text:

- Owen Aptekar-Cassell
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Acknowledgements

teacher and high school humanities teacher at [Emergence Academy](#) in Springfield, MA, for his commitment to holistic family partnerships in the school environment and for his time in peer editing this text.

Springfield-Agawam Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that here, we stand on Indigenous land, known to the original Algonkian Indian (Native American/Indigenous) inhabitants as "Agawam," or "Akawaham." The Indigenous name for this place is a locative term that roughly translates to "low-lying marshy lands," describing a large region along both sides of the Kwinitekw (now called the Connecticut River) from present-day Enfield, Connecticut to the Holyoke Range. For at least 10,000 years, since the last era of glaciation, the Agawam people engaged in trade, diplomacy, and kinship with other regional Indigenous people, most notably: the Quaboag to the East; the Podunk to the South; the Woronoco to the West; and the Nonotuck, Pocumtuck, and Sokoki to the North.

During the 1630s, when Agawam leaders invited English colonial settlers to build a small settlement here, they attempted to preserve, in written deeds, Indigenous cartographies and rights to hunt, fish, plant, and live on tribal lands. When diplomatic relations failed, the Agawam people were decimated and dispersed as a direct result of colonial deceit, disease, and warfare. Although the survivors sought refuge with other Native communities across the northeast, very few direct descendants of the Agawam people live in Springfield today.

I acknowledge, however, that many Indigenous nations, from the territory we now call "southern New England," still survive and still exercise sovereignty. I acknowledge, in particular, these contemporary Indigenous nations: the Nipmuc to the East; the Wampanoag and Narragansett to the Southeast; the Mohegan, Pequot, and Schaghticoke to the South; the Mohican to the West; and the Abenaki to the North, among many others. Recognizing that the entirety of the North American continent constitutes territory considered to be original Indigenous homelands, I respect the sovereignty of these and hundreds of other Native American Indigenous nations that survive today and I pledge to support the rights of these nations and the interests of Indigenous peoples.

Pronunciation Guide:

Abenaki [a-ben-a-kee]

Agawam [aa-gah-wahm]

Akawaham [ah-kah-wa-hahm]

Algonkian [al-gone-kee-uhn]

Kwinitekw [kwin-eh-tek-wuh]

Mohegan [moh-he-gahn]

Mohican [moh-hee-kuhn]

Narragansett [nare-uh-gann-sett]

Nipmuc & Nipmuck [nip-muck]

Nonotuck [non-oh-tuck]

Pequot [pee-kwaht]

Pocumtuck [poe-come-tuck]

Podunk [poe-dunk]

Schaghticoke [scat-ti-coke]

Sokoki [soh-koh-kee]

Quaboag [qua-bog]

Wampanoag [wamp-ah-nawg]

Woronoco [wore-oh-no-co]

This land acknowledgement was written by Margaret M. Bruchac (Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania) & Laurel Davis-Delano (Professor of Sociology, Springfield College). It can be found at https://sites.google.com/view/springfieldagawam-landacknowl/home?authuser=2.

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT FOR THE ROTEL PROJECT

As part of ROTEL Project's mission to support the creation, management, and dissemination of culturally-relevant textbooks, we must acknowledge Indigenous Peoples as the traditional stewards of the land, and the enduring relationship that exists between them and their traditional territories. We acknowledge that the boundaries that created Massachusetts were arbitrary and a product of the settlers. We honor the land on which the Higher Education Institutions of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are sited as the traditional territory of tribal nations. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from their territory, and other atrocities connected with colonization. We honor and respect the many diverse indigenous people connected to this land on which we gather, and our acknowledgement is one action we can take to correct the stories and practices that erase Indigenous People's history and culture.

Identified Tribes and/or Nations of Massachusetts

Historical Nations

- Mahican
- Mashpee
- Massachuset
- Nauset
- Nipmuc
- Pennacook
- Pocomtuc
- Stockbridge
- Wampanoag

Present-Day Nations and Tribes

- [Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe](#)
- [Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah](#)
- [Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe](#)
- [Assawompsett-Nemasket Band of Wampanoags](#)
- [Pocasset Wampanoag of the Pokanoket Nation](#)
- [Pacasset Wampanoag Tribe](#)
- [Seaconke Wampanoag Tribe](#)

- [Chappaquiddick Tribe of the Wampanoag Indian Nation](#)
- [Nipmuc Nation](#) (Bands include the Hassanamisco, Natick)
- [Nipmuck Tribal Council of Chaubunagungamaug](#)
- [Massachusett Tribe at Ponkapoag](#)

At the time of publication, the links above were all active.

Suggested Readings

[Massachusetts Center for Native American Awareness](#)

[A guide to Indigenous land acknowledgment](#)

'[We are all on Native Land: A conversation about Land Acknowledgements](#)' (YouTube video)

[Native-Land.ca | Our home on native land](#) (mapping of native lands)

[Beyond territorial acknowledgments – âpihtawikosisân](#)

[Your Territorial Acknowledgment Is Not Enough](#)

This land acknowledgement was based on the [land acknowledgement of the Digital Commonwealth](#).

PART I
WHAT IS A FAMILY?

Learning Objectives

1. Examine how culture influences the evolving definition of family.

Humans are social creatures. We make friends, live in communities, and connect to acquaintances through shared interests. Perhaps nothing is more central to the social world than the concept of family. Our families represent our earliest relationships and, often, our most enduring ones. In this module, you will learn how culture influences the evolving definition of families and the stages of development of families.

Our discussion will begin with a basic definition of family and how this has changed across time and place. Next, we move on to a discussion of family roles and how families evolve across the lifespan. Finally, we will explore how implicit, explicit, and confirmation bias impacts our work with families, schools, and communities.

Media Attributions

DIVERSITY OF FAMILIES

The United States' Census Bureau defines family as "...a group of two people or more (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together; all such people (including related subfamily members) are considered as members of one family." While this definition provides a framework for understanding family configurations in the United States over a period of time, it may not accurately represent the social and cultural factors that contextualize how we define "family" in our personal networks. It is restrictive and does not integrate the diversity of the modern family in the United States.

In 2023, the Pew Research Center released The Modern American Family: Key Trends in Marriage and Family Life. This document outlined key data points from 1970 that chronicles how the American "family" has evolved and changed.

% of 25- to 49-year-olds who are ...

	1970	1990	2010	2021
Married with kids	67%	47%	39%	37%
Cohabiting with kids		2	4	5
Unpartnered with kids	4	6	7	6
Married, no kids	18	23	21	21
Cohabiting, no kids		3	5	7
Other family members	5	8	11	11
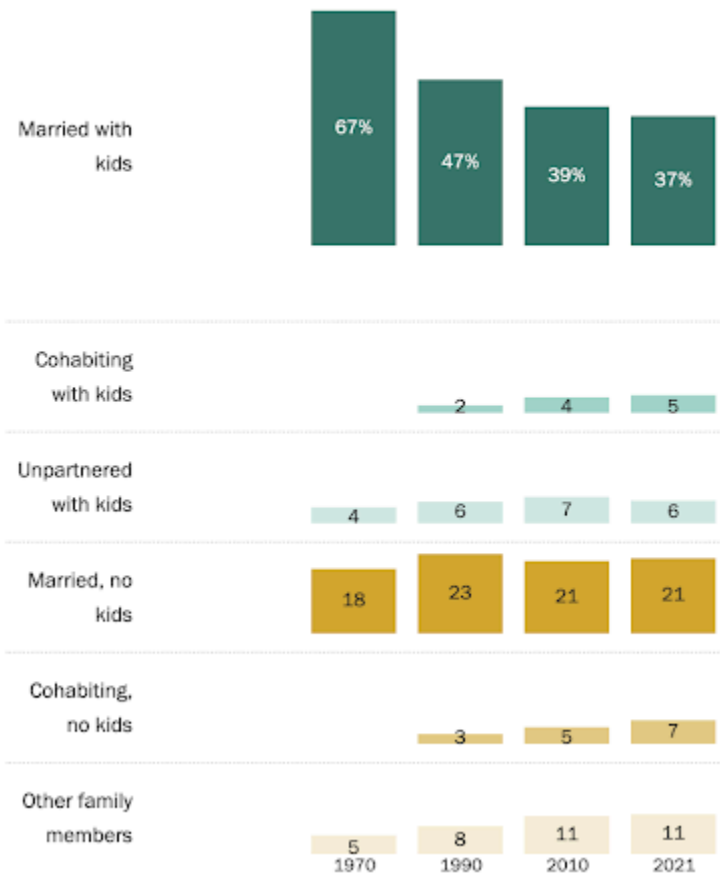
Pause to Reflect!

- Choose one of the categories listed in the left hand column of the infographic.
- Describe how the data has evolved from 1970-2021.
- How does this data change or expand how we define "family"?

The Pew Research Center points to overall changes in marriage types from 1970-2021.

- The number of interracial or interethnic marriages have increased.
- The number of same-sex marriages have increased.
- Women have fewer children, resulting in smaller family sizes.
- The number of women having children without being legally married has increased.
- Individuals with a bachelor's degree are more likely to be married than those with less education.
- Asian and White adults are more likely to be married than those who are Black or Hispanic.

Data trends are important in the field of Education and Child & Family Studies, as they point to the evolution of "family", and therefore the need to continually examine the support structures, community centers or schools or early childhood centers, that surround families.

Pause to Reflect!

- Families often face discrimination about their family structure or values. For example. Same-sex families and a family with an incarcerated caregiver both experience discrimination. However, that discrimination "looks" different. Describe how diverse families experience discrimination in the United States.
- Navigate to The Modern American Family: Key Trends in Marriage and Family Life. At the

bottom of the article, locate an interactive data tool that allows you to examine marriage structures in the United States. Use the filters to explore differences in family structures by race, education, or ethnicity. Describe what you explored. How does that information influence the design of support structures, like community centers or schools or early childhood centers?

Paul R. Amato, Ph.D., former President of the National Council on Family Relations, asks us to expand our definition of "family". Amato states, "Most current research is based on objective definitions of families—definitions that are not shared by the majority of individuals that we study. Viewing families as overlapping networks that extend across multiple households, with each network having at its nucleus a reference person, might yield new insights, especially in an era when families are becoming more complex and difficult to classify." Amato points to the complexity of "family" within a social construct. Amato's perspective incorporates the idea of "fictive kinship." "Fictive kinship" recognizes the important bonds and relationships of individuals outside of the boundaries of the traditional definition of "family." The idea that an individual cannot pick their relatives does not apply to fictive kinship. Rather, fictive kinship honors the diversity of the definition of "family" in that it extends to friend groups, resource families, mentors, etc. The individual is at the center of the relationship and their "family" is self-defined based on their own social and cultural criteria.

Case Study (A)

Ella, a divorced mother lives with her child, Grace. Ella considers her ex-husband, Robert, to be a family member even though they do not live together and are divorced. Robert is Grace's biological father. Grace spends every weekend with Robert, and oftentimes, Robert picks Grace up from school and has dinner with Ella and Grace during the week. Robert is important in Grace's life and Ella supports his presence in her life.

- **U.S. Census Bureau**

A researcher who adopts the U.S. Census Bureau definition would say that Grace is in a single-parent family.

- **Modern Families**

A researcher who adopts a definition more consistent with an understanding of modern families would say that Grace would claim to be in a two-parent family.

Case Study (B)

Adam and Georgia are divorced parents of Allyson. Adam was recently remarried to Frank. They purchased a home together. Allyson lives with them and visits Georgia on the weekends and during school vacations. Allyson does not accept Frank as her parent and refuses to allow Frank to attend parent-teacher conferences at her school. She only wants Adam and Georgia to attend.

- **U.S. Census Bureau**

A researcher who adopts the U.S. Census Bureau definition would say that Allyson is in a two-parent family with Adam and Frank.

- **Modern Families**

A researcher who adopts a definition more consistent with an understanding of modern families would say that Allyson would claim to be in a two-parent family with Adam and Georgia.

Case Study (C)

Jordan and Aaron have been best friends since second grade. They are now 22 years old and are considering renting an apartment together while they attend the local community college. Growing up, Jordan spent more time at Aaron's home than their own because it felt safer and supportive. Jordan currently lives with their mom and dad, but does not have a close relationship with them. Jordan considers Aaron's parents their "real" family.

- **U.S. Census Bureau**

A researcher who adopts the U.S. Census Bureau definition would say that Jordan is in a two-parent family with their biological parents.

- **Modern Families**

A researcher who adopts a definition more consistent with an understanding of modern families would say that Jordan would claim to be in a two-parent family with Aaron's family, or might claim to be an independent person getting ready to move out on their own.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions

1. What does family mean to you? Who do you think of when you define family?
2. Do you see your family represented in the "dominant culture"?
3. Identify a minimum of three concrete examples of ways that the idea of "fictive kinship" connects to your professional or personal life.

A social construction is a mutual understanding and accepted reality created by members of a society: something that is not determined by biology or the natural world. Is there anything that humans have created that holds no real value in the natural world, yet we have assigned a great deal of value to it? If you are thinking of cash, you're right on the money. Humans have determined that certain pieces of paper and metal objects are worth an agreed-upon value. For example, in the United States, a one-dollar bill is worth 100 times the value of a penny. One of the ways that we can tell money is a social construction is that it varies from culture to culture and over time. When you visit another country, the United States dollar bill has to be "exchanged" for money that has a different appearance and value. Compare money with another thing of value to human beings: air. Air is needed by all human beings to survive. The need for air and its value do not change over time or from culture to culture. Air is not a social construction. Money is.

What does this have to do with families? While studying families, we must continually remind ourselves that the idea of the family, and in particular the internalized belief that there is a "traditional family," is a social construction. What is a "traditional family"? I suspect that we can each paint a picture in our heads, based on the years each of us has been exposed to portrayals of families in institutions such as the media, schools, government, and health care.

Generally, the traditional American family has been identified as the nuclear family, most often represented as a male and female heterosexual married couple who is middle class, White, and with several children. When society or the individuals within a society designate one kind of family to be "traditional", this may imply a value, or a preference, for this kind of family structure with these particular social characteristics. This is sometimes called the *Leave it to Beaver* family after the popular sitcom television show that ran from 1957 until 1963.

Friends, which concluded its 10th season in 2004, exemplifies a fictive kinship. The comedy presents a peer group of individuals in their 20s who live in New York City. The six main characters are best friends who enjoy holidays together, date each other, and remain close friends with one

another as they age into their 30s. While they do not all live together in the same apartment, they consider themselves a family.
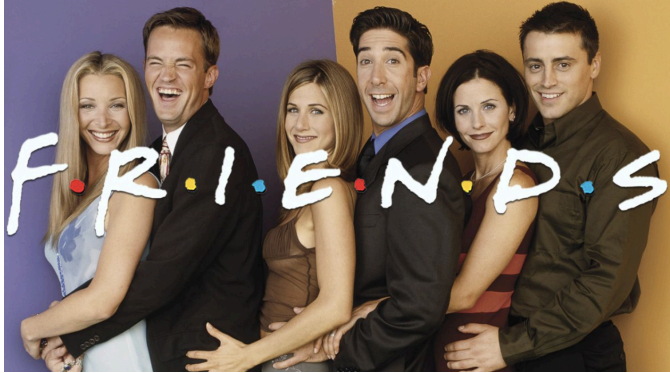
New Girl, which concluded its 7th season in 2018, also exemplifies a fictive kinship. The comedy presents a peer group of individuals in their 20s who live in Los Angeles. Like in Friends, the five main characters are best friends who enjoy holidays together, date each other, and remain close friends with one another as they age into their 30s. With the exception of one character, they all live together in the same apartment, they consider themselves a family. In fact, two of the five characters marry one another.

Modern Family, which concluded its 11th season in 2020, also features this "traditional" family, but includes

two other families which feature people of other ethnic groups, and a same-sex couple. Together they form an extended family who all live in the same town.

This is Us, which concluded its 6th season in 2022, also features this "traditional" family, but includes two adopted children and a mixed-race, multigenerational family. It also extends its story to include adoption, death, divorce, separation, and remarriage.

IIt is important to note, however, that the primacy of the upper-middle-class, White family image continues to be emphasized as the "norm". Our role is to look at how this social construct impacts the way in which children, families, schools, and communities interact with one another in respectful ways that are culturally responsive, honor the diversity of the family structure, and include a vision of fictive kinship in their collaborations.

Pause to Reflect!

- Identify a family or fictive kinship in a current show or movie. Describe how that family representation aligns or misaligned with the data discussed earlier in this chapter from the Pew Research Center?
- Provide three examples of a non traditional family dynamic within a book, a movie, tv show, or other form of entertainment and media.

The traditional definition of family has been criticized as being too narrow. Modern families, especially those in industrialized societies, exist in many forms, including (but not limited to) the single-parent family, resource families, same-sex couples, child-free families, and many other variations from traditional norms. Common to each of these family forms is commitment, caring, and the close emotional ties that are increasingly the defining characteristics of family (Benokraitis, 2015). The changing definition of family has come about, in part, because of many factors that include divorce and remarriage. In many cases, people do not grow up with their family of origin but become part of a step-family or blended family. Whether a single-parent, joint, or two-parent family, a person's family of origin, the family into which he or she is born, or a fictive kinship generally acts as the social context for young children learning about relationships.

As we study families, we must keep in mind that this idea of the "traditional" family is not representative of all families, yet it is continually reinforced by the social processes and institutions in our society. Media, in particular, continually reminds us of what families are "supposed to" look like. Whether you consume big-budget films, social media platforms, video games, and/or books and magazines, take a look. What kind of people and families do you see represented? While the representation of women, people of color, and people of differing sexualities and gender expressions has increased in media, they still predominantly play less consequential characters within the plot lines. Government, schools, medical institutions, businesses, and places of worship all reinforce a typical view of family through the forms, activities, requirements, and processes that are shared with the public. How many times have you tried to fill out a form with checkboxes only to find that you did not "fit" into one of the boxes? Typical examples include giving parental choices of "mother" and "father," couple status choices such as "married" or "single," and gender choices such as "male" or female," all of which reinforce a binary view of individuals and families. The preference for an idealized traditional family type contributes to less social support for families who don't fit this type: for example, single-parent families, LGBTQ+ families, rural families, or families with a member who is disabled, unemployed, or who has a criminal record.

Pause to Reflect!

Research and discuss the following questions.

1. Identify two official forms that a family member may fill out on behalf of a child. Examples might include a school district enrollment form, Head Start enrollment form, or a form for a pediatrician or other medical professional.
2. Examine the forms for inclusive language. Do they include the parental choices of "mother" and "father" or are they more flexible in their labels of parents, guardians, and/or other caregivers?
3. If the forms are not inclusive, edit them.

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THE DIVERSITY OF TODAY'S FAMILIES

The landscape of families has changed considerably over the last few decades. It is not that diverse families have never existed; it is that in today's society, we are making places at the table for this diversity. Today, we elevate and value diverse families. Following are definitions of many of the family structures today.

Table 1.1: Family Structures

Family Structure	Description
Dual parent family	This is often referred to as a mother and father raising children. However, if we think about the diversity of families this could include same sex caregivers as they are also raising children together.
Single parent (either by choice or through divorce)	This could be a male or female caregiver who either wants to be a parent and doesn't have a partner to create a child with or is raising children on their own due to divorce. Often, we think of single parents as female, but today as we continue to form acceptance of family structures, there are males who are also choosing to form a family on their own or raise their children (from divorce) on their own.

As families immigrate or migrate to other parts of the U.S. or world, we might find single parents by default, as not all members of a family unit may move at the same time. |
Grandparents or other relatives raising children (relatives can also be non-related family members who are close to the child(ren))	Children whose caregivers are not able to care for them (for whatever reason), may be raised by their maternal or paternal grandparents or may be raised by extended family members including those family members that are not related biologically.
Teen parents	Today it is more acceptable for teens who become pregnant to raise a child. Sometimes they may do this together or separate. Sometimes they may do this with the help of their families. Teens who become pregnant while still in high school are often able to return to school and there are programs on high school campuses where teens may bring their child. They may receive parenting classes in addition to their high school curriculum.
Adoptive families	Families who are not able to conceive a child on their own may choose adoption. While this tends to be most common, there are families who consciously choose adoption over procreation as well as decide to add to their family through adoption. In any case, forming a family through adoption is a choice that is not taken lightly. There are many options in forming your family through adoption. You can choose to have an open or closed adoption. Open adoption refers to having a continued relationship with the birth parent(s) to just knowing who the birth parents are and everything in between. Closed adoption means that the family does not have access to birth parent(s) information. In addition, families may choose to adopt a child of the same race or of another race. They may choose to adopt nationally or internationally.

Family Structure	Description
Resource Families (formerly referred to as Foster Families)	Children placed in temporary care due to extenuating circumstances involving their family of origin are often placed in homes licensed to care for children. The adults who care for these children must go through strict protocols in order to provide the support and care that these vulnerable children will need. The most common name for this arrangement is fostering, but you may also hear them described as resource families. In these cases, it is the intent to reunite the children with their family of origin whenever possible. When this is not possible, the children are placed in the system to be adopted. The foster family may decide to adopt the children or another family may adopt the children. It is always the intent to find a permanent arrangement for children whenever possible, as we know that stability has better outcomes for children.
Families with Same Sex Parents	Same sex couples, whether two men or two women, may choose to form a family and raise the children together. There are many ways in which they may decide to form their family. They may adopt, they may use reproductive technology, or they may use egg or sperm donors. In the case where two women are choosing to form a family, they may decide to have one of them become pregnant and give birth to their child.
Bi-racial/Multi-racial families	These are children who are raised by parents from two different races, including parents who may be bi-racial themselves. This also includes multi-racial families.
Families with Multi-Religious/ Faith Beliefs	There are children today raised in multi-religious homes. This means that each parent may have different faiths/religions. They may choose one faith/religion or both in raising their children.
Children with an incarcerated parent(s)	Sometimes children are raised by one caregiver while the other parent is incarcerated. This can be complicated for the family as the parent may spend some time away and then return home. While the parent who is incarcerated is away, the family structure changes.
Unmarried parents who are raising children	Today, many caregivers are deciding not to marry but to raise children. The only difference is that they do not have a legal marriage license; however, their family structure is the same as dual parent families whether opposite sex or same sex.

Family Structure	Description
Transgender parents raising children	This refers to two ways in which children may be raised by a transgender caregiver(s). A parent may transition after already having children with someone of the opposite sex or they may transition prior to having a child and decide they want to parent.
Blended families	A blended family can be two different caregivers that come together each bringing their children from a previous relationship with them. Sometimes the caregivers that come together with children from a previous relationship may also decide to have a child together.
Families formed through reproductive technology	Today we have sophisticated medical advances to help parents who are infertile to become pregnant and give birth to their biological child as well as to use the biological material from someone else and carry that fertilized embryo to term. There are a variety of reproductive technologies that are available to families. This is often at a huge financial cost to the families, as most medical insurance companies do not cover the medical expenses of becoming pregnant.
First time older parents	Today it is becoming more common for men and women to have children in their 30's, 40's, and even older. There are many reasons why men and women may wait to become parents. It may be due to infertility. It may be that the man and/or woman want to establish themselves in a career prior to having children. It may be that they wanted to have financial security before starting a family. What is important is to not assume why someone is parenting at an older age.
Families who experience homelessness	We know that some children are raised without a stable home. The family may be living in their car, living in a hotel, a homeless shelter, or living in multiple dwellings also known as couch surfing. Families experiencing homelessness may be due to the loss of a job/ steady income, being employed by making minimal wages that do not provide the means necessary to sustain housing (and other basic necessities), or other issues that may complicate the family's ability to sustain a stable place to live. Families do not always share their homeless status as there is often shame and embarrassment that society places on these families.

Family Structure	Description
Families with children who have developmental delays and disabilities	This refers to families who have a child or children with developmental delays and/or disabilities. These delays/disabilities are varied. There also may be children without delays/disabilities in the family as well. This often places a burden on families, not only because of the time needed to care for a child who is not typically developing, but because society often misinterprets children who display behaviors that may be viewed as inappropriate.
Families raising their children in a culture not their own and in which English is not the primary language	This refers to families who may have immigrated here and whose children were either born in their country of origin or born in the United States. This duality of cultures can create problems for the child and their family if societal expectations are that the family acculturate to the dominant culture. This results in children feeling shame about their family when they should feel pride in their family of origin.
Chosen or Found Family	A chosen or found family is made up of people who have intentionally chosen to embrace, nurture, love, and support each other regardless of blood or marriage. Rather than the blood ties that may dictate some biological families, found family stories emphasize the connections and communities we choose for ourselves. These narratives are often especially resonant for members of disenfranchised communities, such as those in the LGBTQ+ community, who keenly understand that unconditional love comes in all forms, and so do families.
Multi-parent families	Multi-parent families come in a variety of forms, which include but are not limited to LGBTQIA+ and other families with children born via surrogacy or a sperm/egg donor, step-families where a child or children have developed a significant relationship with one or more step-parents, extended relationship families where relatives are raising the child, friends who wish to share the emotional and physical cost of child-rearing through platonic parenting, polyamorous families.

Children experience different family structures. Those structures may change as a child grows. We must provide supportive and inclusive interactions, relationships and environments for each and every family. This can be accomplished through our ability to be open, inviting, and listening to what the families in our program need from us to feel a sense of belonging.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. After reviewing all of the families above, were there family structures that you were not previously familiar with?
2. How do the family structures above challenge the traditional social construct of "family"?
3. Imagine that you are working with families in a school or community setting. What level of comfort do you have in working with diverse families? What may be challenging for you? What are some strategies that you could use to help you in working on the biases that you may have?

THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURE

Culture is the set of beliefs, values, symbols, means of communication, religion, rituals, fashions, etiquette, foods, and art that unite a particular society. Culture elements are learned behaviors; children learn them while growing up in a particular culture as older members teach them how to live. As such, culture is passed down from one generation to the next. The process of learning culture is called "acculturation".

Some experts assert that who we are is a result of nurture—the relationships and caring that surround us. Others argue that who we are is based entirely on genetics. According to this belief, our temperaments, interests, and talents are set before birth. From this perspective, then, who we are depends on nature.

One way researchers attempt to measure the impact of nature is by studying twins. Some studies have followed identical twins who were raised separately. The pairs shared the same genetics but in some cases were socialized in different ways. Instances of this type of situation are rare, but studying the degree to which identical twins raised apart are the same and different can give researchers insight into the way our temperaments, preferences, and abilities are shaped by our genetic makeup versus our social environment.

For example, in 1968, twin girls were put up for adoption, separated from each other, and raised in different households. The adoptive parents, and certainly the babies, did not realize the girls were one of five pairs of twins who were made subjects of a scientific study (Flam 2007).

In 2003, the two women, then aged thirty-five, were reunited. Elyse Schein and Paula Bernstein sat together in awe, feeling like they were looking into a mirror. Not only did they look alike but they also behaved alike, using the same hand gestures and facial expressions (Spratling 2007). Studies like these point to the genetic roots of our temperament and behavior.

Though genetics and hormones play an important role in human behavior, sociology's larger concern is the effect society has on human behavior, the "nurture" side of the nature versus nurture debate. What race were the twins? From what social class were their parents? What about gender? Religion? All these factors affected the lives of the twins as much as their genetic makeup and are critical to consider as we look at life through the sociological lens.

The nature versus nurture debate is useful to help us contextualize the impact of culture on our definition of self and our interaction with one another. Biology gives us the neural capacity for things like language and culture, but our environments teach us how to use these capacities. For example, biology enables humans to learn a language; this makes us different from other species. However, nothing about our biology dictates whether a baby learns English, Spanish, or Tagalog. Which language one speaks is a learned behavior.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

Imagine if the McClure Twins were separated at birth and adopted by or placed in separate resource families.

1. What sociological factors might impact their development differently from one another?
2. What biological factors might impact their development the same as one another?

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BIAS & MICROAGGRESSIONS

Our identities are ingrained in our being and the intersectionality of our identities make up the sum of who we are. Those identities include:

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion
- Socioeconomic status
- Physical, Emotional, and Developmental (Dis)Ability
- National Origin
- First Language

Most of us have a tendency to view the world from the perspective of our own culture and may tend to view different cultures as inferior or below one's own. This is referred to as ethnocentrism. This creates barriers to building collaborative learning spaces for children, families, schools, and communities that celebrate and elevate all members of that learning community. Reflecting on this affords us the opportunity to acknowledge that no culture is better or worse than any other, only different.

As we investigate our perspectives, we find that we are a product of our environments and as such, have absorbed some of the thinking and ideas that have been passed to us from our family of origin. The relationship between children, families, schools, and communities is delicate. Our goal is to promote collaboration that is deeply respectful of one another. As such, we must self-reflect on areas of our own stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination and take care to mitigate or eliminate them from harming those relationships.

> 🖥 *An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*
> *https://rotel.pressbooks.pub/children-families-schools-communities/?p=43#h5p-1*

Table 1.2: Connecting Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination

Item	Function	Connection	Example
Stereotype	Cognitive; thoughts about people	Overgeneralized beliefs about people may lead to prejudice.	"Yankees fans are arrogant and obnoxious."
Prejudice	Affective; feelings about people, both positive and negative	Feelings may influence treatment of others, leading to discrimination.	"I hate Yankees fans; they make me angry."
Discrimination	Behavior; positive or negative treatment of others	Holding stereotypes and harboring prejudice may lead to excluding, avoiding, and biased treatment of group members.	"I would never hire nor become friends with a person if I knew they were a Yankees fan."

The American Psychological Association defines bias as "...an inclination or predisposition for or against something." Bias often results in unfair treatment, in either positive or negative ways. Consider the following forms of bias:

1. Explicit bias: attitudes and beliefs (positive or negative) that we consciously or deliberately hold and express about a person or group. This kind of bias is outwardly and intentionally displayed through body language, facial expressions, speech, or other forms of communication. It is observed easily and oftentimes creates conflict between people.

2. Implicit bias: attitudes and beliefs (positive or negative) about other people, ideas, issues, or institutions that occur outside of our conscious awareness and control, which affect our opinions and behavior. This kind of bias occurs automatically as the brain makes judgments based on past experiences, education and background. These judgments, if left unexamined, can cause friction with relationships.

3. Confirmation bias: our subconscious tendency to seek and interpret information and other evidence in ways that affirm our existing beliefs, ideas, expectations, and/or hypotheses. Therefore, confirmation bias is both affected by and feeds our implicit biases.

Whether we mean to or not, we sometimes offend people by not thinking about what we say and the manner in which we say it. One danger of limiting our social interactions to people who are from our own social group is in being insensitive to people who are not like us. The term microaggression refers to acts of insensitivity that reveal our inherent biases, cultural incompetency, and hostility toward someone outside of our community. Those biases can be toward race, gender, nationality, or any other diversity variable. The individual on the receiving end of a microaggression is reminded of the barriers to complete acceptance and understanding in the relationship. Let's consider an example.

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Table 1.3: Microaggressions

(9.3 Navigating the Diversity Landscape – College Success | OpenStax, n.d.)

Category	Microaggression	Why It's Offensive
Educational Status or Situation	"You're an athlete; you don't need to study."	Stereotypes athletes and ignores their hard work.
Educational Status or Situation	"You don't get financial aid; you must be rich."	Even an assumption of privilege can be invalidating.
Educational Status or Situation	"Did they have honors classes at your high school?"	Implies that someone is less prepared or intelligent based on their geography.
Race, Ethnicity, National Origin	"You speak so well for someone like you."	Implies that people of a certain race/ethnicity can't speak well.
Race, Ethnicity, National Origin	"No, where are you *really* from?"	Calling attention to someone's national origin makes them feel separate.
Race, Ethnicity, National Origin	"You must be good at _____."	Falsely connects identity to ability.
Race, Ethnicity, National Origin	"My people had it so much worse than yours did."	Makes assumptions and diminishes suffering/difficulty.
Race, Ethnicity, National Origin	"I'm not even going to try your name. It looks too difficult."	Dismisses a person's culture and heritage.
Race, Ethnicity, National Origin	"It's so much easier for Black people to get into college."	Assumes that merit is not the basis for achievement.
Gender and Gender Identity	"They're so emotional."	Assumes a person cannot be emotional and rational.
Gender and Gender Identity	"I guess you can't meet tonight because you have to take care of your son?"	Assumes a parent (of any gender) cannot participate.
Gender and Gender Identity	"I don't get all this pronoun stuff, so I'm just gonna call you what I call you."	Diminishes the importance of gender identity; indicates a lack of empathy.
Gender and Gender Identity	"I can't even tell you used to be a woman."	Conflates identity with appearance, and assumes a person needs someone else's validation.
Gender and Gender Identity	"You're too good-looking to be so smart."	Connects outward appearance to ability.
Sexual Orientation	"I support you; just don't throw it in my face."	Denies another person's right to express their identity or point of view.
Sexual Orientation	"You seem so rugged for a gay guy."	Stereotypes all gay people as being "not rugged," and could likely offend the recipient.
Sexual Orientation	"I might try being a lesbian."	May imply that sexual orientation is a choice.

Category	Microaggression	Why It's Offensive
Sexual Orientation	"I can't even keep track of all these new categories."	Bisexual, pansexual, asexual, and other sexual orientations are just as valid and deserving of respect as more binary orientations.
Sexual Orientation	"You can't just love whomever you want; pick one."	Bisexual, pansexual, asexual, and other sexual orientations are just as valid and deserving of respect as more binary orientations.
Age	"Are you going to need help with the software?"	May stereotype an older person as lacking experience with the latest technology.
Age	"Young people have it so easy nowadays."	Makes a false comparison between age and experience.
Age	"Okay, boomer."	Dismisses an older generation as out of touch.
Size	"I bet no one messes with you."	Projects a tendency to be aggressive onto a person of large stature.
Size	"You are so cute and tiny."	Condescending to a person of small stature.
Size	"I wish I was thin and perfect like you."	Equates a person's size with character.
Ability	(To a person using a wheelchair) "I wish I could sit down wherever I went."	Falsely assumes a wheelchair is a luxury; minimizes disabilities.
Ability	"You don't have to complete the whole test. Just do your best."	Assumes that a disability means limited intellectual potential.
Ability	"I'm blind without my glasses."	Equating diminished capacity with a true disability.

Pause to Reflect!

Review Table 1: Family Structures. As you answer the following questions, think about implicit, explicit, and confirmation bias both for and against the diversity of family structures.

1. What judgements or assumptions do I have about different family structures?
2. Identify examples of times when families are recipients of negative implicit, explicit, or confirmation bias from schools or communities.
3. Reflect on a time when you experienced or witnessed a microaggression in a family, school, or community:

    1. Describe what happened.
    2. What was the hidden message?

4. Calling out bias and microaggressions in schools and communities takes advocacy and courage. Describe concrete ways to bring awareness to and devise strategies around identifying and combating bias and microaggressions.

PART II
THEORIES THAT HELP US UNDERSTAND FAMILIES

Learning Objectives

- 2.1: Contrast five theories that help us to understand families.
- 2.2: Explain how theories provide understanding of family dynamics.
- 2.3: Analyze how a theoretical framework of families influences the reciprocal relationships between schools and/or communities and families.

Introduction

We examine theories about families in order to gain perspective about how they grow and develop. Our examinations include an analysis of how families engage, collaborate, influence, and interact with children, schools, and communities. In this chapter, we will look at five theories that help us to understand families:

1. Bioecological systems theory,
2. Family systems theory,
3. Functionalism,
4. Conflict theory, and
5. Symbolic interaction.

Each theory presents a distinct and different perspective regarding the role of family in society. We will identify areas of theoretical and practical overlap that inform our work with children, families, schools, and communities.

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BIOECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY
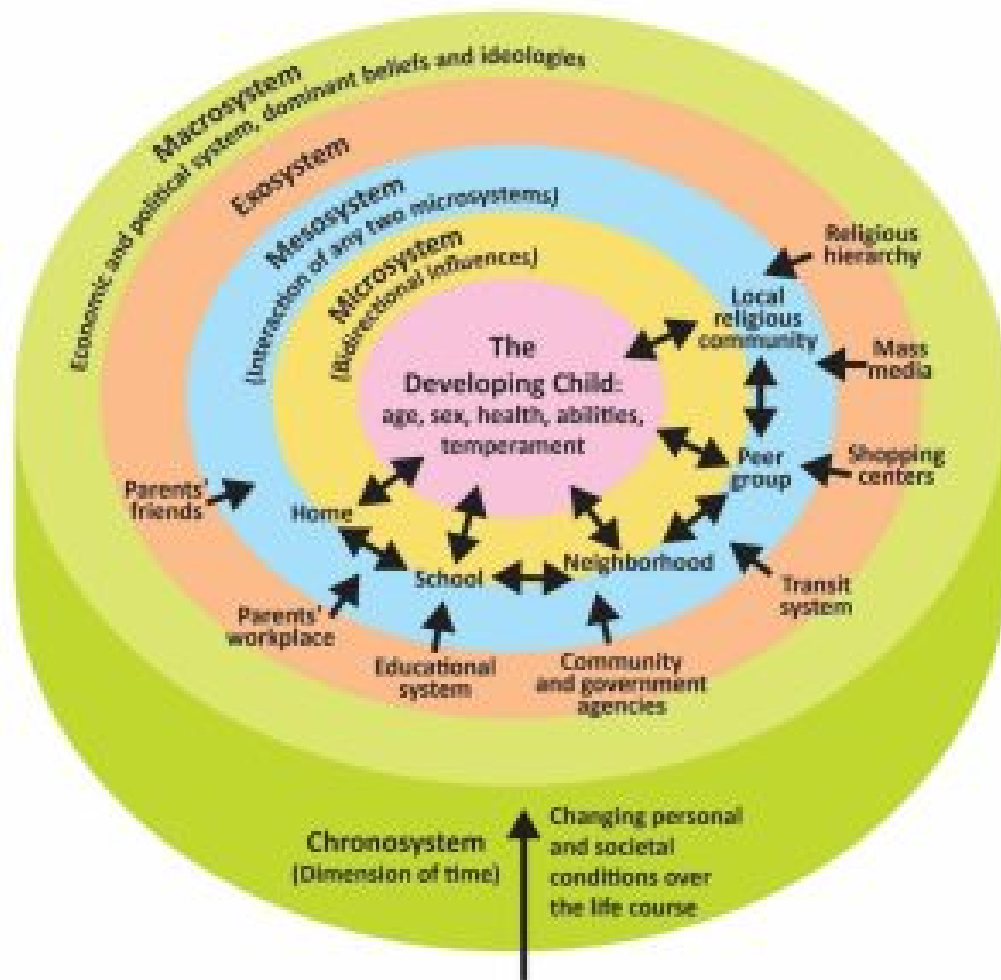
One of the key theories that explains influences on individuals and their families is Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory. A basic tenet of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) is that child and youth development are influenced by many different contexts, settings, or ecologies. Examples include family, peers, schools, communities, sociocultural belief systems, policy regimes, and the economy. At the center of this theory is the child. As we move in and out of the circles, we categorize the external influences that impact the child's development. Those circles impact each other. They shift and change in society and in the overall influence on the child.

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Table 2.1: Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory

Name	Description
Microsystem	Microsystems impact a child directly. These are the people with whom the child interacts such as parents, peers, and teachers. The relationship between individuals and those around them need to be considered.
Mesosystem	Mesosystems are interactions between those surrounding the individual. The relationship between parents and schools, for example, will indirectly affect the child.
Exosystem	Larger institutions such as the mass media or the healthcare system are referred to as the exosystem. These have an impact on families and peers and schools who operate under policies and regulations found in these institutions.
Macrosystem	We find cultural values and beliefs at the level of macrosystems. These larger ideals and expectations inform institutions that will ultimately impact the individual.
Chronosystem	All of this happens in an historical context referred to as the chronosystem. Cultural values change over time, as do policies of educational institutions or governments in certain political climates. Development occurs at a point in time.

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory looked at patterns of development across time. It also considered the interactions between the development of the child and the environment. The implications of this model include the social and political policies and practices affecting children, families, and parenting. The bioecological systems theory serves as a visual organizer to both summarize and unpack key concepts and themes as they relate to individual development, teaching and learning, and educational practices. The goal of learning the bioecological systems theory is to understand the theoretical and research foundations that inform the work in supporting students' well-being, teaching and learning, and identifying and using other factors/resources such as parents, family, peers, to provide positive influence on students' learning and development.

Case Study (A)

The human ecology framework extends Bronfenbrenner's model. As an example, a family seeking refugee resettlement might be influenced by the following systems (Lang):

- Biophysical environment: Were members of the family injured as they fled persecution?
- Microsystem: Was there parental conflict from the stress of fleeing persecution?
- Mesosystem: Is the family working with teachers and other school personnel who do not understand the complexities of refugee resettlement, or the home language of the family, or the cultural traditions of the family?
- Exosystem: How have local leaders responded in ensuring that the family has support services and cultural experiences that welcome and include them into the community?
- Macrosystem: Is the family experiencing discrimination or racism in the community of resettlement?
- Chronosystem: How has the community of resettlement changed over time in response to the resettlement of multiple refugee families?

Case Study (B)

Reading about the Bioecological Systems Theory, I can think of a time in my life that shows each

system impacting my childhood. Halfway through my fifth grade year, my parents informed me that we would travel overseas to live in Izmir, Turkey for two years. Even though my dad was in the military and we were used to moving a lot, we were surprised by this news. I didn't have a ton of time to prepare mentally and emotionally. We had a long sit down at the dinner table talking about this huge change in our life. I was so upset about leaving my friends and dog behind. For me, that resonates with **microsystems**.

I experienced a lot of issues with being bullied while living in Turkey. I was the new kid, coming in with my southern U.S. accent. I was physically attacked by one girl in the bathroom at school which sent me to a local Turkish hospital. At the time, we were not living on a military base, but in the community of Izmir itself. My parents and my dad's commanding officer had to have a giant sit down meeting with the school. At the time, I felt like it was just making everything worse but really, I just wanted to go home back to my friends. This was part of my **mesosystem**.

I developed panic attacks from the trauma of moving, of being bullied, and of feeling isolated. I was in and out of the hospital until I learned how to self soothe and control my anxiety on my own, but needing to go to the hospital from panic attacks was enough to stress me out and send me back time and time again. The cultural divide was wide. In Izmir, there was not a military base. Our family lived in Izmir. Americans were seen as aggressors. I was constantly harassed in the streets due to the significant cultural differences. I wore tank tops and shorts, while most women from Turkey dressed in long scarfs, head coverings, and long skirts. This was really hard for me as a fifth grader. I didn't fully understand. This was part of my **exosystem** and **macrosystem**.

Coming back to the United States was difficult. I began to understand that cultural differences mattered and that the United States was seen as an aggressor in other parts of the world. I was able to have first-hand experience of cultures and beliefs outside of what I grew up in. I gained a deeper understanding of my own self and for how I interact with folks from parts of the world outside of the U.S. This was part of my **chronosystem**.

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory and the human ecology framework assume that families are intentional in their decision-making and that they work toward

- biological sustenance,
- economic maintenance, and
- psychosocial function.

As patterns in the social environment threaten family's quality of life in these three areas, the system will be

more and more likely to seek change. Those threats create non-supportive and exclusive communities that work against the families' participation and inclusion in schools and communities.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Think of yourself at a particular time in your childhood (e.g., age 10). Describe how each system in the bioecological systems theory model directly impacted your development. Identify your influencers in each system.
2. Identify two specific community resources that are available to children and families in your community that address each system in the bioecological systems theory model. For each resource, provide the address, phone number, and web site. Why does each resource connect to the specific system level?

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FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY

Dr. Murray Bowen's Family Systems Theory claims that the family is understood best by conceptualizing it as a complex, dynamic, and changing collection of parts, subsystems and family members. Family Systems Theory states that individuals cannot be understood in isolation from their family unit, as families are emotional systems with interconnected members. It highlights key concepts like differentiation of self, which refers to one's ability to separate personal thoughts and feelings from the family's emotional climate. Bowen also identified patterns like triangles, where conflicts involve a third party to stabilize relationships, and multigenerational transmission, where behaviors and patterns are passed down through generations. The theory emphasizes the need for self-awareness and understanding family dynamics to improve individual functioning and relationships.

The Family Systems Theory is represented by triangles, or a three-person relationship system. It is considered the building block or "molecule" of larger emotional systems because a triangle is the smallest stable relationship system. A two-person system is unstable because it tolerates little tension before involving a third person (Lang).

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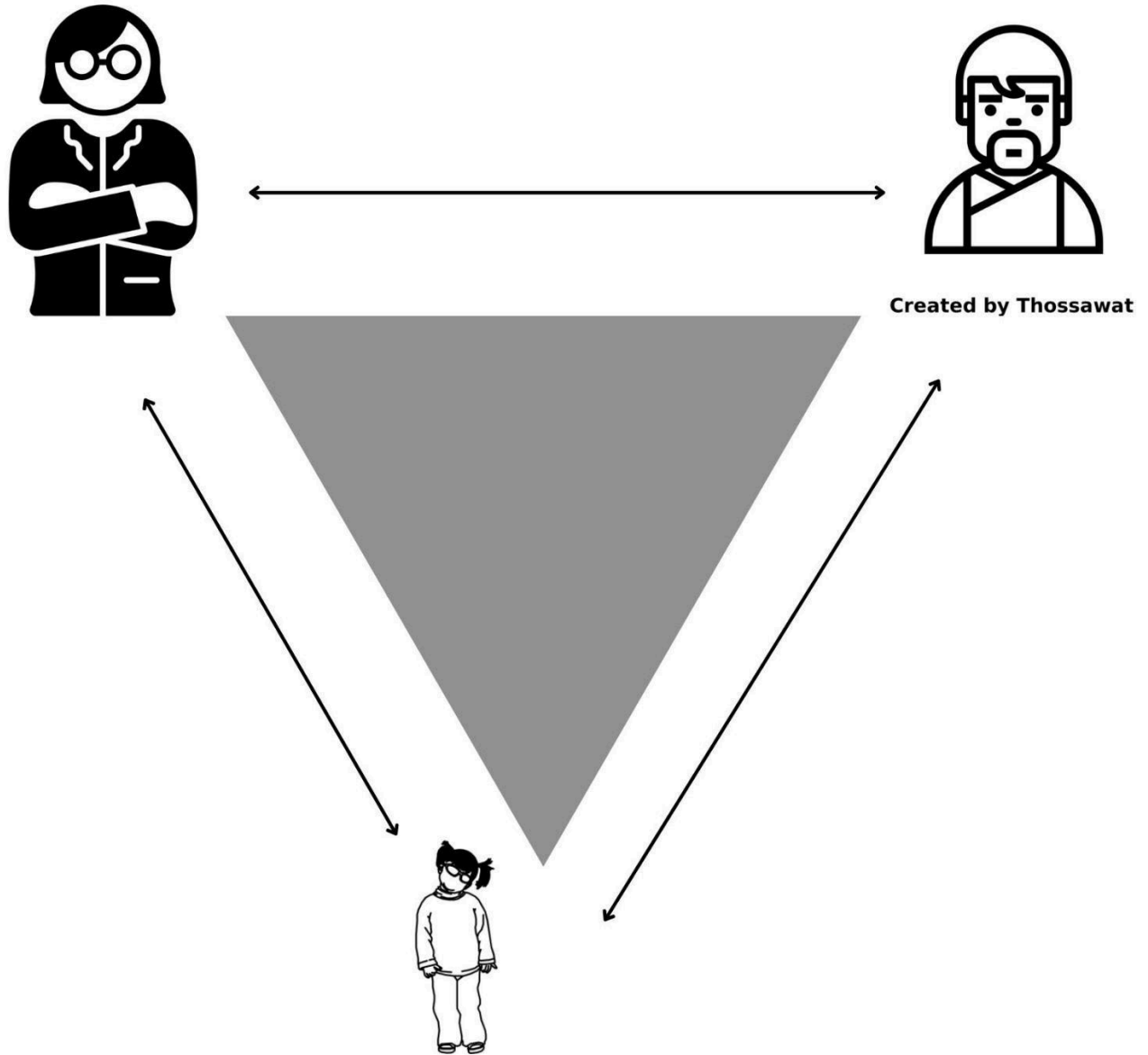
Pause to Reflect!

Marcus and Antonio married three years ago and adopted a daughter, Angela, who is now eleven years old. Marcus and Antonio frequently argue about parenting styles and are navigating preteen years with different views on how to best support Angela.Marcus often confides in Angela, sharing his frustrations about Antonio. Angela feels uncomfortable about this and is not sure if she should talk with Antonio about what she has heard. Over time, Angela begins to feel undue stress and loyalty conflicts.

1. Describe how this scenario relates to Family Systems Theory.
2. Describe which sides of the family systems triangle are unstable.
3. How might that instability impact the family's interactions with schools?

A triangle can contain much more tension without involving another person because the tension can shift around three relationships. If the tension is too high for one triangle to contain, it spreads to a series of "interlocking" triangles. Spreading the tension can stabilize a system, but does not resolve tension. Bowen Family Systems Theory asks us to consider eight key interlocking triangles when understanding the family:

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https://rotel.pressbooks.pub/children-families-schools-communities/?p=54#h5p-4

Table 2.2: Bowen's Family Systems Theory

Name	Description
Emotional triangles	An emotional triangle represents the emotionally driven relationship process that is present in all families. It describes the emotional dynamics between any two or all members of the triangle.
Differentiation of self	We are emotionally connected to our families, and those emotions impact our family dynamics. Differentiation of self indicates that we are autonomous in our own emotional functioning.
Nuclear family	The nuclear family provides a symbolic image of the family at the nucleus, the center, of the emotional system. In times of marital conflict, dysfunction of a spouse, emotional distancing, or conflict over child rearing, that nucleus is threatened.
Family projective process	The child is the focus of this key tenet of Bowen's Family Systems Theory. When there is an intense focus on the child, they may not be given the tools or space to grow, think, feel, and act for themself.
Multi-generational transmission process	Multi-generational transmission process refers to how generations of families teach or role model emotional intensity. This key tenet asks us to consider how each generation offers greater or lesser levels of differentiation of emotional intensity within the nuclear family.
Emotional cut-off	Emotional cut-off describes our need for personal space and distance from emotional intensity.
Sibling position	Personality characteristics fit within the sibling position in which a person grows up.
Societal emotional process	Our emotions influence our cognitive systems and behaviors which, in turn, impact our interactions with others. The societal emotional process describes that relationship within society and amongst each other.

Other key concepts within the Family Systems Theory include:

- boundaries (e.g.Who is a member of the system?),
- equilibrium (e.g., during stressors or crises, the system attempts to return to its original state wherein members are functional and comfortable), and
- bidirectional (e.g., a change with one member will impact at least one other member, and hence impact the whole system).

Case Study (C)

In order to assess patterns of adjustment in families that have resettled into a new country, we must examine the structure of the family unit and the processes that occur within that family system.

For example, one 2008 study collected data from parents and their children who immigrated to the United States from Vietnam and Cambodia to assess the role of family processes in disagreements over cultural values. The researchers found that cultural clashes were linked to parent-child conflict, which in turn was linked to reduced parent-child bonding, both of which increase adolescent behavioral problems (Lang).

This theory also assumes that families can examine their own processes and set deliberate goals. Change can occur when a family system acknowledges that a particular family pattern causes family stressors and identifies new processes that support the family's goals.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. What is the main role you have in your family system?
2. Which cultural values do you share with your family system?
3. Which cultural values do you separate yourself from within your family system?
4. How do family roles, patterns of interaction between family members, and shared or unshared cultural values impact a family's relationships with schools or communities?

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FUNCTIONALISM

When considering the role of family in society, functionalists uphold the notion that families are an important social institution and that they play a key role in stabilizing society. They also note that family members take on status roles in a marriage or family. The family, and its members, perform certain functions that facilitate the prosperity and development of society. Functionalists believe that the family socializes children, it provides emotional and practical support for its members, it helps regulate sexual activity and sexual reproduction, and it provides its members with a social identity. In addition, sudden or far-reaching changes in the family's structure or processes threaten its stability and weaken society.

Sociologist George Murdock conducted a survey of 250 societies and determined that there are four universal residual functions of the family: sexual, reproductive, educational, and economic (Lee 1982). According to Murdock, the family (which for him includes the state of marriage) regulates sexual relations between individuals. He does not deny the existence or impact of premarital or extramarital sex, but states that the family offers a socially legitimate sexual outlet for adults (Lee 1985). This outlet gives way to reproduction, which is a necessary part of ensuring the survival of society.

Once children are born, the family plays a vital role in training them for adult life. As the primary agent of socialization and enculturation, the family teaches young children the ways of thinking and behaving that follow social and cultural norms, values, beliefs, and attitudes.

Case Study (D)

BudEllison.com

Functionalists believe that parents teach children gender roles. Gender roles are an important part of the economic function of a family. In each family, there is a division of labor that consists of instrumental and expressive roles. Men tend to assume the instrumental roles in the family, which typically involve work outside of the family that provides financial support and establishes family status. Women tend to assume the expressive roles, which typically involve work inside of the family which provides emotional support and physical care for children (Crano and Aronoff 1978).

What might this little girl be learning about the role of her mother?

Case Study (E)

Maria and Sarah are a same-sex couple raising their 6-year-old son, Ethan, in a suburban community. Maria and Sarah adopted Ethan when he was an infant. Both parents are employed; Maria works as a nurse, while Sarah is a software engineer. They share responsibilities at home.

Maria and Sarah read to Ethan daily, help him with homework, and encourage his curiosity. They

also teach him social skills through playdates and family gatherings. Both moms ensure Ethan feels loved and secure. They practice open communication, allowing Ethan to express his feelings and concerns. Every weekend, they participate in outings and game nights with family friends.

Maria and Sarah budget carefully, saving for Ethan's education and ensuring all basic needs are met. Maria and Sarah share household duties and parenting responsibilities. They rotate tasks like cooking, cleaning, and attending parent-teacher meetings, ensuring a balanced workload and modeling cooperation for Ethan.

1. Functionalism focuses on socialization, emotional support, economic support, reproduction and regulation of sexual activity, and family dynamics. Describe how this family fits into those categories.

According to functionalists, the differentiation of the roles on the basis of sex ensures that families are well balanced and coordinated. When family members move outside of these roles, the family is thrown out of balance and must recalibrate in order to function properly. For example, if the father assumes an expressive role such as providing daytime care for the children, the mother must take on an instrumental role such as gaining paid employment outside of the home in order for the family to maintain balance and function.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Functionalism is often criticized as being an outdated theory in understanding families. Why?
2. How do traditional gender and family roles impact a family's relationships with schools or communities?

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CONFLICT THEORY

Conflict theorists are quick to point out that U.S. families have been defined as private entities, the consequence of which has been to leave family matters to only those within the family. Many people in the United States are resistant to government intervention in the family: parents do not want the government to tell them how to raise their children or to become involved in domestic issues. Conflict theory highlights the role of power in family life and contends that the family is often not a haven but rather an arena where power struggles can occur. This exercise of power often entails the performance of family status roles. Conflict theorists may study conflicts as simple as the enforcement of rules from parent to child, or they may examine more serious issues such as domestic violence (spousal and child), sexual assault, marital rape, and incest.

The conflict perspective views the family as a vehicle to maintain patriarchy (gender inequality) and social inequality in society. According to conflict theorists, the family works toward the continuance of social inequality within a society by maintaining and reinforcing the status quo. Because inheritance, education and social capital are transmitted through the family structure, wealthy families are able to keep their privileged social position for their members, while individuals from poor families are denied similar status.

Case Study (D)

Conflict theorists have also seen the family as a social arrangement benefiting men more than women, allowing men to maintain a position of power. The traditional family form in most cultures is patriarchal, contributing to inequality between the sexes. Males tend to have more power and females tend to have less. Traditional male roles and responsibilities are valued more than the traditional roles done by their wives (i.e., housekeeping, child rearing). The traditional family is also an inequitable structure for women and children.

What might this young child be learning about household responsibilities of the mother and the father?

The first study of marital power was performed in 1960. Researchers found that the person with the most access to valued resources held the most power. As money is one of the most valuable resources, men who worked in paid labor outside of the home held more power than women who worked inside the home (Blood and Wolfe 1960). Even today, with more fluid family roles, conflict theorists find disputes over the division of household labor to be a common source of marital discord. Household labor offers no wages and, therefore,

no power. Studies indicate that when men do more housework, women experience more satisfaction in their marriages, reducing the incidence of conflict (Coltrane 2000). In general, conflict theorists tend to study areas of marriage and life that involve inequalities or discrepancies in power and authority, as they are reflective of the larger social structure.

Case Study (E)

John and Lisa have been married for 15 years. They have three children: Alex (14), Emily (11), and Jake (8). John is a high-powered attorney, and Lisa is a successful businesswoman. The family lives in an affluent suburban neighborhood, enjoying a lifestyle with access to extracurricular activities, and a vacation home.

John and Lisa work in high-demand careers which result in very long work days. They hired a nanny and house cleaner to help with the day-to-day family operations.   John and Lisa's busy careers mean less time spent with their children. Alex, being the oldest, often receives more attention and investment in extracurricular activities like private tutoring and sports, while Emily and Jake feel they receive less focus and resources.

The children are socialized into a lifestyle that emphasizes material wealth and status, creating a competitive atmosphere among siblings. Alex, excelling academically and athletically, is often praised, intensifying sibling rivalry and feelings of inadequacy in Emily and Jake. Emily, in particular, shows signs of rebellion, such as declining grades and arguments with her parents. Family conflicts escalate when John and Lisa, recognizing the issues, attempt to impose stricter rules and oversight.

1. Describe how this scenario relates to Conflict Theory.
2. Describe the power struggles presented in this case study.
3. How might those power struggles impact the family's interactions with schools?

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. How does the division of chores impact your household?
2. How does the traditional household division impact a family's relationships with schools or communities?

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SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

Interactionists view the world in terms of symbols and the meanings assigned to them (LaRossa and Reitzes 1993). The family itself is a symbol. To some, it is a father, mother, and children. To others, it is any union that involves respect and compassion. Interactionists stress that family is not an objective, concrete reality. Like other social phenomena, it is a social construct that is subject to the ebb and flow of social norms and ever-changing meanings.

Consider the meaning of other elements of family: in the past, "parent" was a symbol of a biological and emotional connection to a child. With more parent-child relationships developing through adoption, remarriage, or change in guardianship, the word "parent" today is less likely to be associated with a biological connection than with whoever is socially recognized as having the responsibility for a child's upbringing. Similarly, the terms "mother" and "father" are no longer rigidly associated with the meanings of caregiver and breadwinner. These meanings are more free-flowing through changing family roles.

Case Study (F)

In Chapter 1, you learned about the changing definition of the family and explored "family" as a social construct that is influenced by culture, society, and the media. Interactionists also recognize how the family status roles of each member are socially constructed, playing an important part in how people perceive and interpret social behavior.

Based on what you see in this photograph, describe the role of the father in this family.

Interactionists view the family as a group of role players or "actors" that come together to act out their parts in an effort to construct a family. These roles are up for interpretation. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a "good father," for example, was one who worked hard to provide financial security for his children. Today, for some, a "good father" is one who takes the time outside of work to promote his children's emotional well-being, social skills, and intellectual growth—in some ways, a much more daunting task.

Case Study (G)

Karen, a single mother, works as a nurse, balancing long shifts with raising her two teenage sons, Michael and David, in an urban neighborhood. Karen maintains an open and supportive communication style with her sons, fostering an environment where they feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences.

Karen assumes multiple roles: caregiver, disciplinarian, and emotional support. She often discusses her expectations openly with her sons, emphasizing the importance of responsibility and mutual respect. Michael and David communicate differently with Karen; Michael is more reserved and indirect, while David is expressive and straightforward. Michael and David understand and navigate their roles as sons and students. Michael, being the elder, often feels the implicit expectation to set an example for his younger brother, which shapes his behavior and decisions.

Michael takes on a part-time job and aspires to attend college. David engages actively in school sports and arts. The family develops shared understandings and routines, such as dinner conversations and weekend activities.

1. Describe how this scenario relates to Symbolic Interactionism.
2. Describe the social interactions presented in this case study.
3. How might those social interactions impact the family's interactions with schools?

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Based on what you learned in Chapter 1, which family structures align with the symbolic interactionist perspective?
2. What implicit or explicit bias might a traditional family aligned with conflict theory experience from a teacher or community member who holds a symbolic interactionist perspective?

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PART III
A CLOSER LOOK AT PARENTING

Learning Objectives

- 3:1: Apply Attachment Theory to our modern definition of "family".
- 3.2: Identify different parenting styles.
- 3.3: Describe how parenting develops over time.

Introduction

Parenting styles influence the development of children's social and emotional growth. It is a major area of study for developmental psychologists. We will examine a variety of parenting styles and analyze how culture impacts them. We will also define attachment theory and discuss its application to our evolving definition of "family" that we explored in Chapters 1 and 2.

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ATTACHMENT THEORY

Attachment

Psychosocial development occurs as children form relationships, interact with others, and understand and manage their feelings. In social and emotional development, forming healthy attachments is very important and is the major social milestone of infancy. Attachment is a long-standing connection or bond with others. Developmental psychologists are interested in how infants reach this milestone. They ask such questions as: How do parent and infant attachment bonds form? What accounts for children's attachment differences?

Researchers Harry Harlow, John Bowlby, and Mary Ainsworth conducted studies designed to answer these questions. In the 1950s, Harlow conducted a series of experiments on monkeys. He separated newborn monkeys from their mothers. Each monkey was presented with two surrogate mothers. One surrogate monkey was made out of wire mesh. She could dispense milk. The other monkey was softer and made from cloth: this monkey did not dispense milk. Research shows that the monkeys preferred the soft, cuddly cloth monkey even though she did not provide any nourishment. The baby monkeys spent their time clinging to the cloth monkey and only went to the wire monkey when they needed to be fed. Prior to this study, the medical and scientific communities generally thought that babies become attached to the people who provide their nourishment. However, Harlow (1958) concluded that there was more to the mother-child bond than nourishment. Feelings of comfort and security are the critical components to maternal-infant bonding, which leads to healthy psychosocial development.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Watch Harlow's Studies on Dependency in Monkeys.

📰 *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://rotel.pressbooks.pub/children-families-schools-communities/?p=70#oembed-1*

2. Describe what you see in the video.
3. Identify how this helps you to understand attachment.

Building on the work of Harlow and others, John Bowlby developed the concept of attachment theory. He defined attachment as the affectional bond or tie that an infant forms with the mother (Bowlby, 1969). An infant must form this bond with a primary caregiver in order to have normal social and emotional development. In addition, Bowlby proposed that this attachment bond is very powerful and continues throughout life. He used the concept of secure base to define a healthy attachment between parent and child (Bowlby, 1969). A secure base is a parental presence that gives the child a sense of safety as the child explores its surroundings. Bowlby said that two things are needed for a healthy attachment: the caregiver must be responsive to the child's physical, social, and emotional needs. In addition, the caregiver and child must engage in mutually enjoyable interactions (Bowlby, 1969).

Bowlby concluded that the primary caregiver has a particular role in providing the infant and child with a sense of safety: a secure base from which to thrive and flourish. Bowlby pointed toward four stages in the development of attachment:

- Preattachment phase (birth to 6 weeks)
- 'Attachment-in-the-making' phase (6 weeks to 6 to 8 months)
- 'Clear cut' attachment phase (6 to 8 months to 18 months to 2 years)
- Formation of a reciprocal relationship (18 months to 2 years and on) (Harlow, 2021)

While Bowlby thought attachment was an all-or-nothing process, Mary Ainsworth's (1970) research showed otherwise. Ainsworth wanted to know if children differ in the ways they bond, and if so, why.

To find the answers, she used the Strange Situation procedure to study attachment between mothers and their infants (1970). In the Strange Situation, the mother (or primary caregiver) and the infant (age 12-18 months) are placed in a room together. There are toys in the room, and the caregiver and child spend some time alone in the room. After the child has had time to explore the surroundings, a stranger enters the room. The mother then leaves her baby with the stranger. After a few minutes, she returns to comfort her child.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Watch Ainsworth's Strange Situation study.

> *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://rotel.pressbooks.pub/children-families-schools-communities/?p=70#oembed-2*

2. Describe what you see in the video.
3. Identify how this helps you to understand attachment theory.

Based on how the infants/toddlers responded to the separation and reunion, Ainsworth identified three types of parent-child attachments: secure, avoidant, and resistant (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970). A fourth style, known as disorganized attachment, was later described (Main & Solomon, 1990).

Table 3.1: Types of Attachments

Type	Description
Secure	The attachment figure is used as a secure base to explore the environment and is sought out in times of stress. Securely attached children were distressed when their caregivers left the room in the Strange Situation experiment, but when their caregivers returned, the securely attached children were happy to see them. Securely attached children have caregivers who are sensitive and responsive to their needs.
Avoidant	The child is unresponsive to the parent, does not use the parent as a secure base, and does not care if the parent leaves. The toddler reacts to the parent the same way she reacts to a stranger. When the parent does return, the child is slow to show a positive reaction. Ainsworth theorized that these children were most likely to have a caregiver who was insensitive and inattentive to their needs (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978).
Resistant	Children tend to show clingy behavior, but then they reject the attachment figure's attempts to interact with them (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970). These children do not explore the toys in the room, as they are too fearful. During separation in the Strange Situation, they became extremely disturbed and angry with the caregiver. When the caregiver returns, the children are difficult to comfort. Resistant attachment is the result of the caregivers' inconsistent level of response to their child.
Disorganized	Children with disorganized attachment behave oddly in the Strange Situation. They freeze, run around the room in an erratic manner, or try to run away when the caregiver returns (Main & Solomon, 1990). This type of attachment is seen most often in children who have been abused. Research has shown that abuse disrupts a child's ability to regulate their emotions.

More recently, attachment theory has been critiqued for its limitations. While it is clear that secure attachments to caregivers influence human development across the lifespan, it is important to note that Harlow's, Bowlby's, and Ainsworth's studies focused, primarily, on the role of the mother. Also, as we consider the interactions outlined in Table 1, we notice that each interaction is short in duration and does not provide multiple glimpses into the relationship between the caregiver and the child. A longitudinal understanding of that relationship development is lacking.

John T. Bruer, author of the book *The Myth of the First Three Years*, critiqued the Strange Situation Test. He believed that attachment classifications that infants received were not highly stable over time. "One would think that when, or shortly after, the twig is bent into a type B baby, the infant would tend to remain a type B baby. Recent studies of even middle class infants, however, do not show high stability in infants attachment classification over time. What the evidence seems to suggest is that the classification remains stable as long as the life circumstances for mother and infant and the caring relationship between mother and infant remains

stable'." Breuer concludes that is really, 'as the wind blows', rather than, 'as the twig is bent'.   Later experience, according to Bruer, can straighten a bent twig or bend a straight one.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Think of a child that you know well.
2. What type of attachment best describes the child's relationship with a caregiver?
3. Describe interactions between the two that drew you to this conclusion.

Attachment theory has been critiqued for its limitations. While it is clear that secure attachments to caregivers influence human development across the lifespan, it is important to note that Harlow's, Bowlby's, and Ainsworth's studies focused, primarily, on the role of the mother. An example of one critique came from psychologist Michael Rutter who argued that Attachment Theory excluded an examination of caregivers like fathers and grandparents. Researchers like Lena Robinson noted that Attachment Theory was built around Western notions of 'good parenting' and ignored diverse parenting models practiced in communities around the world. Finally, as we consider the interactions outlined in Table 1, we notice that each interaction is short in duration and does not provide multiple glimpses into the relationship between the caregiver and the child. A longitudinal understanding of that relationship development is lacking (Gibson et al., 2023).

Researchers have pointed out that a child's temperament may have a strong influence on attachment (Gervai, 2009; Harris, 2009), and others have noted that attachment varies from culture to culture, a factor not accounted for in Ainsworth's research (Rothbaum, Weisz, Pott, Miyake, & Morelli, 2000; van Ijzendoorn & Sagi-Schwartz, 2008).

A growing body of research points toward the role of peers in relationship development. This research questions which have more influence: caregivers or peers (Harris 1998). O'Connor and Zeanah (2003) suggest that the definition of attachment disorder might be expanded to include problems in social relationships with peers and social cognitive problems indexed by a difficulty in understanding the thoughts and feelings of self and others. Reframing attachment theory through this lens leads to the question of the theory's applicability to children with exceptionalities such as Autism Spectrum Disorders or psychiatric disorders where attachments are influenced by the characteristics of the exceptionality.

Researchers are interested in how early experience and attachments impact adulthood, indicating that people who have insecure attachments as small children tend to be drawn to those who fit their expectations, even if they are treated badly. "Our attachment system preferentially sees things according to what has happened in the past," said Dr. Amir Levine, a psychiatrist at Columbia University and the co-author of the book "Attached," which explores how attachment behaviors affect the neurochemistry of the brain. "It's kind of like searching in Google where it fills in based on what you searched before" (Murphy, 2017). It is important to note that our attachment models are not fixed.

Secure attachments formed later in life can help us to override our expectations for insecure attachments.It is important to note that our attachment models are not fixed. Secure attachments formed later in life can help us to override our expectations for insecure attachments. Educators, caregivers, and support systems can intervene directly with children with insecure attachments by focusing on their external social interactions and internal feelings of self-worth to build a foundation. This foundation includes promoting

- Trust that a caregiver is available and supportive,
- Parental reflective function when a caregiver understands their own and their children's behaviors and stresses;
- Self-esteem that encourages a positive self-view because of the stable and reliable external social environment;
- Autonomy/self-efficacy that encourages the child to ask questions and demonstrate healthy protest;
- Family membership. (Harlow, 2021).

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Choose one of the following lenses: temperament, culture, peers, exceptionalities. Give specific examples of how it challenges or extends your understanding of attachment theory.
2. Identify life events that support the idea that attachment models are not fixed.
3. Think back to Chapters 1 and 2 when you explored the growing definition of family. Apply attachment theory to one of those definitions. Where does it align and where does it diverge?

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PARENTING STYLES

Developmental psychologists have been interested in how parents influence the development of children's social and instrumental competence since at least the 1920s. One of the most robust approaches to this area is the study of what has been called "parenting style." Our text defines parenting style, explores four types, and discusses how parenting styles influence the social and emotional development of children. It is important to note that parenting styles are not the sole influencers in the development and trajectory of a child's development. They are only one force within a system of forces.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Watch The Science Behind How Parents Affect Child Development.
   https://embed.ted.com/talks/lang/en/
   yuko_munakata_the_science_behind_how_parents_affect_child_development
2. What are your key take-aways from Yuko Munakata's TED Talk?
3. Identify how this helps you to understand parenting styles and their effect on the development of children?

Parenting Style Defined

Parenting is a complex activity that includes many specific behaviors that work individually and together to influence child outcomes. Although specific parenting behaviors, such as spanking or reading aloud, may influence child development, looking at any specific behavior in isolation may be misleading. Many writers have noted that specific parenting practices are less important in predicting child well-being than is the broad pattern of parenting. Most researchers who attempt to describe this broad parental milieu rely on Diana Baumrind's concept of parenting style. The construct of parenting style is used to capture normal variations in parents' attempts to control and socialize their children (Baumrind, 1991).

Two points are critical in understanding this definition. First, parenting style is meant to describe normal variations in parenting. In other words, the parenting style typology Baumrind developed should not be understood to include deviant parenting, such as might be observed in abusive or neglectful homes. Second, Baumrind assumes that normal parenting revolves around issues of control.

Parenting style captures two important areas of focus: parental responsiveness and parental demandingness (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Parental responsiveness (also referred to as parental warmth or supportiveness) refers to "the extent to which parents intentionally foster individuality, self-regulation, and self-assertion by being attuned, supportive, and acquiescent to children's special needs and demands" (Baumrind, 1991, p. 62). Parental demandingness (also referred to as behavioral control) refers to "the claims parents make on children to become integrated into the family whole, by their maturity demands, supervision, disciplinary efforts and willingness to confront the child who disobeys" (Baumrind, 1991, pp. 61- 62).

Table 3.2: Parenting Styles

Demand Level	Support (Low)	Support (High)
Low	Uninvolved	Permissive
High	Authoritarian	Authoritative

According to Baumrind, categorizing parents according to whether they are high or low on parental demandingness and responsiveness creates a typology of four parenting styles: indulgent, authoritarian, authoritative, and uninvolved (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Each of these parenting styles reflects different naturally occurring patterns of parental values, practices, and behaviors (Baumrind, 1991) and a distinct balance of responsiveness and demandingness.

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https://rotel.pressbooks.pub/children-families-schools-communities/?p=75#h5p-5

Table 3.3: Baumrind's Categories of Parenting

Category	Description
Indulgent	Indulgent caregivers may also be referred to as "permissive" or "nondirective." They "are more responsive than they are demanding. They are nontraditional and lenient, do not require mature behavior, allow considerable self-regulation, and avoid confrontation" (Baumrind, 1991, p. 62). Indulgent caregivers may be further divided into two types: • democratic parents, who, though lenient, are more conscientious, engaged, and committed to the child, and • nondirective parents.
Authoritarian	Authoritarian caregivers are highly demanding and directive, but not responsive. "They are obedience- and status-oriented, and expect their orders to be obeyed without explanation" (Baumrind, 1991, p. 62). These parents provide well-ordered and structured environments with clearly stated rules. Authoritarian caregivers can be divided into two types: • non authoritarian-directive, who are directive, but not intrusive or autocratic in their use of power, and • authoritarian-directive, who are highly intrusive.
Authoritative	Authoritative caregivers are both demanding and responsive. "They monitor and impart clear standards for their children's conduct. They are assertive, but not intrusive and restrictive. Their disciplinary methods are supportive, rather than punitive. They want their children to be assertive as well as socially responsible, and self-regulated as well as cooperative" (Baumrind, 1991, p. 62).
Uninvolved	Uninvolved caregivers are low in both responsiveness and demandingness. In extreme cases, this parenting style might encompass both rejecting-neglecting and neglectful parents, although most parents of this type fall within the normal range. (Baumrind, 1991).

Parenting styles also differ in the extent to which they are characterized by a third dimension: psychological control. Psychological control "refers to control attempts that intrude into the psychological and emotional development of the child" (Barber, 1996, p. 3296) through use of parenting practices such as guilt induction, withdrawal of love, or shaming. One key difference between authoritarian and authoritative parenting is in the dimension of psychological control. Both authoritarian and authoritative parents place high demands

on their children and expect their children to behave appropriately and obey parental rules. Authoritarian parents, however, also expect their children to accept their judgments, values, and goals without questioning. In contrast, authoritative parents are more open to give and take with their children and make greater use of explanations. Thus, although authoritative and authoritarian parents are equally high in behavioral control, authoritative parents tend to be low in psychological control, while authoritarian parents tend to be high.

Parenting style has been found to predict child well-being in the domains of social competence, academic performance, psychosocial development, and problem behavior. Research in the United States, based on parent interviews, child reports, and parent observations consistently finds that:

- Children and adolescents whose parents are authoritative rate themselves and are rated by objective measures as more socially and instrumentally competent than those whose parents are nonauthoritative (Baumrind, 1991; Weiss & Schwarz, 1996; Miller et al., 1993).
- Children and adolescents whose parents are uninvolved perform most poorly in all domains.

In general, parental responsiveness predicts social competence and psychosocial functioning, while parental demandingness is associated with instrumental competence and behavioral control (i.e., academic performance and deviance). These findings indicate that

- Children and adolescents from authoritarian families (high in demandingness, but low in responsiveness) tend to perform moderately well in school and be uninvolved in problem behavior, but they have poorer social skills, lower self-esteem, and higher levels of depression.
- Children and adolescents from indulgent homes (high in responsiveness, low in demandingness) are more likely to be involved in problem behavior and perform less well in school, but they have higher self-esteem, better social skills, and lower levels of depression.

In reviewing the literature on parenting style, one is struck by the consistency with which authoritative

upbringing is associated with both instrumental and social competence and lower levels of problem behavior in both boys and girls at all developmental stages. The benefits of authoritative parenting and the detrimental effects of uninvolved parenting are evident as early as the preschool years and continue throughout adolescence and into early adulthood. Although specific differences can be found in the competence evidenced by each group, the largest differences are found between children whose parents are unengaged and their peers with more involved parents.

Differences between children from authoritative homes and their peers are equally consistent, but somewhat smaller (Weiss & Schwarz, 1996). Just as authoritative parents appear to be able to balance their conformity demands with their respect for their children's individuality, so children from authoritative homes appear to be able to balance the claims of external conformity and achievement demands with their need for individuation and autonomy.

Lemasters and Defrain (1989) offer another model of parenting. This model is interesting because it looks more closely at the motivations of the parent and suggests that parenting styles are often designed to meet the psychological needs of the parent rather than the developmental needs of the child.

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> *https://rotel.pressbooks.pub/children-families-schools-communities/?p=75#h5p-6*

Table 3.4: Lemaster and Defrain's Model of Parenting

Name	Description
Martyr	• Will do anything for the child-even tasks that the child should do for himself or herself • May use all they do for the child to guilt the child into compliance • Child learns to be dependent and manipulative.
Pal	• Wants to be the child's friend; • Lets children do what they want and focuses mostly on being entertaining and fun • Sets few limits • Children may have little self-discipline and may try to test limits with others.
Police Officer/Drill Sergeant	• Focuses primarily on making sure that the child is obedient and that the parent has full control of the child • May scold or punish child for not doing things right • Struggles to allow child to grow and learn to make decisions independently • Child may have a lot of resentment towards a parent that they may displace on others.
Teacher-Counselor	• Pays a lot of attention to expert advice on parenting and who believes that as long as all of the steps are followed, the parent can rear a perfect child • Puts all responsibility for outcomes on parents
Athletic Coach	• Helps the child understand what needs to happen in certain situations and encourages and advises the child about how to manage these situations • Does not intervene or do things for the child • Sets consistent and objective rules • Children are supported and guided while they learn firsthand how to handle situations.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Which parenting style were you raised in?
2. If you are a parent now, which style are you? If you are not a parent, which style do you believe you will follow?
3. How did your caregiver's parenting style impact you as a child, and as an adult today?
4. Think about a family's relationship with a school or community organization. How might parenting styles impact parental engagement?

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THE DEVELOPING PARENT

Think back to an emotional event you experienced as a child. How did your parents react to you? Did your parents get frustrated or criticize you, or did they act patiently and provide support and guidance? Did your parents provide lots of rules for you or let you make decisions on your own? Why do you think your parents behaved the way they did?

Psychologists have attempted to answer these questions about the influences on parents and understand why parents behave the way they do. Because parents are critical to a child's development, a great deal of research has been focused on the impact that parents have on children. Less is known, however, about the development of parents themselves and the impact of children on parents. Nonetheless, parenting plays a major role in an adult's life. Parenthood is often considered a normative developmental task of adulthood. Cross-cultural studies show that adolescents around the world plan to have children. In fact, most men and women in the United States will become parents by the age of 40 years (Martinez, Daniels, & Chandra, 2012).

People have children for many reasons, including emotional reasons (e.g., the emotional bond with children and the gratification the parent–child relationship brings), economic and utilitarian reasons (e.g., children provide help in the family and support in old age), and social-normative reasons (e.g., adults are expected to have children; children provide status) (Nauck, 2007).

Parenthood is undergoing changes in the United States and elsewhere in the world. Children are less likely to be living with both parents, and women in the United States have fewer children than they did previously. The average fertility rate of women in the United States was about seven children in the early 1900s and has remained relatively stable at 2.1 since the 1970s (Hamilton, Martin, & Ventura, 2011; Martinez, Daniels, & Chandra, 2012). Not only are parents having fewer children, the context of parenthood has also

changed. Parenting outside of marriage has increased dramatically among most socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic groups, although college-educated women are substantially more likely to be married at the birth of a child than are mothers with less education (Dye, 2010). Finally, our evolving definition of "family" influences us to provide an inclusive lens to "parenthood" and the definition of "parent" or "caregiver".

Galinsky (1987) was one of the first to emphasize the development of parents themselves, how they respond to their children's development, and how they grow as parents. Parenthood is an experience that transforms one's identity as parents take on new roles. Children's growth and development force parents to change their roles. They must develop new skills and abilities in response to children's development. Galinsky identified six stages of parenthood that focus on different tasks and goals.

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Table 3.5: Galinsky's Six Stages of Parenthood

Stage	Description
Stage 1 The Image-Making Stage	As prospective parents think about and form images about their roles as parents and what parenthood will bring and prepare for the changes an infant will bring, they enter the image-making stage. Future parents develop their ideas about what it will be like to be a parent and the type of parent they want to be. Individuals may evaluate their relationships with their own parents as a model of their roles as parents.
Stage 2 The Nurturing Stage	The nurturing stage occurs at the birth of the baby. A parent's main goal during this stage is to develop an attachment relationship to their baby. Parents must adapt their romantic relationships, their relationships with their other children, and with their own parents to include the new infant. Some parents feel attached to the baby immediately, but for other parents, this occurs more gradually. Parents may have imagined their infant in specific ways, but they now have to reconcile those images with their actual baby. In incorporating their relationship with their child into their other relationships, parents often have to reshape their conceptions of themselves and their identity. Parenting responsibilities are the most demanding during infancy because infants are completely dependent on caregiving.
Stage 3 The Authority Stage	The authority stage occurs when children are 2 years old until about 4 or 5 years old. In this stage, parents make decisions about how much authority to exert over their children's behavior. Parents must establish rules to guide their child's behavior and development. They have to decide how strictly they should enforce rules and what to do when rules are broken.
Stage 4 The Interpretive Stage	The interpretive stage occurs when children enter school (preschool or kindergarten) to the beginning of adolescence. Parents interpret their children's experiences as children are increasingly exposed to the world outside the family. Parents answer their children's questions, provide explanations, and determine what behaviors and values to teach. They decide what experiences to provide their children, in terms of schooling, neighborhood, and extracurricular activities. By this time, parents have experience in the parenting role and often reflect on their strengths and weaknesses as parents, review their images of parenthood, and determine how realistic they have been. Parents have to negotiate how involved to be with their children, when to step in, and when to encourage children to make choices independently.
Stage 5 The Interdependent Stage	Parents of teenagers are in the interdependent stage. They must redefine their authority and renegotiate their relationship with their adolescent as the children increasingly make decisions independent of parental control and authority. On the other hand, parents do not permit their adolescent children to have complete autonomy over their decision-making and behavior, and thus adolescents and parents must adapt their relationship to allow for greater negotiation and discussion about rules and limits.
Stage 6 The Departure Stage	During the departure stage of parenting, parents evaluate the entire experience of parenting. They prepare for their child's departure, redefine their identity as the parent of an adult child, and assess their parenting accomplishments and failures. This stage forms a transition to a new era in parents' lives. This stage usually spans a long time period from when the oldest child moves away (and often returns) until the youngest child leaves. The parenting role must be redefined as a less central role in a parent's identity.

Case Study (A)

James and Emma have been married for 20 years. They have three children: Olivia (18), Ethan (15), and Lily (10).

Stage 1: Image-Making

During Emma's pregnancy with Olivia, James and Emma imagined their future roles as parents, discussing their parenting philosophies and dreams for their child. They developed a vision of themselves as nurturing and supportive parents, laying the foundation for their parenting journey.

Stage 2: Nurturing

After Olivia's birth, James and Emma adjusted to the demands of caring for an infant, balancing sleepless nights and work responsibilities. They strengthened their bond with Olivia, learning to interpret her needs and establishing a secure attachment through consistent and loving care.

Stage 3: Authority

With Ethan's birth, James and Emma navigated setting boundaries and enforcing rules. They worked on being authoritative figures while allowing room for exploration. They established routines and clear expectations, helping Olivia and Ethan understand limits and appropriate behaviors.

Stage 4: Interpretive

As Olivia started school, James and Emma focused on helping her make sense of the world, answering questions and guiding her through social interactions. They supported Ethan's early education and Lily's preschool experience. They provided a framework for understanding values, ethics, and social norms, ensuring their children developed a strong moral compass.

Stage 5: Interdependent

With Olivia entering high school and Ethan transitioning to middle school, James and Emma faced new challenges related to independence and identity. They negotiated rules, offered guidance, and respected their children's growing autonomy. They learned to balance authority with independence, fostering open communication and mutual respect. Olivia's part-time job and Ethan's involvement in sports highlighted their growing interdependence.

Stage 6: Departure

As Olivia prepared for college, James and Emma grappled with the impending change in family dynamics. They supported her applications, planned campus visits, and helped her

develop life skills for independence. They transitioned to a more advisory role, offering support while allowing Olivia to make her own decisions. This stage marked a shift in their identity, embracing their evolving roles as parents of an adult child.

It is important to note that little research has examined developmental changes in parents' experiences and behaviors over time. Thus, it is not clear whether these theoretical stages are generalizable to parents of different races, ages, and religions, nor do we have empirical data on the factors that influence individual differences in these stages. Additionally, because our definition of "family" is evolving, caregivers may enter parenthood in a nonlinear progression through Galinsky's stages or may skip through them, depending on the family circumstances. Little research has examined developmental changes from non-linear or skipped stages.

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INFLUENCES ON PARENTING

Parenting is a complex process in which parents and children influence one another. There are many reasons that parents behave the way they do. The multiple influences on parenting are still being explored. Proposed influences on parental behavior include:

- parent characteristics,
- child characteristics, and
- contextual and sociocultural characteristics (Belsky, 1984; Demick, 1999).

Parent Characteristics

Caregivers bring unique traits and qualities to the parenting relationship that affect their decisions as parents. These characteristics include the age of the caregiver, gender, beliefs, personality, developmental history, knowledge about parenting and child development, and mental and physical health. Caregivers' personalities affect parenting behaviors. Caregivers who are more agreeable, conscientious, and outgoing are warmer and provide more structure to their children. Caregivers who are more agreeable, less anxious, and less negative also support their children's autonomy more than caregivers who are anxious and less agreeable (Prinzie, Stams, Dekovic, Reijntjes, & Belsky, 2009). Caregivers who have these personality traits appear to be better able to respond to their children positively and provide a more consistent, structured environment for their children.

Caregivers' developmental histories, or their experiences as children, also affect their parenting strategies. Caregivers may learn parenting practices from their own parents (Kerr, Capaldi, Pears, & Owen, 2009). Patterns of negative parenting and ineffective discipline also appear from one generation to the next. However, caregivers who are dissatisfied with their own parents' approach may be more likely to change their parenting methods with their own children.

Child Characteristics

Parenting is bidirectional. Not only do caregivers affect their children, children influence their caregivers. Child characteristics, such as gender, birth order, temperament, and health status, affect parenting behaviors and roles. For example, an infant with an easy temperament may enable parents to feel more effective, as they are easily able to soothe the child and elicit smiling and cooing.

On the other hand, a cranky or fussy infant elicits fewer positive reactions from his or her parents and may result in caregivers feeling less effective in the parenting role (Eisenberg et al., 2008). Over time, caregivers of more difficult children may become more punitive and less patient with their children (Clark, Kochanska, & Ready, 2000; Eisenberg et al., 1999; Kiff, Lengua, & Zalewski, 2011). Caregivers who have a fussy, difficult child are less satisfied with their marriages and have greater challenges in balancing work and family roles (Hyde, Else-Quest, & Goldsmith, 2004).

Contextual Factors and Sociocultural Characteristics

The parent–child relationship does not occur in isolation. Sociocultural characteristics, including economic hardship, religion, politics, neighborhoods, schools, and social support, also influence parenting. Parents who experience economic hardship are more easily frustrated, depressed, and sad, and these emotional characteristics affect their parenting skills (Conger & Conger, 2002). Culture also influences parenting behaviors in fundamental ways. Although promoting the development of skills necessary to function effectively in one's community is a universal goal of parenting, the specific skills necessary vary widely from culture to culture. Thus, caregivers have different goals for their children that partially depend on their culture (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008). For example, caregivers vary in how much they emphasize goals for independence and individual achievements and goals involving maintaining harmonious relationships and being embedded in a strong network of social relationships. These differences in parental goals are influenced by culture and by immigration status. Other important contextual characteristics, such as the neighborhood, school, and social networks, also affect parenting, even though these settings don't always include both the child and the parent (Brofenbrenner, 1989).

For example, Latina mothers who perceived their neighborhood as more dangerous showed less warmth with their children, perhaps because of the greater stress associated with living in a threatening environment (Gonzales et al., 2011). Fieldwork by Furstenberg and his colleagues (1993) led them to conclude "where

parents live affects how they manage their children" (p. 254). The results from several ethnographic and qualitative studies suggest that residence in dangerous or impoverished neighborhoods is associated with more restrictive parenting practices (e.g., Burton, 1990; Furstenberg, 1993). Neighborhood characteristics also have been found to affect the parenting dimension of warmth/responsiveness. Klebanov, Brooks-Gunn, and Duncan (1994) found a strong association between residence in poorer neighborhoods and lower levels of displayed maternal warmth toward children. Again, ethnographic research supports this contention by providing narratives that suggest that parents who live in more impoverished or dangerous neighborhoods are less warm and more controlling with their children than parents who live in more advantaged and safer neighborhoods (e.g., Furstenberg, 1993). This parenting style is considered to be somewhat adaptive because it teaches children to take care of themselves in a dangerous environment (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000).

In addition to socioeconomic status, typically defined as the proportion of families under the poverty line residing in a particular neighborhood, neighborhoods or communities may be classified by population density (e.g., urban vs. rural; Forehand et al, 2000), thus allowing for a comparison of parenting practices across diverse community contexts. For example, Armistead and colleagues examined parenting among single-parent African American families (most of whom were poor) in rural and urban communities. They found that, on average, urban parents monitor their children's activities more than their rural counterparts, and that urban parents perceive more risks in their communities than did rural parents, which the authors speculate could account for the differential rates of parental monitoring across the two contexts. Interestingly, the authors also found that higher levels of parental monitoring were associated with better child and adolescent outcomes in urban, but not rural, families. Their findings suggest, once again, that parents alter their parenting strategies to fit the environmental circumstances in which they are raising their children so that their children's chances of success are maximized (Ogbu, 1981).

It is important to distinguish between differences in the distribution and the correlations of parenting style in different subpopulations. Although in the United States authoritative parenting is most common among intact, middle-class families of European descent, the relationship between authoritativeness and child outcomes is quite similar across groups. There are some exceptions to this general statement, however:

1. Demandingness appears to be less critical to girls' than to boys' well-being (Weiss & Schwarz, 1996), and
2. Authoritative parenting predicts psychosocial outcomes and problem behaviors for adolescents in all ethnic groups studied (African-, Asian-, European-, and Hispanic Americans), but it is associated with academic performance only among European Americans and, to a lesser extent, Hispanic Americans (Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992; Steinberg, Darling, & Fletcher, 1995).

Chao (1994) and others (Darling & Steinberg, 1993) have argued that observed ethnic differences in the association of parenting style with child outcomes may be due to differences in social context, parenting practices, or the cultural meaning of specific dimensions of parenting style.

Despite the interest in the development of parents among lay people and helping professionals, little

research has examined developmental changes in parents' experience and behaviors over time. Thus, it is not clear whether these theoretical stages are generalizable to parents of different races, ages, and religions, nor do we have empirical data on the factors that influence individual differences in these stages.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Consider the parenting behaviors (e.g., rules, discipline strategies, warmth, and support) used in your household when you were a child. What socioeconomic or cultural factors influenced those parenting behaviors?
2. Think about different parents and grandparents you know. Do the challenges they face as parents differ based on the age of their children? Do your observations fit with Galinsky's stages of parenting?

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CAREGIVERS AND THE EVOLVING DEFINITION OF FAMILY

Divorce

Divorce refers to the legal dissolution of a marriage. Despite popular belief, divorce rates in the United States actually declined for many years during the 1980s and 1990s, and only just recently started to climb back up—landing at just below 50% of marriages ending in divorce today; however, it should be noted that divorce rates increase for each subsequent marriage, and there is considerable debate about the exact divorce rate. Are there specific factors that can predict divorce? Are certain types of people or certain types of relationships more or less at risk for breaking up?

Indeed, there are several factors that appear to be either risk factors or protective factors. Pursuing education decreases the risk of divorce. So too does waiting until we are older to marry. Likewise, if our parents are still married, we are less likely to divorce. Factors that increase our risk of divorce include having a child before marriage and living with multiple partners before marriage, known as serial cohabitation (cohabitation with one's expected marital partner does not appear to have the same effect). And, of course, societal and religious attitudes must also be taken into account. In societies that are more accepting of divorce, divorce rates tend to be higher. Likewise, in religions that are less accepting of divorce, divorce rates tend to be lower.

Divorce can impact the stages of the developing parent and the attachments to the child(ren). Caregivers can employ specific strategies to their parenting style by reassuring their children that all caregivers will continue to love them and that the divorce is in no way the children's fault. Caregivers should also encourage open communication with their children and be careful not to bias them against their "ex" or use them as a means of hurting their "ex" (Denham, 2013; Harvey & Fine, 2004; Pescosoido, 2013).

Pause to Reflect!

Listen to the following podcast:

She wanted to vaccinate their kids against COVID. He didn't. A judge had to decide

Consider the co-parenting model and debate presented to the caregivers in the story.

1. What questions would you ask the caregivers in this story about their parenting relationships?
2. What questions would you ask the caregivers in this story about their co-parenting future?
3. What questions would you ask the children in this story?
4. What strategies would you offer to this family as it moves forward into the future?

Abuse

Abuse can occur in multiple forms and across all family relationships. Breiding, Basile, Smith, Black, & Mahendra (2015) define the forms of abuse as

- Physical abuse: the use of intentional physical force to cause harm. Scratching, pushing, shoving, throwing, grabbing, biting, choking, shaking, slapping, punching, and hitting are common forms of physical abuse;
- Sexual abuse: the act of forcing someone to participate in a sex act against his or her will. Such abuse is often referred to as sexual assault or rape;

- Psychological abuse: aggressive behavior that is intended to control someone else. Such abuse can include threats of physical or sexual abuse, manipulation, bullying, and stalking. Abuse between partners is referred to as intimate partner violence; however, such abuse can also occur between a parent and child (child abuse), adult children, their aging parents (elder abuse), and even between siblings.

- Neglect: a family's failure to provide for a child's basic physical, emotional, medical, or educational needs (DePanfilis, 2006).

Abuse is a complex issue, especially within families. There are many reasons people become abusers: poverty, stress, and substance abuse are common characteristics shared by abusers, although abuse can happen in any family. There are also many reasons adults stay in abusive relationships: (a) learned helplessness (the abused person believing he or she has no control over the situation); (b) the belief that the abuser can/will change; (c) shame, guilt, self-blame, and/or fear; and (d) economic dependence. All of these factors can play a role.

Children who experience abuse may "act out" or otherwise respond in a variety of unhealthful ways. These include acts of self-destruction, withdrawal, and aggression, as well as struggles with depression, anxiety, and academic performance. Researchers have found that abused children's brains may produce higher levels of stress hormones. These hormones can lead to decreased brain development, lower stress thresholds, suppressed immune responses, and lifelong difficulties with learning and memory (Middlebrooks & Audage, 2008).

Adoption

Adoption has long historical roots and involves taking in and raising someone else's child legally as one's own. Becoming a parent is one of the most fulfilling things a person can do (Gallup & Newport, 1990), but even with modern reproductive technologies, not all couples who would like to have children are able to. In 2013, in the United States, there were over 100,000 children in resource families available for adoption (Soronen, 2013). In total, about 2% of the U.S. child population is adopted, either through foster care or through private domestic or international adoption (Adopted Children, 2012).

For years, international adoptions have been popular. In the United States, between 1999 and 2014, 256,132 international adoptions occurred, with the largest number of children coming from China (73,672) and Russia (46,113) (Intercountry Adoption, 2016). People in the United States, Spain, France, Italy, and Canada adopt the largest numbers of children (Selman, 2009). More recently, however, international adoptions have begun to decrease. One significant complication is that each country has its own set of requirements for adoption, as does each country from which an adopted child originates. As such, the adoption process can vary greatly, especially in terms of cost, and countries are able to police who adopts their children.

CONCLUSION

Parenting factors include characteristics of the parent, such as gender and personality, as well as characteristics of the child, such as age. Parenting style provides a robust indicator of parental functioning that predicts child well-being across a wide spectrum of environments and across diverse communities of children. Both parental responsiveness and parental demandingness are important components of good parenting. Furthermore, parenting influences not just a child's development, but also the development of the caregiver. The interaction among all these factors creates many different patterns of parenting behavior. As caregivers are faced with new challenges, they change their parenting strategies and construct new aspects of their identity. The goals and tasks of caregivers change over time as their children develop (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Baumrind, 1991; and Barber, 1996).

PART IV

WHAT IS GENDER AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Learning Objectives

- 4.1 Differentiate between sex and gender and explain how gender is a social construct.
- 4.2 Identify how gender is a socializing agent.
- 4.3 Define gender as a continuum.

Introduction

When Harry was born, his parents, Steve and Barb, were delighted to add another boy to their family. But as their baby boy began to grow and develop, they noticed that Harry began to express himself in a manner that they viewed as more feminine than masculine. He gravitated toward dolls and other toys that our culture typically associates with girls. But Harry's preference was not simply about liking pink more than blue or flowers more than fire trucks. He even began to draw himself as a girl, complete with a dress and high-heeled shoes. In fact, Harry did not just wish to be a girl; he believed he was a girl.

In kindergarten, Harry often got into arguments with male classmates because he insisted that he was a girl, not a boy. He even started calling himself "Hailey." Steve and Barb met with several psychologists, all of whom told them that Hailey was transgendered. But Steve and Barb had a hard time understanding that their five-year-old son could have already developed a gender identity that went against society's expectations. Concerned with the social ramifications associated with his child being transgendered, Steve hoped this was just a phase. But Barb, and eventually Steve, realized that Harry's feelings were genuine and unyielding, and they made the decision to let Harry live as Hailey—a girl. They came to this decision after concluding that the criticism he would endure from his peers and other members of society would be less damaging than the confusion he might experience internally if he were forced to live as a boy.

Many transgendered children grow up hating their bodies. This population can have high rates of drug abuse and suicide (Weiss 2011). Fearful of these outcomes and eager to make their child happy, Steve and Barb now refer to Harry as Hailey and allow her to dress and behave in manners that are considered feminine. To a stranger, Hailey is likely to appear just like any other girl and may even be considered extra girly due to her love of all things pink. But to those who once knew Hailey as Harry, Hailey is likely to endure more ridicule and rejection as the result of adopting a feminine gender identity.

Currently, seven-year-old Hailey and her parents are comfortable with her gender status, but Steve and Barb are concerned about what questions and problems might arise as she gets older. "Who's going to love my child?" asks Steve (Ling 2011). This question isn't asked because Hailey is unlovable, but because North American society has yet to fully listen to or understand the personal narratives of the transgendered population (Hines and Sanger 2010).

A social construct is an important term. It refers to ideas that have been created by and accepted in society. According to the World Health Organization, "gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviors and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other" (2022). As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time.

In this chapter, we will explore the social constructs of gender and intersectionality. Social constructs challenge, and oftentimes reinforce, our understanding of human behavior, leading to dangerous stereotypes,

microaggressions, implicit bias, explicit bias, and confirmation bias. We will determine how our ideas about gender support or harm our collaborative relationships with children, families, schools, and communities.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Re-read Hailey's story.
2. Identify at least 2 social constructs of gender identified in the story.
3. Identify at least 1 microaggression or bias identified in the story.
4. Discuss how a school or community can best support Hailey.

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SEX AND GENDER

When filling out a document such as a job application or school registration form, you are often asked to provide your name, address, phone number, birth date, and sex or gender. But have you ever been asked to provide your sex and your gender? As with most people, it may not have occurred to you that sex and gender are not the same. However, sociologists and most other social scientists view sex and gender as conceptually distinct.

- Sex refers to physical or physiological differences between males and females, including both primary sex characteristics (the reproductive system) and secondary characteristics such as height and muscularity.
- Gender is a term that refers to social or cultural distinctions associated with being male or female. Gender identity is the extent to which one identifies as being either masculine or feminine (Diamond 2002).

Sex refers to the anatomical and other biological differences between females and males that are determined at the moment of conception and develop in the womb and throughout childhood and adolescence. Humans and many other mammals have one pair of sex chromosomes in each cell. Females have two X chromosomes while males have one X and one Y chromosome. The Y chromosome is very small. It likely contains 50 to 60 genes and represents 2% of a cell's total DNA. Because only males have the Y chromosome, the genes on this chromosome tend to be involved in male sex determination and development (National Human Genome Research Institute 2022).
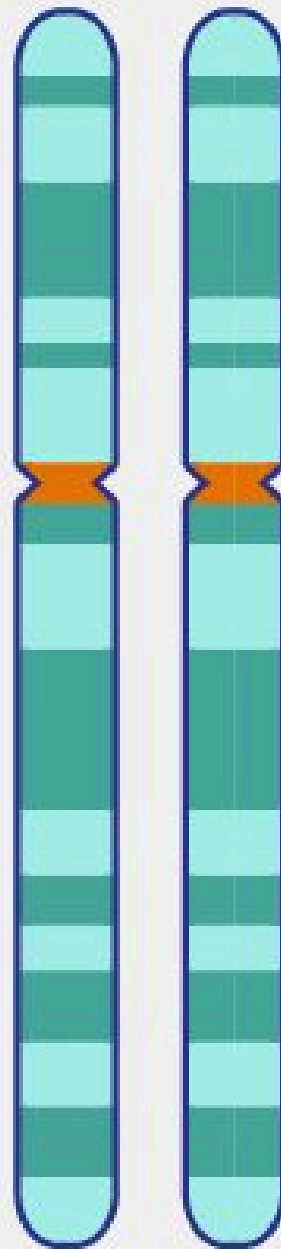
Sex chromosomes

Male

Female

or

X Y   X X
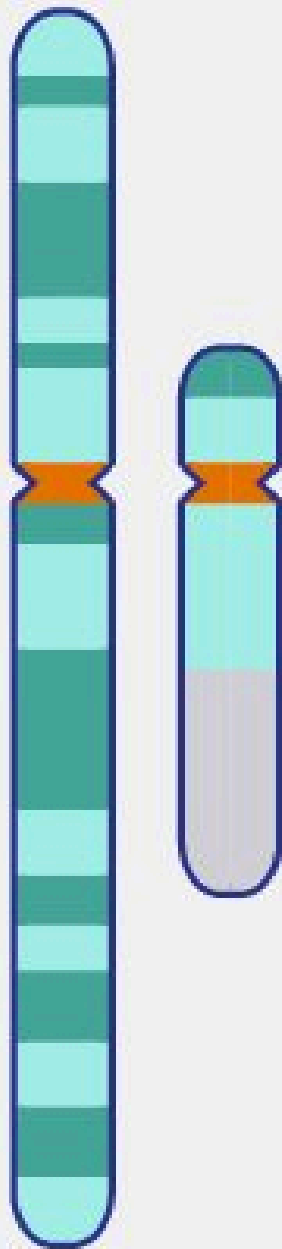
When babies are born, they are assigned a gender based on their biological sex—male babies are assigned as boys, female babies are assigned as girls, and intersex babies (those who are born with sex characteristics that do not fit the typical definitions for male or female bodies) are usually relegated into one gender category or another. Scholars generally regard gender as a social construct, meaning that it doesn't exist naturally but is instead a concept that is created by cultural and societal norms. From birth, children are socialized to conform to certain gender roles based on their biological sex and the gender to which they are assigned.

The term gender roles refers to a society's expectations of people's behavior and attitudes based on whether they are females or males. Understood in this way, gender, like race, is a social construction. How we think and behave as females and males is not etched in stone by our biology but rather is a result of how society expects us to think and behave based on what sex we are. As we grow up, we learn these expectations as we develop our gender identity, or our beliefs about ourselves as females or males.

These expectations are called femininity and masculinity. Femininity refers to the cultural expectations we have of girls and women, while masculinity refers to the expectations we have of boys and men. A familiar nursery rhyme nicely summarizes these two sets of traits:

> *What are little boys made of?*
> *Snips and snails,*
> *And puppy dog tails,*
> *That's what little boys are made of.*
> *What are little girls made of?*
> *Sugar and spice,*
> *And everything nice,*
> *That's what little girls are made of.*

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. As a child, what toys did you play with?
2. In what ways did those toys reinforce the social construction of gender?
3. In what ways did those toys resist the social construction of gender?

A person's sex, as determined by biology, does not always correspond with gender. Therefore, the terms sex and gender are not interchangeable. A baby boy who is born with male genitalia will be identified as male. As he grows, however, he may identify with the feminine aspects of his culture. Since the term sex refers to biological or physical distinctions, characteristics of sex will not vary significantly between different human societies. For example, all persons of the female sex, in general, regardless of culture, will eventually menstruate and develop breasts that can lactate. Characteristics of gender, on the other hand, may vary greatly between different societies. For example, in American culture, it is considered feminine (or a trait of the female gender) to wear a dress or skirt. However, in many Middle Eastern, Asian, and African cultures, dresses or skirts (often referred to as sarongs, robes, or gowns) can be considered masculine. For example, the kilt worn by a Scottish male does not make him appear feminine in his culture.

The dichotomous view of gender (the notion that one is either male or female) is specific to certain cultures and is not universal. In some cultures, gender is viewed as fluid. In the past, some anthropologists used the term *berdache* to refer to individuals who occasionally or permanently dressed and lived as the opposite gender. The practice has been noted among certain Aboriginal groups (Jacobs, Thomas, and Lang 1997). Samoan culture accepts what they refer to as a "third gender." *Fa'afafine*, which translates as "the way of the woman," is a term used to describe individuals who are born biologically male but embody both masculine and feminine traits. Fa'afafines are considered an important part of Samoan culture. Individuals from other cultures may mislabel them as homosexuals because fa'afafines have a varied sexual life that may include men or women (Poasa 1992).

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GENDER AS A SOCIALIZING AGENT

Sociologists and other social scientists generally attribute many of the behavioral differences between genders to socialization. Socialization is the process of transferring norms, values, beliefs, and behaviors to group members. The most intense period of socialization is during childhood, when adults who are members of a particular cultural group instruct young children on how to behave in order to comply with social norms. Gender is included in this process; individuals are taught how to socially behave in accordance with their assigned gender, which is assigned at birth based on their biological sex (for instance, male babies are given the gender of "boy", while female babies are given the gender of "girl"). Gender socialization is thus the process of educating and instructing males and females as to the norms, behaviors, values, and beliefs of group membership.

Preparations for gender socialization begin even before the birth of the child. One of the first questions people ask of expectant parents is the sex of the child. This is the beginning of a social categorization process that continues throughout life. Preparations for the birth often take the infant's sex into consideration (e.g., painting the room blue if the child is a boy, pink for a girl). Today it is largely believed that most gender differences are attributed to differences in socialization, rather than genetic and biological factors.

Gender stereotypes can be a result of gender socialization. Girls and boys are expected to act in certain ways, and these ways are socialized from birth by many parents (and society). For example, girls are expected to be clean and quiet, while boys are messy and loud. As children get older, gender stereotypes become more apparent in styles of dress and choice of leisure activities. Boys and girls who do not conform to gender stereotypes are usually ostracized by same-age peers for being different. This can lead to negative effects, such as lower self-esteem.

In Western contexts, gender socialization operates as a binary, or a concept that is exclusively composed of two parts. In other words, individuals are socialized into conceiving of their gender as either masculine (male) or feminine (female). Identities are therefore normatively constructed along this single parameter. However, some individuals do not feel that they fall into the gender binary and they choose to question or challenge the male-masculine / female-feminine binary. For example, individuals that identify as transgender feel that their gender identity does not match their biological sex. Individuals that identify as genderqueer challenge classifications of masculine and feminine, and may identify as somewhere other than male and female, in between male and female, a combination of male and female, or a third (or fourth, or fifth, etc.) gender altogether. These identities demonstrate the fluidity of gender, which is so frequently thought to be biological and immutable. Gender fluidity also shows how gender norms are learned and either accepted or rejected by the socialized individual.

Pause to Reflect!

Choose one of the podcasts from the [How to Be a Girl](#) series and listen to it.

1. Summarize the podcast that you listened to, emphasizing your key takeaways.
2. What questions would you ask the caregivers in this story about their parenting relationships?
3. What questions would you ask the children in this story?
4. What strategies would you offer the schools and communities in this story to best support this family as it moves forward into the future?

The Family

Socialization into gender roles begins in infancy, as almost from the moment of birth parents begin to socialize their children as boys or girls without even knowing it (Begley, 2009; Eliot, 2009). Many studies document this process (Lindsey, 2011). Parents commonly describe their infant daughters as pretty, soft, and delicate and their infant sons as strong, active, and alert, even though neutral observers find no such gender differences among infants when they do not know the infants' sex. From infancy on, parents play with and otherwise interact with their daughters and sons differently. They play more roughly with their sons—for example, by throwing them up in the air or by gently wrestling with them—and more quietly with their daughters. When their infant or toddler daughters cry, they warmly comfort them, but they tend to let their sons cry longer and to comfort them less. They give their girls dolls to play with and their boys "action figures" and toy guns. While these gender differences in socialization are probably smaller now than a generation ago, they certainly continue to exist. Go into a large toy store and you will see pink aisles of dolls and cooking sets and blue aisles of action figures, toy guns, and related items.

Peers

Peer influences also encourage gender socialization. As they reach school age, children begin to play different games based on their gender. Boys tend to play sports and other competitive team games governed by inflexible rules and relatively large numbers of roles, while girls tend to play smaller, cooperative games such as hopscotch

and jumping rope with fewer and more flexible rules. Although girls are much more involved in sports now than a generation ago, these gender differences in their play as youngsters persist and continue to reinforce gender roles. For example, they encourage competitiveness in boys and cooperation and trust among girls. Boys who are not competitive risk being called "sissy" or other words by their peers. The patterns we see in adult males and females thus have their roots in their play as young children (King, Miles, & Kniska, 1991).

In considering the debate, discussed in the text, between biology and sociology over the origins of gender roles, some widely cited studies by sociologists over gender differences in children's play and games provide evidence for the importance of socialization.

Janet Lever (1978) studied fifth-grade children in three different communities in Connecticut. She watched them play and otherwise interact in school and also had the children keep diaries of their play and games outside school. One of her central aims was to determine how complex the two sexes' play and games were in terms of such factors as number of rules, specialization of roles, and size of the group playing. In all of these respects, Lever found that boys' play and games were typically more complex than girls' play and games. She attributed these differences to socialization by parents, teachers, and other adults and argued that the complexity of boys' play and games helped them to be better able than girls to learn important social skills such as dealing with rules and coordinating actions to achieve goals.

Meanwhile, Barrie Thorne (1993) spent many months in two different working-class communities in California and Michigan observing fourth and fifth graders sit in class and lunchrooms and play on the school playgrounds. Most children were white, but several were African American or Latino. As you might expect, the girls and boys she observed usually played separately from each other, and the one-sex groups in which they played were very important for the development of their gender identity, with boys tending to play team sports and other competitive games and girls tending to play cooperative games such as jump rope. These differences led Thorne to conclude that gender-role socialization stems not only from practices by adults but also from the children's own activities without adult involvement. When boys and girls did interact, it was often "girls against the boys" or vice versa in classroom spelling contests and in games such as tag. Thorne concluded that these "us against them" contests helped the children learn that boys and girls are two different and antagonistic sexes and that gender itself is antagonistic, even if there were also moments when both sexes interacted on the playground in more relaxed, noncompetitive situations. Boys also tended to disrupt girls' games more than the reverse and in this manner both exerted and learned dominance over females. In all of these ways, children were not just the passive recipients of gender-role socialization from adults (their teachers), but they also played an active role in ensuring that such socialization occurred.

The studies by Lever and Thorne were among the first to emphasize the importance of children's play and peer relationships for gender socialization. They also called attention to the importance of the traits and values learned through such socialization for outcomes later in life. The rise in team sports opportunities for girls in the years since Lever and Thorne did their research is a welcome development that addresses the concerns

expressed in their studies, but young children continue to play in the ways that Lever and Thorne found. To the extent children's play has the consequences just listed, and to the extent these consequences impede full gender inequality, these sociological studies suggest the need for teachers, parents, and other adults to help organize children's play that is more egalitarian along the lines discussed by Lever, Thorne, and other scholars. In this way, their sociological work has helped to make a difference and promises to continue to do so.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. What does egalitarian children's play look like?
2. Identify at least 2 games played by children that offer an egalitarian lens.

Schools

School is yet another agent of gender socialization (Klein, 2007). First of all, school playgrounds provide a location for the gender-linked play activities just described to occur. Second, and perhaps more important, teachers at all levels treat their female and male students differently in subtle ways of which they are probably not aware. They tend to call on boys more often to answer questions in class and to praise them more when they give the right answer. They also give boys more feedback about their assignments and other school work (Sadker & Sadker, 1994). At all grade levels, many textbooks and other books still portray people in gender-stereotyped ways. It is true that the newer books do less of this than older ones, but the newer books still contain some stereotypes, and the older books are still used in many schools, especially those that cannot afford to buy newer volumes.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Identify at least 3 children's books published in the last 10 years that highlight trans or non-binary characters.
2. Read at least one of those stories.
3. Is the character(s) story presented from a strengths or deficit based lens?
4. How is gender or socialization presented in the story?

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THE GENDER CONTINUUM

Viewing gender as a continuum allows us to perceive the rich diversity of genders, from trans- and cisgender to gender queer and agender. Most Western societies operate on the idea that gender is a binary, that there are essentially only two genders (men and women) based on two sexes (male and female), and that everyone must fit one or the other. This social dichotomy enforces conformance to the ideals of masculinity and femininity in all aspects of gender and sex—gender identity, gender expression, and biological sex.

According to supporters of queer theory, gender identity is not a rigid or static identity but can continue to evolve and change over time. Queer theory developed in response to the perceived limitations of the way in which identities are thought to become consolidated or stabilized (for instance, gay or straight), and theorists constructed queerness in an attempt to resist this. In this way, the theory attempts to maintain a critique rather than define a specific identity. While "queer" defies a simple definition, the term is often used to convey an identity that is not rigidly developed but is instead fluid and changing.

The Gender Unicorn

Trans Student Educational Resources was co-founded in 2011 by two 16-year-old transgender women, as Trans Student Equality Resources (TSER). It was and remains the only national organization run by young transgender people. TSER created the Gender Unicorn which describes the continuums of five major areas: *Gender Identity, Gender Expression, Sex Assigned at Birth, Physically Attracted to*, and *Emotionally Attracted to*.

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by: TSER — Trans Student Educational Resources

Gender Identity — Female/Woman/Girl, Male/Man/Boy, Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression — Feminine, Masculine, Other

Sex Assigned at Birth — Female, Male, Other/Intersex

Physically Attracted to — Women, Men, Other Gender(s)

Emotionally Attracted to — Women, Men, Other Gender(s)
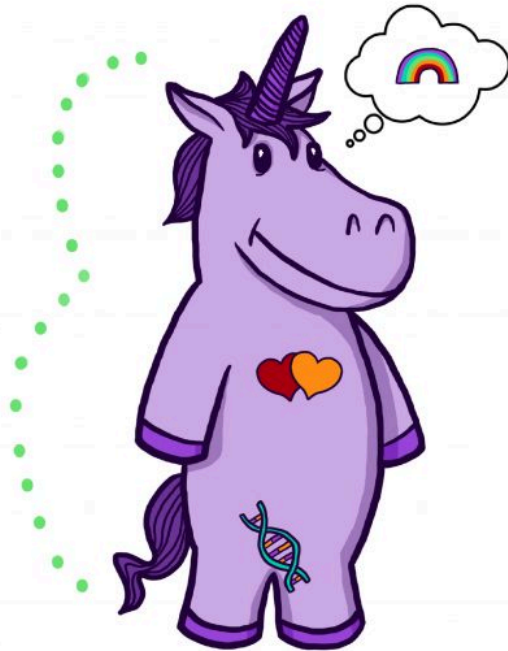
To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore
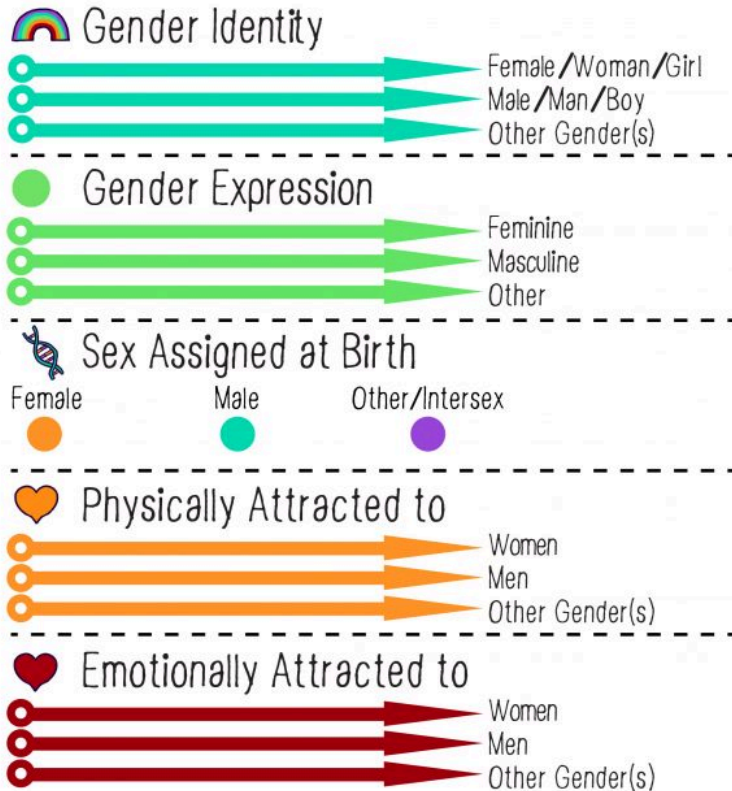
The Genderbread Person

In 2012, Sam Killerman created the Genderbread Person as an infographic to break down gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, and sexual orientation. Killerman writes,

Gender identity is all about how you think about yourself. It's about how you internally interpret the chemistry that composes you (e.g., hormone levels). As you know it, do you think you fit better into the societal role of "woman" or "man," or does neither ring particularly true for you? That is, do you have aspects of your identity that align with elements from both? Or do you consider your gender to fall outside of the gender norms completely? The answer is your gender identity. It has been accepted that we form our gender identities around the age of three and that after that age, it is incredibly difficult to change them. Formation of identity is affected by hormones and environment just as much as it is by biological sex. Oftentimes, problems arise when someone is assigned a gender based on their sex at birth that doesn't align with how they come to identify.

The Genderbread Person, a pictorial representation of these variations in identity, is, in 2022, in its fourth version as Killerman continues to update it to be more accurate and inclusive.

The Genderbread Person v4

by it's pronounced METROsexual.com

Identity

Attraction

Expression

Sex
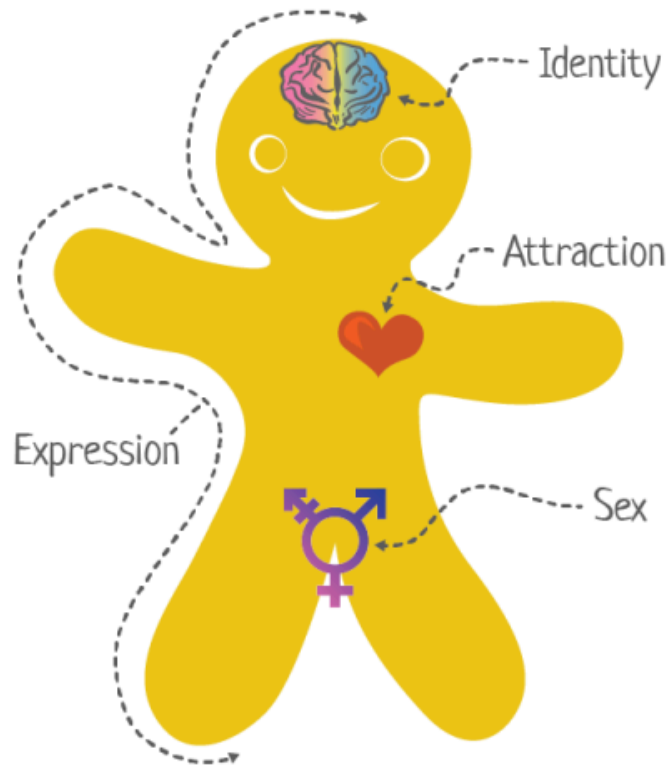
⊘ means a lack of what's on the right side.

Gender Identity
⊘ ————→ Woman-ness
⊘ ————→ Man-ness

Gender Expression
⊘ ————→ Femininity
⊘ ————→ Masculinity

Anatomical Sex
⊘ ————→ Female-ness
⊘ ————→ Male-ness

Identity ≠ Expression ≠ Sex
Gender ≠ Sexual Orientation

Sex Assigned At Birth
☐ Female ☐ Intersex ☐ Male

Sexually Attracted to...   and/or (a/o)
⊘ ————→ Women a/o Feminine a/o Female People
⊘ ————→ Men a/o Masculine a/o Male People

Romantically Attracted to...
⊘ ————→ Women a/o Feminine a/o Female People
⊘ ————→ Men a/o Masculine a/o Male People

Genderbread Person Version 4 created and uncopyrighted 2017 by Sam Killermann   For a bigger bite, read more at www.genderbread.org

Transgender or Gender Non-Conforming Children

Children who do not feel that they are the gender they were assigned with birth deserve a bit of special attention in this discussion about gender. "Gender identity and expression are central to the way we see ourselves and engage in the world around us. This is certainly true of transgender and gender-expansive children and teens, for whom family support is absolutely critical" (Human Rights Campaign, 2019).

Transgender issues manifest at different times in life in different individuals. In most cases of gender dysphoria, the condition is often apparent in early childhood, when such a child may express behavior incongruent with and dissatisfaction related to their assigned gender. However, many of these children experience rejection as a result of their differences and quickly attempt to repress them. Therefore, people who see these children regularly may be unaware that they are unhappy as members of their assigned gender.

Family acceptance among transgender children predicts an increase in greater self-esteem, social support, and general health status. It also protects against depression, substance abuse, and suicidal ideation and behaviors. Parents' access to information is critical in aiding and advocating for transgender youth.

A safe school climate is essential for transgender, gender dysphoric, and gender non-conforming children, who likely experience stress and anxiety due to their desire to transition or display themselves as a different gender. While many schools have become more accepting and allow children to express their desired gender identity, current research shows that there is an increased amount of harassment, bullying, indifference by school staff, and antigay victimization towards transgender and gender non-conforming youth.

Trans Parenting

There is little to no visibility or public support through pregnancy and parenting resources directed towards trans parents. In the case of trans individuals who desire to become parents and to be legally recognized as mothers or fathers of their children, courts often refuse to legally acknowledge such roles because of biological discrimination.

LGBT Parenting

LGBT parenting refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people raising one or more children as parents or resource parents. This includes: children raised by same-sex couples (same-sex parenting), children raised by single LGBT parents, and children raised by an opposite-sex couple where at least one partner is LGBT. LGBT people can become parents through various means including current or former relationships, coparenting, adoption, donor insemination, reciprocal IVF, and surrogacy.

Many lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people are parents. In the 2000 U.S. Census, for example, 33 percent of female same-sex couple households and 22 percent of male same-sex couple households reported at least one child under the age of 18 living in the home. As of 2005, an estimated 270,313 children in the United States live in households headed by same-sex couples.

Scientific research consistently shows that gay and lesbian parents are as fit and capable as heterosexual

parents, and their children are as psychologically healthy and well-adjusted as those reared by heterosexual parents despite the reality that considerable legal discrimination and inequity remain significant challenges for these families. Major associations of mental health professionals in the U.S., Canada, and Australia have not identified credible empirical research that suggests otherwise.

Children of LGBT parents do not have any differences in their gender role behaviors in comparison to those observed in heterosexual family structures. In fact, a study by Bos and Sandfort (2009) also revealed that children raised by same-sex couples felt less pressured to follow gender stereotypes. But children may struggle with negative attitudes about their parents from the harassment they may encounter by living in society.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. What challenges might LBGT families face when identifying an early childhood program?
2. What role might early childhood educators and their program play in supporting LBGT families?

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PART V

BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Learning Objectives

- 5.1 Understand disability as a social construct
- 5.2 Understand that disability systems and structures are inherently inequitable and biased
- 5.3 Name and describe two different models of disability
- 5.4 Understand the importance of and describe some best practices when collaborating with families of children with disabilities

Introduction

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a social construct is "an idea that has been created and accepted by the people in a society" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). When discussing social constructions, it is common to talk about the ways in which race has been socially constructed across history. So often, though, when disability is discussed, it is seen as something biological and real, and certainly not something that has been socially constructed. When thinking about disability broadly and in connection with collaborating with children with disabilities and/or their families, it is important to remember that how we think about disability has also been socially constructed over time and space. These understandings of disability impact how family members, professionals and others view children with disabilities, including how each of us as individual members of society think about and interact with disability. Annamma, Connor and Ferri (2013) provide two examples that illustrate disability as a social construct. One example is the line between someone who has poor eyesight and someone who is blind. This imaginary fine line between the two categories is something that has been shaped and determined by a variety of factors. Another example that highlights how disability has been socially constructed is in the history of the category we know of today as intellectual disability. Prior to 1973, people with an IQ of 85 or less were identified as having an intellectual disability. In 1973 this number changed and the official cut-off for an intellectual disability became 70 (Annamma, Connor & Ferri, 2013, p.3). While nothing had changed about the people in question, anyone who had an IQ that fell in the range of 71 to 85 was suddenly no longer seen as having an intellectual disability. If disability was not a social construct, it would not have been possible to change the IQ requirements for the definition of intellectual disability and suddenly change the disability status of many people across the country.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Re-read the introduction.
2. Identify at least one additional example of disability as a social construct.

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DISABILITY AND INEQUALITY: OVERREPRESENTATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Overrepresentation in special education refers to the ways in which students of color are labeled with disabilities at higher rates than their peers. Artiles and Trent (1994) explain that "even though 25 years have passed, many of the problems [of overrepresentation] still plague the field today." Twenty-six years after Artiles and Trent (1994) wrote about 25 years of similar structural problems, educational researchers, such as Cavendish et al. (2020), continue to address the issue of overrepresentation and argue for the need for a different approach to overrepresentation. It is important for professionals working with children and families to understand overrepresentation. As an example, students of color are more likely to be identified as having a disability within our society due to many factors, including individual level implicit and explicit bias and structural bias, such as the bias found within the standardized assessments used to identify a disability in children.

Every year, schools across the country have to report data to the U.S. Department of Education concerning their special education delivery. Some examples of disability categories where overrepresentation occurs include developmental delay, emotional disturbance, intellectual disability and specific learning disability (U.S. Department of Education, 2021, p. 51). For example, the data shows American Indian or Alaskan Native students are over four times as likely to be identified as having a developmental delay, over two times as likely to be labeled with an intellectual disability, and more than two times as likely to be identified as having a specific learning disability as their white peers. Black or African students are over 1.5 times more likely to be labeled with an emotional disturbance, over three times as likely to be labeled as having an intellectual disability, and two times as likely to be identified as having a specific learning disability as their white peers (U.S. Department of Education, 2021, p. 51). When working with children with disabilities and their families, it is important to understand that overrepresentation means that students of color are more likely to be seen as having a disability than white students.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Re-read the data presented in this section from the U.S. Department of Education regarding the overrepresentation of students of color labeled as having a disability.
2. Describe the implicit and explicit bias and structural bias, including standardized assessments, that lead toward overrepresentation.

REFRAMING DISABILITY

In the previous section, we highlighted how disability has been constructed in the United States as a deficit, thus positioning anyone with a disability as inferior, and how it has been used to further marginalize and oppress certain groups of people. Next, we present different models of disability and important perspectives and concepts to consider when working to reframe disability to better shape our collaboration with families.

Models of Disability

Conceptual models are representations, often abstract, of something such as a physical object or social phenomena. They are meant to aid in understanding social phenomena. Above, disability is explained as a social construct. So, models of disability then would be abstract representations meant to aid in understanding disability as a social phenomena. Each model represents a different understanding of disability. There are an ever-growing number of models of disability. However, here we will focus on two opposing and common models in hopes of illustrating the different approaches to disability and how the approaches shape practice. "The medical model and social models of disability… are two ways of understanding disability within traditions dominant in Western science and philosophy. At the center of the divide between these models lies the contested concept of normalcy." (Baglieri and Lalvani, 2020)

The Social Model vs. The Medical Model of Disability

The medical model of disability approaches disability as an inherently individual problem or deficit within someone. Because of this view, disability is something that should be thus identified or diagnosed and then treated accordingly, with the goal of either overcoming or mitigating the "symptoms" or impacts of the disability for the person and for society.

The social model of disability distinguishes disability from impairment. Impairment is a difference (mental, physical, etc.) within an individual, and disability is a societal problem or barrier due to inaccessible environments and structures. Taking this approach, barriers in the environment and social structures and systems should be identified and altered or removed in order to address disability and increase access for all.

According to Baglieri and Lalvani (2020), the center of the debate between these two opposing models of disability is the concept of normalcy. In the medical model of disability, disability is positioned as inferior to some other marker which in this case is normalcy. The medical model assumes a neutral normal and then positions disability as a deficit in relation to that. The social model rethinks what normal is and views disability

as diversity, as part of the natural variance in human existence. The medical model of disability is the traditional view of disability, and the dominant approach in US systems and structures. In order to qualify for disability services whether that is inside or outside of the US public school system, individuals must be diagnosed or labeled, which then prompts a determination of qualifications and services. To rethink disability through the social model then goes against much of what parents have been taught and socialized to accept.

> One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: *https://rotel.pressbooks.pub/children-families-schools-communities/?p=107#oembed-1*

Reframing disability as diversity, in the social model of disability, works to push against the view and the systems which have marginalized and oppressed not only people with disabilities, but other minority groups as well. To come from the social model of disability means to recognize that the problem of disability is the societal and environmental barriers that are in place that limit individuals with disabilities and their families. In the next section, we will look at different phenomena that are important to examine when reframing disability in our approach to collaborating with families with children with disabilities.

Parental Involvement

Differing levels of parental involvement are required for navigating disability support services whether in school or out. For example, the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) requires parental/guardian consent and involvement. (Rosetti et al., 2017). Family involvement and advocacy can mean all the difference for a child's trajectory within the special education/general education system (Fish, 2010). We will use the special education system within public K-12 schools to illustrate barriers families may come up against when navigating systems designed for individuals with disabilities. However, these barriers will apply in almost any context. When examining disability and the experiences of children with disabilities and their families within the K-12 public education system through a social model lens, we see numerous potential barriers.

Navigating and advocating within the K-12 system, first and foremost, requires knowledge of the system. It requires knowledge of the laws that govern the system children are being served by, the ways in which different labels come with different likely trajectories for students both inside and outside of the K-12 system, the people to get involved in any given situation, and the ways in which to communicate to increase the likelihood of a favorable outcome for their child. For example, going back to the notion of over-representation, not only in special education but in certain labels that will more likely lead to segregation, the knowledge of this phenomena and how to push back, may fall under the category of cultural capital.

Another potential barrier that impacts the ability of families to collaborate is the time commitment for their jobs. Students served under the IDEA all have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) which requires family involvement. However, IEP meetings are often held either during the school day or right before or after school. It is a privilege to have a job and/or life structure that is either flexible enough to work around any meeting time or that offers enough time-off to be able to take some for the numerous meetings families are invited to or required to attend for their children. Families who don't have this flexibility or ability are then either left out of important decision-making or are forced to make difficult decisions that may impact their ability to keep up with the commitments that allow them to support their family.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Identify ways that the education system can collaborate with the families to ensure that there is equity within the the special education process.
2. What strategies can schools employ to prioritize family involvement in the IEP process?

Biased Assessments

Assessments are often used to categorize, label, and place students in terms of special education. Dudley-Marling and Gurn (2010) explain that one of the most powerful tools of modern society is the concept of normality and go on to describe the Bell curve or normal curve as something that has been used to legitimize it. "In the context of schooling, the ideology of the normal curve affects school placement, grading, college admission, educational policy and research, and the everyday language of teachers." (Dudley-Marling & Gurn, 2010, p. 2) They go on to explain that measuring students up against this concept of normality impacts many facets of education for individual students (2010).

The ideology of the normal curve does harm to individuals with disabilities and their families. But it isn't just individuals who are at risk of being marginalized and pathologized by the concept of "normal." Normal curve thinking has been used to rationalize the marginalization of whole groups of people, perpetuating historic injustices. (Dudley-Marling & Gurn, 2010, pp. 5-6)

Assessments are designed to implement this idea of the bell-shaped or "normal curve," but as Dudle-Marling and Gurn (2010) describe, the curve is designed in such a way that it promotes white superiority and thus

works to marginalize minority groups. So assessments created largely by and for white people are then what is being used to decide what students do and do not qualify for, what labels they receive, and what options are available to them within and beyond K-12.

Language Debate

Another important point of consideration when reframing disability is language. A debate in the disability community is whether to use person-first or identity-first language. In an effort to recognize and center the human before the label, person-first language has long been promoted throughout the disability field as best practice. For example, person-first language would dictate best practice would be using phrases such as a person with a disability, or a student who has autism. More recently, there has been push back by the disability community, who want to claim disability as an identity and thus prefer to be referred to in identity-first language. So, rather than be called a student with autism, some prefer to be referred to as an autistic student. It is the difference between saying "I have autism" and "I am autistic." In saying "I have autism," the person is saying that autism is something they have but not necessarily who they are. In saying, "I am autistic," the person is claiming autistic as an identity that describes who they are.

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Table 5.1: Person and Identity First Language

Person-First Language	Identity-First Language
Person with a disability	Disabled Person
Person with autism	Autistic person
Person who is blind	Blind person
Person who uses a wheelchair	Wheelchair user
Person who uses non-verbal communication	Non-speaking person
Person with a learning disability	Learning Disabled
Person who is deaf	Deaf person

Some argue that person-first language is the most respectful way to talk about people with disabilities, while others argue that by using person-first language, there is an erasure of the disabled identity and culture. We argue here not for one or the other (person-first versus identity-first language), but rather to ask individuals and base the decision on how individuals or groups of people refer to themselves. Another method is to do your research when you don't have the other options available and to be clear why you are making the decision you are in terms of your language use. Rather than prescribe an approach for someone, let them decide and respect their language preferences and ways of identifying themselves.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Identify at least 3 children's books published in the last 10 years that highlight children with disabilities.
2. Read at least one of those stories.
3. Is the character's story presented from a medical or social construct lens?
4. Describe the challenges and/or opportunities that are presented between the families and schools and/or communities.

COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

There are best practices for collaboration with families that use an inclusive approach, reframing disability as diversity and honoring what families bring to the collaboration.

Parents as Co-Equals of the Team

First and foremost, parents must be treated as and believed to be co-equals in the collaborative process. In a study of guardians' perceptions of the IEP process, Fish (2010) found that guardians had positive perceptions when they were treated as co-equals in the decision making. To position guardians as co-equals, professionals must honor the knowledge and approach that families bring to the table. This often requires acknowledging that certain knowledge and ways of knowing have been constructed in ways that uphold white hegemony (the social, cultural, ideological, or economic influence exerted by a dominant group), and actively pushing back. When we apply this to disability, we must recognize that families may have different understandings of disability than those that have been presented here and are in our current repertoire. We must also recognize that as we work to reframe disability, parents will most likely be most familiar with the medical model of disability, as it is the dominant approach in the US and is often what families of individuals must learn to navigate for survival. We need to work to understand how families approach disability and honor that in our collaboration with them. When we value family contributions and treat them as equals in the collaborative process, many of the other best practices we present will fall into place because they will be necessary to carry out an equal and equitable process.

Prioritizing Family Involvement

In order for families of individuals with disabilities to be valuable and co-equal members of the collaborative team, their involvement in all aspects of the process and decision-making has to be prioritized. As Rosetti et al. (2017) explain, although family involvement in the IEP process has been federally mandated for over 40 years, "many families have indicated a lack of collaboration during the IEP process" (Rosetti et al., 2017, p. 329). The collaborative process must prioritize and ensure parental involvement in their children's education. There are several best practices that may prioritize family involvement.

Plain Language Documents and Communication

In order to be involved in the collaborative process and "make informed educational decisions, families must be able to read and comprehend the information that is given to them by their school" (Fitzgerald & Watkins, 2006). Fitzgerald and Watkins conducted a study that looked at the readability of the documents given to families going through the K-12 public school IEP process and found that only four to eight percent of the documents examined were at the recommended reading level and as much as half of the documents were written at the college reading level or higher (2006). In order to ensure families can be co-equals of the team and can be informed about the process and what it will mean for their children, it is crucial that we provide documents and communicate in plain language that does not require specific training and knowledge of professional jargon. When background knowledge is necessary, this should also be offered for families in order to ensure they are being supported and informed in the collaboration process.

Appropriate Translation

When necessary, it is imperative that families are offered appropriate translation for ALL planned collaborative interactions. If families are seen as co-equals on the team, then it makes sense they should have the supports necessary to fully participate. Per federal guidance, "schools must communicate information to limited English proficient parents in a language they can understand about any program, service, or activity that is called to the attention of parents who are proficient in English" (Rosetti et al., 2017). Rosetti et al. (2017) focus on research-based strategies for improving collaboration with families who are culturally and linguistically diverse and emphasize the importance of offering proper translation services to ensure the ability to foster collaboration in all interactions within the IEP process.

Flexible Scheduling

Another practice that is required in order to prioritize family involvement is flexible scheduling that takes into account family work schedules and other responsibilities. "Teachers should ask families about their preferred meeting times and comfort level with the special education process. This conveys willingness to be flexible and supportive within the collaboration" (Rosetti et al, 2017). As we outline above, it is a privilege to have either a work and responsibilities schedule that aligns with the K-12 schedule, or to have the flexibility to adjust work schedule around meetings with the school team.

Parental Barriers to Participation

Our final suggestion for best practice when collaborating with families with children who have disabilities is to look for and be aware of any additional barriers families are facing with regard to collaboration with the team in support of their children. Barriers may be limited available transportation causing an inability to attend in-person meetings, events, etc. There may also be cultural differences in expectations for communication and who should and should not be a part of the decision-making process. It is not enough to be aware of these barriers; we must work together to mitigate these.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Visit a school or early childhood center.
2. Gather information about how families with children with disabilities collaborate with and are included in communications, translation, scheduling, etc.
3. Identify best practices and challenges that need to be addressed.
4. Identify at least two additional recommendations to foster inclusive and collaborative relationships with families with children with disabilities.

CONCLUSION

When we recognize that disability is a social construct that has been used historically and culturally in the United States to marginalize and justify oppression, we cannot only use this reimagining in how we interact with disabled people but also with families of children with disabilities. In pushing back against the systems and structures which have been used to uphold hegemony and thus continue to oppress marginalized groups, we open up new possibilities for collaborating with families, both specifically around disability and in a much broader sense.

PART VI

WHAT IS CULTURE AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Learning Objectives

- 6.1 Explain ethnocentrism and xenocentrism
- 6.2 Define cultural capital, funds of knowledge, and cultural humility
- 6.3 Recommend strategies for child, family, school, and community collaboration that

respects cultural exchange in equitable relationships and decision-making.

Introduction

What are the rules when you pass an acquaintance at school, work, in the grocery store, or in the mall? Generally, we do not consider all of the intricacies of the rules of behavior. We may simply say, "Hello!" and ask, "How was your weekend?" or some other trivial question meant to be a friendly greeting. Rarely do we physically embrace or even touch the individual. In fact, doing so may be viewed with scorn or distaste, since as people in the United States we have fairly rigid rules about personal space. However, we all adhere to various rules and standards that are created and maintained in culture.

These rules and expectations have meaning, and there are ways in which you may violate this negotiation. Consider what would happen if you stopped and informed everyone who said, "Hi, how are you?" exactly how you were doing that day, and in detail. You would more than likely violate rules of culture and specifically greeting. Perhaps in a different culture the question would be more literal, and it may require a response. Or if you are having coffee with a good friend, perhaps that question warrants a more detailed response. These examples are all aspects of culture, which is shared beliefs, values, and practices that participants must learn. Sociologically, we examine in what situation and context certain behavior is expected and in which situations perhaps it is not. These rules are created and enforced by people who interact and share culture.

Pause to Reflect!

Examine the image from a parent-teacher conference.

- What cultures might be represented in the image?
- Describe the body language, room set up, and participant facial expressions.
- Based on what you see in the image, determine if there is equitable conversation and collaboration between the teacher and the family.

It is important to begin with a clear understanding of terms presented in this chapter:

- A culture represents the beliefs and practices of a group.
- A society represents the people who share the beliefs and practices of a culture.
- "Community" refers to a definable region—as small as a neighborhood (Brooklyn, or "the east side of

town"), as large as a country (Ethiopia, the United States, or Nepal), or somewhere in between (in the United States, this might include someone who identifies with Southern or Midwestern society).

- Neither society nor culture could exist without the other.
- "Dominant culture" refers to the cultural norms, values, and practices that are accepted and pervasive within a particular social, economic, or institutional context. It's the "default setting" of a society, the background noise that influences how we behave, speak, and even think.

In this chapter, we will elevate the importance of culture, society, and community in our work with children, families, schools, and communities. We will examine factors, such as bias, microaggressions, and discrimination, that impact how families engage with the larger structures of schools and communities. We will recommend strategies that create equitable partnerships that honor the cultures, societies, and communities of families with the dominant culture.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. What rules shape your interactions with your family?
2. What rules shape your interactions with your coworkers?
3. What rules shape your interactions with strangers?
4. Compare and contrast those rules.

Media Attributions

WHAT IS CULTURE?

Humans are social creatures. Since the dawn of Homo sapiens nearly 250,000 years ago, people have grouped together into communities in order to survive. Living together, people form common habits and behaviors—from specific methods of childrearing to preferred techniques for obtaining food. In modern-day Paris, many people shop daily at outdoor markets to pick up what they need for their evening meal, buying cheese, meat, and vegetables from different specialty stalls. In the United States, the majority of people shop once a week at supermarkets, filling large carts to the brim. How would a Parisian perceive U.S. shopping behaviors that Americans take for granted?

Almost every human behavior, from shopping to marriage to expressions of feelings, is learned. In the United States, people tend to view marriage as a choice between two people based on mutual feelings of love. In other nations and in other times, marriages have been arranged through an intricate process of interviews and negotiations between entire families, or in other cases, through a direct system, such as a "mail order bride." To someone raised in New York City, the marriage customs of a family from Nigeria may seem strange or even wrong. Conversely, someone from a traditional Kolkata family might be perplexed with the idea of romantic love as the foundation for marriage and lifelong commitment. In other words, the way in which people view marriage depends largely on what they have been taught.

Behavior based on learned customs is not a bad thing. Being familiar with unwritten rules helps people feel secure and "normal." Most people want to live their daily lives confident that their behaviors will not be challenged or disrupted. But even an action as seemingly simple as commuting to work evidences a great deal of cultural propriety.

Take the case of going to work on public transportation. Whether people are commuting in Dublin, Cairo, Mumbai, or San Francisco, many behaviors will be the same, but significant differences also arise between cultures. Typically, a passenger will find a marked bus stop or station, wait for his bus or train, pay an agent before or after boarding, and quietly take a seat if one is available. But when boarding a bus in Cairo, passengers might have to run because buses there often do not come to a full stop to take on patrons. Dublin bus riders would be expected to extend an arm to indicate that they want the bus to stop for them. And when boarding a commuter train in Mumbai, passengers must squeeze into overstuffed cars amid a lot of pushing and shoving on the crowded platforms.

That kind of behavior would be considered the height of rudeness in the United States, but in Mumbai it reflects the daily challenges of getting around on a train system that is taxed to capacity.

In this example of commuting, culture consists of thoughts (expectations about personal space, for example) and tangible things (bus stops, trains, and seating capacity). Material culture refers to the objects or belongings of a group of people. Metro passes and bus tokens are part of material culture, as are automobiles, stores, and the physical structures where people worship. Nonmaterial culture, in contrast, consists of the ideas, attitudes, and beliefs of a society. Material and nonmaterial aspects of culture are linked, and physical objects often symbolize cultural ideas. A metro pass is a material object, but it represents a form of nonmaterial culture, namely, capitalism, and the acceptance of paying for transportation. Clothing, hairstyles, and, jewelry are part of material culture, but the appropriateness of wearing certain clothing for specific events reflects nonmaterial culture. A school building belongs to material culture, but the teaching methods and educational standards are part of education's nonmaterial culture. These material and nonmaterial aspects of culture can vary subtly from region to region. As people travel farther afield, moving from different regions to entirely different parts of the world, certain material and nonmaterial aspects of culture become dramatically unfamiliar. What happens when we encounter different cultures? As we interact with cultures other than our own, we become more aware of the differences and commonalities between others' worlds and our own.

Cultural Universals

Often, a comparison of one culture to another will reveal obvious differences. But all cultures also share common elements. Cultural universals are patterns or traits that are globally common to all societies. One example of a cultural universal is the family unit: every human society recognizes a family structure that regulates sexual reproduction and the care of children. Even so, how that family unit is defined and how it functions vary. In many Asian cultures, for example, family members from all generations commonly live together in one household. In these cultures, young adults continue to live in the extended household family structure until they marry and join their spouse's household, or they may remain and raise their nuclear family within the extended family's homestead. In the United States, by contrast, individuals are expected to leave home and live independently for a period before forming a family unit that consists of parents and their offspring. Other cultural universals include customs like funeral rites, weddings, and celebrations of births. However, each culture may view the ceremonies quite differently.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. What is the cultural norm in your family unit regarding who you live with and when, or even if, you are expected to establish your own home?

Anthropologist George Murdock first recognized the existence of cultural universals while studying systems of kinship around the world. Murdock found that cultural universals often revolve around basic human survival, such as finding food, clothing, and shelter, or around shared human experiences, such as birth and death or illness and healing.

Anthropologists closely examine modern and ancient human family structures, compare familial structures to those of our living primate relatives, and strive to understand pre-human familial structures based on the fossil record.

Modern family structures vary across cultures and across time indicating the variety of ways that a human society can be constructed. Cultural anthropologists are particularly interested in this variation and seek to better understand the diverse ways that families exist because it is within the family that we are first exposed to cultural norms and beliefs. Humans are enculturated by our families: we learn our religions, race, traditions, gender roles, etc. within our family units and then we bring these beliefs and traditions into our societies.

If you look at a society – consider the United States, as an example – you might say that the U.S. is one culture. But each state also has its own culture within the larger culture. Then, each city has its own, unique culture within that state's culture, and each neighborhood also has its own specific culture. Then, within each neighborhood, each family has its own, unique traditions, beliefs, and practices. So, from this perspective, you can understand that the family unit is the smallest building block of our overall cultural system. No two families have identical beliefs, histories, or worldviews and we can understand how cultural conflict arises when we are able to examine the diverse cultural beliefs of each family group that still live side-by-side within a larger cultural context.

For many, our first childhood slumber party was a sort of anthropological fieldwork. Your first sleepover was the first time you realized that different people have different cultures and practices than you do. Other families may go to bed at a different time, they may have different rules about snacks or watching cartoons, other families may share chores in a way that is different from your own family, etc. These encounters can be the first instances that we are meaningfully introduced to cultural diversity and – in a way – participant observation. This is why anthropologists like to study family structures: closely examining family structures creates an opportunity to understand the basic building blocks of human nature, biological evolution, cultural norms, and cultural differences.

Cultural anthropologists call this the study of kinship. Kinship is a system of meaning and power that we create in order to determine who is responsible for whom (Guest). Each culture constructs familial

responsibility differently. For example, some cultural groups believe that parents are responsible for children when they are young while children are then responsible for their parents later in life. Some cultures do not believe that children must care for aging parents and still each culture varies in the extent to which parents are expected to care for children (Ex: Should both parents raise the children? Should both parents earn money for the children? When should the children start earning money for the family – if at all? etc.)

At the same time, each culture constructs relatedness differently: Some cultures incorporate exclusively blood relatives, others believe that you can have family members who are not blood related to you. Some cultures believe that cousins and grandparents are part of the same household while, in other cultures, parents can live in entirely separate households. Each tradition varies from place to place, culture to culture, and generation to generation, and there is no one, universal idea of what kinship (or family) is nor is there one universal idea of what kinship (or family) should achieve.

While it's difficult to come up with one clear definition of kinship, cultural anthropologists typically point to a variety of shared characteristics that we commonly see in kinship structures. Typically, kinship serves the following functions:

- Families provide support and they nurture
- Families ensure reproduction
- Families protect group assets
- Families influence, social, economic, and political systems

To summarize, anthropologists closely examine family structures because:

- Basic social structures frequently follow family structures
- The family is where humans learn behavior
- Family identity is intertwined with age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality
- It's within our families that we learn gender roles, division of labor, religion, warfare, politics, migration, nationalism, etc.
- We create families in order to maintain cultural continuity.

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THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN COLLABORATION WITH CHILDREN, FAMILIES, SCHOOLS, AND COMMUNITIES

Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism

Despite how much humans have in common, cultural differences are far more prevalent than cultural universals. For example, while all cultures have language, analysis of particular language structures and conversational etiquette reveal tremendous differences. In some Middle Eastern cultures, it is common to stand close to others in conversation. North Americans keep more distance and maintain a large "personal space." Even something as simple as eating and drinking varies greatly from culture to culture. If your professor comes into an early morning class holding a mug of liquid, what do you assume she is drinking? In the United States, it's most likely filled with coffee, not Earl Grey tea, a favorite in England, or Yak Butter tea, a staple in Tibet.

The way cuisines vary across cultures fascinates many people. Some travelers pride themselves on their willingness to try unfamiliar foods, like celebrated food writer Anthony Bourdain, while others return home expressing gratitude for their native culture's fare. Often, people in the United States express disgust at other cultures' cuisine and think that it's gross to eat meat from a dog or guinea pig, for example, while they don't question their own habit of eating cows or pigs. Such attitudes are an example of ethnocentrism, or evaluating and judging another culture based on how it compares to one's own cultural norms. Ethnocentrism, as sociologist William Graham Sumner (1906) described the term, involves a belief or attitude that one's own culture is better than all others. Almost everyone is a little bit ethnocentric. For example, Americans tend to say that people from England drive on the "wrong" side of the road, rather than on the "other" side. Someone from a country where dog meat is standard fare might find it off-putting to see a dog in a French restaurant—not on the menu, but as a pet and patron's companion. A good example of ethnocentrism is referring to parts of Asia as the "Far East." One might question, "Far east of where?"

A high level of appreciation for one's own culture can be healthy; a shared sense of community pride, for example, connects people in a society. But ethnocentrism can lead to disdain or dislike for other cultures and could cause misunderstanding and conflict. People with the best intentions sometimes travel to a society to "help" its people, because they see them as uneducated or backward—essentially inferior. In reality, these travelers are guilty of cultural imperialism, the deliberate imposition of one's own cultural values on another culture. Europe's colonial expansion, begun in the sixteenth century, was often accompanied by a severe cultural imperialism. European colonizers often viewed the people in the lands they colonized as uncultured savages who were in need of European governance, dress, religion, and other cultural practices. A more modern

example of cultural imperialism may include the work of international aid agencies who introduce agricultural methods and plant species from developed countries while overlooking indigenous varieties and agricultural approaches that are better suited to the particular region.

Ethnocentrism can be so strong that when confronted with all of the differences of a new culture, one may experience disorientation and frustration. In sociology, we call this culture shock. A traveler from Chicago might find the nightly silence of rural Montana unsettling, not peaceful. An exchange student from China might be annoyed by the constant interruptions in class as other students ask questions—a practice that is considered rude in China. Perhaps the Chicago traveler was initially captivated with Montana's quiet beauty and the Chinese student was originally excited to see a U.S.-style classroom firsthand. But as they experience unanticipated differences from their own culture, their excitement gives way to discomfort and doubts about how to behave appropriately in the new situation. Eventually, as people learn more about a culture, they recover from culture shock.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Discuss the following questions.

   1. Reflect on how ethnocentrism might affect the dynamics between families and schools.
   2. How might cultural biases and assumptions from both educators and parents influence communication, expectations, and the educational experiences of students.
   3. How can recognizing and addressing ethnocentrism improve relationships and outcomes in the school community?

Cultural relativism is the practice of assessing a culture by its own standards rather than viewing it through the lens of one's own culture. Practicing cultural relativism requires an open mind and a willingness to consider and even adapt to new values and norms. However, indiscriminately embracing everything about a new culture is not always possible.

Sometimes when people attempt to rectify feelings of ethnocentrism and develop cultural relativism, they swing too far to the other end of the spectrum. Xenocentrism is the opposite of ethnocentrism, and refers to the belief that another culture is superior to one's own. (The Greek root word xeno, pronounced "ZEE-no," means "stranger" or "foreign guest.") An exchange student who goes home after a semester abroad or a

sociologist who returns from the field may find it difficult to associate with the values of their own culture after having experienced what they deem a more upright or nobler way of living.

Perhaps the greatest challenge for sociologists studying different cultures is the matter of keeping a perspective. It is impossible for anyone to keep all cultural biases at bay; the best we can do is strive to be aware of them. Pride in one's own culture doesn't have to lead to imposing its values on others. And an appreciation for another culture shouldn't preclude individuals from studying it with a critical eye.

Schools and communities must examine the role of ethnocentrism and xenocentrism in their interactions with children and families. This requires deep self-reflection, honesty, and cultural humility. It also requires that schools and communities view families and children from a strengths-based perspective by honoring their cultural capital and funds of knowledge.

Cultural humility is the lifelong practice of self-reflection and learning to understand and respect different cultural perspectives, recognizing one's own biases, and engaging with others authentically and respectfully. It emphasizes openness, self-awareness, and the commitment to equitable and inclusive interactions. Cultural humility in education involves teachers acknowledging their own biases, continuously learning about different cultures, and engaging with families and communities in a respectful and collaborative manner.

Case Study (A)

Mr. Smith, a middle school teacher, has a new student, Amina, who recently arrived from a refugee camp in Syria. Amina's family has faced significant trauma and disruption due to the war and their subsequent displacement.

Mr. Smith takes time to reflect on his own cultural background, beliefs, and potential biases. He acknowledges that he might have preconceived notions about refugees and consciously decides to approach the situation with an open mind and a willingness to learn. He

- attends a workshop on cultural competence and reads about the experiences of Syrian refugees to better understand Amina's background.
- learns more about Amina's cultural background, including the challenges her family might have faced and their cultural practices.
- reaches out to local refugee support organizations and community groups to gather information and resources that could help him better understand Amina's needs.
- organizes a meeting with Amina's parents, ensuring that an interpreter is present to facilitate effective communication.

- listens actively to the parents' concerns, asks about their expectations, and shows genuine interest in their cultural practices and values.
- discusses various support options, such as language assistance and counseling services, and seeks the parents' preferences and suggestions.
- includes stories and materials from diverse cultures, including Syrian culture, in his curriculum.
- pairs Amina with a peer buddy to help her navigate the new school environment.

Cultural capital refers to the non-financial social assets that influence an individual's ability to succeed in society. These assets include education, intellect, style of speech, dress, and even physical appearance, which can grant social mobility and access to resources and opportunities. In an educational setting, recognizing and valuing the cultural capital of all families involves acknowledging and leveraging the unique strengths, knowledge, and experiences these families bring to the educational environment.

Case Study (B)

Ms. Garcia is a teacher at an early childhood education center. She has a new student, Sam, whose family is currently experiencing homelessness and living in a shelter. Ms. Garcia wants to ensure that Sam and his family feel valued and included in the classroom community. She

- takes time to learn about the experiences and strengths of Sam's family. She understands that living through homelessness requires resilience, resourcefulness, and strong problem-solving skills.
- she learns that Sam's mother, despite their current situation, is actively involved in community support networks and has extensive knowledge about local resources and services.
- invites Sam's mother to share her knowledge about community resources with other parents during a parent workshop, highlighting her expertise and contributions.
- learns that Sam's family has a tradition of storytelling and often shares stories about their cultural heritage. Ms. Garcia invites Sam's mother to tell a story to the class, celebrating and valuing their cultural background.

- creates a "family wall" where each child can bring in photos and share stories about their family. This helps Sam and other children feel proud of their backgrounds and promotes understanding and empathy among classmates.
- invites Sam's mother to join the parent advisory committee, recognizing her insights and experiences as valuable contributions to the school's decision-making processes.
- organizes a "skills day" where parents can lead activities based on their unique skills and experiences. Sam's mother, who is an excellent cook, leads a cooking activity, teaching the children how to make a traditional dish.

Funds of knowledge are the diverse cultural and experiential knowledge that students bring from their home and community environments. This concept recognizes these assets as valuable resources for learning, helping educators connect curriculum to students' real-life experiences and enhancing educational engagement and relevance.

Case Study (C)

Mx. Taylor is an elementary school teacher who has a new student, Alex, who identifies as non-binary. Mx. Taylor wants to create an inclusive classroom environment that recognizes and values Alex's unique experiences and knowledge. They

- take time to learn about Alex's interests, experiences, and the knowledge they bring to the classroom. This includes understanding Alex's gender identity and the experiences related to it.
- have a conversation with Alex and their parents to learn more about Alex's hobbies, such as their interest in storytelling and creative writing, and how they express their identity through these activities.
- design a writing project where students create their own stories. Alex's contribution includes stories featuring non-binary characters, which helps broaden the perspectives of their peers.
- include books and resources in the classroom library that feature non-binary and LGBTQ+ characters and themes.
- collaborate with Alex's family and the broader community to bring in additional resources

and perspectives that support Alex's learning and well-being.
- ensure that classroom activities and groupings are not based on gender, allowing all students, including Alex, to participate comfortably and equally.

In an ethnographic study in Geneva, Switzerland, Jean-Paul Payet and Fabien Deshayes (2019) found that, while teachers and schools adopt language about multiculturalism and diversity, they oftentimes approach families through a deficit-based lens, especially when it is combined with poor school results and when parents have little knowledge of the institution and its expectations. Even though a family may view culture and ethnicity as a resource, as a fund of knowledge, the teacher or school may not truly recognize it as such. This results in distrust of the school and teachers. It decreases caregiver participation.

Pause to Reflect!

Reflect on a time when cultural humility, cultural capital, and/or funds of knowledge were integral to the outcome of a school or community based discussion.

- Was the outcome positive or negative?
- Were all stakeholders collaborative and equitable?
- Recommend additional strategies for highlight cultural humility, cultural capital, and/or funds of in that discussion.

VALUES AND BELIEFS

Joan Giovannini

The first, and perhaps most crucial, elements of culture we will discuss are its values and beliefs. Values are a culture's standard for discerning what is good and just in society. Values are deeply embedded and critical for transmitting and teaching a culture's beliefs. Beliefs are the tenets or convictions that people hold to be true. Individuals in a society have specific beliefs, but they also share collective values. To illustrate the difference, Americans commonly believe in the American Dream—that anyone who works hard enough will be successful and wealthy. Underlying this belief is the American value that wealth is good and important.

Values help shape a society by suggesting what is good and bad, beautiful and ugly, sought or avoided. Consider the value that the United States places upon youth. Children represent innocence and purity, while a youthful adult appearance signifies sexuality. Shaped by this value, individuals spend millions of dollars each year on cosmetic products and surgeries to look young and beautiful. The United States also has an individualistic culture, meaning people place a high value on individuality and independence. In contrast, many other cultures are collectivist, meaning the welfare of the group and group relationships are a primary value.

Living up to a culture's values can be difficult. It's easy to value good health, but it's hard to quit smoking. Marital monogamy is valued, but many spouses engage in infidelity. Cultural diversity and equal opportunities for all people are valued in the United States, yet the country's highest political offices have been dominated by white men.

Values often suggest how people should behave, but they don't accurately reflect how people do behave. Values portray an ideal culture, the standards society would like to embrace and live up to. But ideal culture differs from real culture, the way society actually is, based on what occurs and exists. In an ideal culture, there would be no traffic accidents, murders, poverty, or racial tension. But in real culture, police officers, lawmakers, educators, and social workers constantly strive to prevent or repair those accidents, crimes, and injustices. American teenagers are encouraged to value celibacy. However, the number of unplanned pregnancies among teens reveals that not only is the ideal hard to live up to, but the value alone is not enough to spare teenagers the potential consequences of having sex.

One way societies strive to put values into action is through rewards, sanctions, and punishments. When people observe the norms of society and uphold its values, they are often rewarded. A boy who helps an elderly woman board a bus may receive a smile and a "thank you." A business manager who raises profit margins may receive a quarterly bonus. People sanction certain behaviors by giving their support, approval, or permission, or by instilling formal actions of disapproval and nonsupport. Sanctions are a form of social control, a way to encourage conformity to cultural norms. Sometimes people conform to norms in anticipation or expectation

of positive sanctions: good grades, for instance, may mean praise from parents and teachers. From a criminal justice perspective, properly used social control is also inexpensive crime control. Utilizing social control approaches pushes most people to conform to societal rules, regardless of whether authority figures (such as law enforcement) are present.

When people go against a society's values, they are punished. A boy who shoves an elderly woman aside to board the bus first may receive frowns or even a scolding from other passengers. A business manager who drives away customers will likely be fired. Breaking norms and rejecting values can lead to cultural sanctions such as earning a negative label—lazy, no-good bum—or to legal sanctions, such as traffic tickets, fines, or imprisonment.

Values are not static; they vary across time and between groups as people evaluate, debate, and change

collective societal beliefs. Values also vary from culture to culture. For example, cultures differ in their values about what kinds of physical closeness are appropriate in public. It's rare to see two male friends or coworkers holding hands in the United States, where that behavior often symbolizes romantic feelings. But in many nations, masculine physical intimacy is considered natural in public. This difference in cultural values came to light when people reacted to photos of former president George W. Bush holding hands with the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia in 2005. A simple gesture, such as hand-holding, carries great symbolic differences across cultures.

Conversations with families require us to be open to seeing their perspectives. Sometimes we share the same perspectives and our conversations go smoothly. At other times, we are surprised by something or feel challenged. Sometimes our program cannot accommodate a family's request. No matter the situation, it always helps to approach the conversation with the family's strengths in mind. Adopting a strengths-based attitude does not mean avoiding challenges. Instead it shows families that we want to work together with them to find a solution. In contrast, when we approach our interactions with a fixed or negative attitude, we may convey our distrust or judgment. They may feel that they can't trust us. We may put up barriers to engaging families without realizing it.

A strengths-based approach involves

- acknowledging the strengths of families first
- respecting and learning from differences
- showing openness to adapting practice based on family preferences
- sharing decision-making
- approaching families as equal and reciprocal partners.

Each child and family have unique strengths that can be the foundation of our discussions and partnership. Families are the most important constant in children's lives, and children's healthy development relies on sensitive and nurturing interactions within the family and the community. Families make choices every day that affect a child's development and learning. These choices are rooted in their belief systems and cultural identities. Being open to families' suggestions and requests helps us do our best on behalf of their children.

Strength-based Attitudes	Description
All families have strengths.	Each child and family have unique strengths that can be the foundation of our discussions and partnership.
Families are the first and the most important teachers of their children.	Families are the most important constant in children's lives, and children's healthy development relies on sensitive and nurtuing interactions within the family and the community.
Families have expertise about their child and their family.	Families make choices every day that affect a child's development and learning. These choices are rooted in their belief systems and cultural identities.
Families' contributions are important and valuable.	Being open to families' suggestions and requests helps us do our best on behalf of their children.

Case Study (D)

Consider the following case study:

Ravi, a 5-year-old in Ms. Martinez's early childhood class, recently migrated to the United States from India with his family. His parents are concerned about his adjustment to the new environment and his progress in learning English.

In the parent-teacher conference, Ms. Martinez adopts a strengths-based approach, starting by celebrating Ravi's enthusiasm for learning and his quick adaptation to classroom routines. She notes his eagerness to participate in group activities. Ms. Martinez highlights Ravi's ability to form friendships quickly, using his non-verbal communication and friendly demeanor. She shares examples of Ravi's leadership during playtime and his curiosity about new topics.

Ms. Martinez and Ravi's parents discuss strategies to support his English language development while valuing his cultural background. They agree to incorporate bilingual resources and cultural stories in the classroom and at home.

Ravi's parents leave the conference feeling positive and supported. They appreciate the focus on Ravi's strengths and the collaborative plan that respects their cultural heritage. This strengths-based approach fosters a welcoming environment for Ravi's growth and adjustment.

- List specific ways that Ms. Martinez demonstrated a strengths-based lens with the family.

- Identify examples of cultural humility, cultural capital, and/or funds of knowledge in this case study.

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PART VII
HONORING LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

Learning Objectives

- Define terms and categories used to describe children from linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Report on data and demographics about linguistic diversity in the United States.
- Apply an understanding of legal responsibilities related to linguistic diversity to inclusive strategies for schools and communities.
- Identify strategies to support families defined as immigrants, migrants, and refugees.

Linguistic diversity is a reflection of the broader cultural diversity within a community. Community bonds

are strengthened when schools and communities show an understanding and appreciation for different languages. Families feel connected, welcomed, respected, and are more likely to participate in community activities and school events. This engagement leads to stronger partnerships between families and schools which fosters a supportive environment for children's development.

Are we welcoming multilingual families?

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INTRODUCTION TO HONORING LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky was a Russian and Soviet psychologist, best known for his work on psychological development in children. Vygotsky's theories on cognitive development and the role of language in learning provide valuable extensions into understanding and addressing linguistic diversity in educational settings. Vygotsky asserted that cognitive development is largely a social process, occurring through interaction with more knowledgeable others (parents, teachers, peers). This perspective underscores the importance of linguistic diversity. Among many of his major publications and research is the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). ZPD refers to the gap between a child's current level of development and the level they are capable of reaching with tools provided by others with more knowledge.

Zone of proximal development (Learner can do with guidance)

Learner can do unaided

Learner cannot do
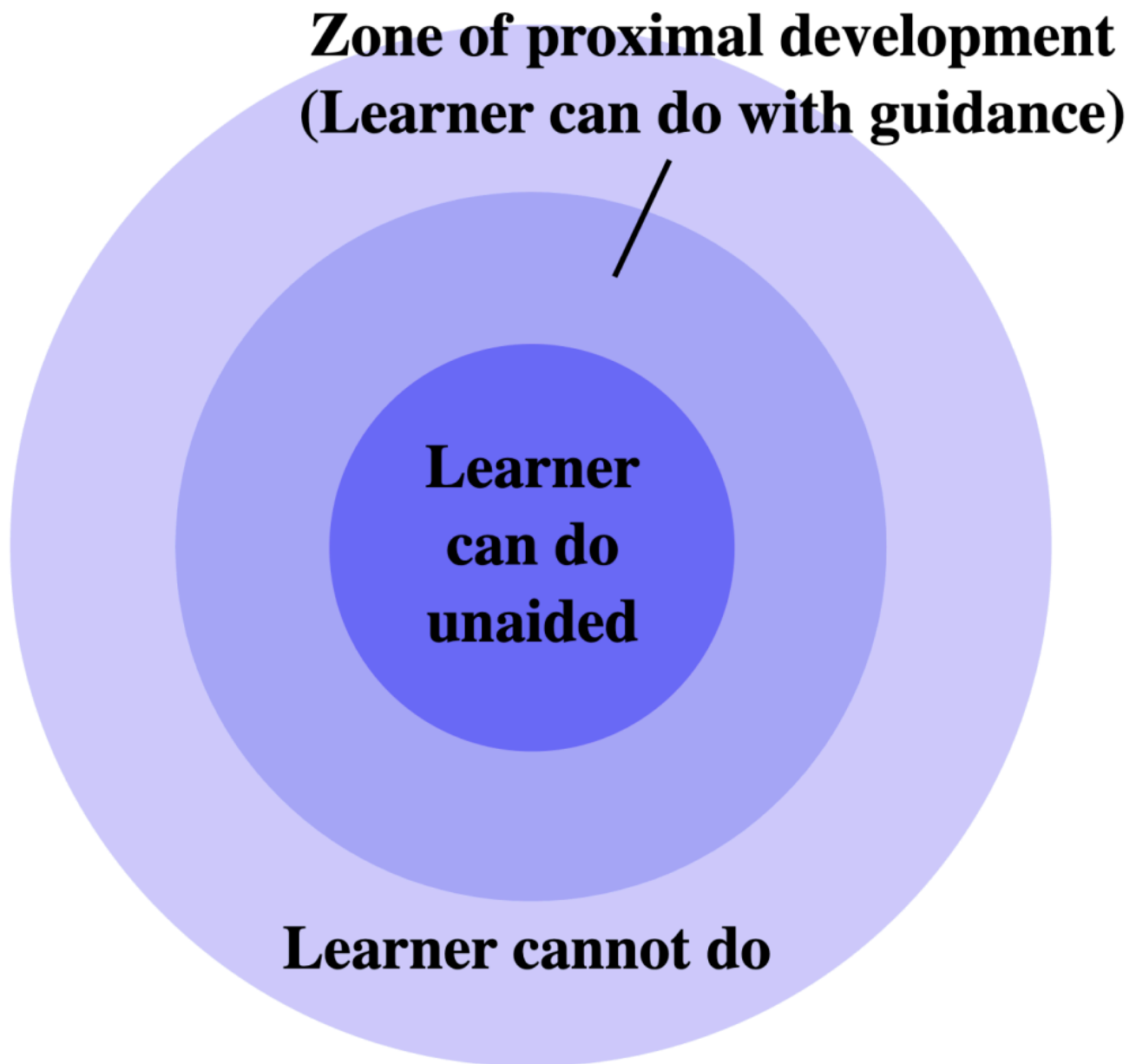
Zone of proximal development

Vygotsky argued that language is a primary tool for thinking and learning. He distinguished between "inner speech" (internal thought) and "external speech" (communication with others), emphasizing that internalization of language transforms cognitive processes. Vygotsky's theories suggest that learning is deeply embedded in cultural and linguistic contexts. This implies that students' home languages and cultural backgrounds should be integrated into the educational process to support learning. Vygotsky's view that language develops through social interaction highlights the importance of creating collaborative and communicative classroom environments that honor and engage with families. Recognizing and valuing students' home languages and cultures enhances their cognitive development and self-esteem. According to

Vygotsky, language is a means of cultural transmission, so incorporating students' linguistic backgrounds in the classroom supports their overall development.

Pause to Reflect!

Kamila Noori, a prominent Afghan judge, on the balcony of the apartment where she will live with her husband and two of their daughters.

Listen to [From Kabul to Virginia: An Afghan family is starting over in America](#)

- How might the drastic change in environment affect the cultural identity and emotional well-being of Kamila Noori's children and grandchildren?
- In what ways can the educational system in Northern Virginia support the Mohib children in maintaining their home language, Dari, while also helping them achieve proficiency in English?
- What challenges might the Mohib children face in navigating their dual identities as Afghan

refugees and new residents of the United States?

In 2009, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) released *Where We Stand on Responding to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity*. In the statement, NAEYC asserts that early childhood education must

- Help all families realize the cognitive advantages of a child knowing more than one language, and provide them with strategies to support, maintain, and preserve home language learning.
- Ensure that children remain cognitively, linguistically, and emotionally connected to their home language and culture.
- Encourage home language and literacy development.
- Help develop essential concepts in the children's first language and within cultural contexts that they understand.
- Make every effort to use children's home languages and create classroom environments that reflect children's languages and cultures.

Pause to Reflect!

Mariela is a 41-year-old migrant worker who immigrated to the United States from Oaxaca, Mexico, looking for work and a better life for her family. She now works on a strawberry farm in Florida. Her 4-year-old daughter, Alicia, and 2-year-old son, Mariano, are enrolled in a local Spanish/English Head Start program.

Mariela's first language is Mixtec, an Indigenous Oaxacan language. Spanish is her second language. Mariela struggles with the idea of teaching Mixtec to her children. Mariela says she wants to spare her children the discrimination she felt when she arrived in this country. At home, she only speaks Mixtec with her husband and adult family members. After listening to her concerns, Alicia's teacher suggests that Mariela speak with her children in Mixtec. She encourages Mariela to sing songs and rhymes and ask open-ended questions in Mixtec, Spanish, and English.

1. How does Mariela's concern about discrimination reflect broader societal attitudes towards Indigenous languages and cultures?

2. What role can schools and educators play in addressing and mitigating discrimination against students who speak Indigenous languages?
3. How can the Head Start program support Mariela in her efforts to teach Mixtec to her children?
4. What strategies can be implemented by the school to foster a collaborative environment that respects and promotes the use of home languages?

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DESCRIPTIVE TERMS FOR DIVERSE LINGUISTIC BACKGROUNDS

Families encounter myriad terms, definitions, and categories to describe children from diverse linguistic backgrounds. According to TESOL, "the bottom line is that whatever term you choose to use, it is important to ensure that it portrays the student from an asset-based perspective, is concise, and cannot be misinterpreted." This section introduces common terms used to describe and categorize children from diverse linguistic backgrounds and programs that support them.

Table A: Terms and Categories for Children from Diverse Linguistic Backgrounds

Term	Description
English Learner (EL)	A broad term used to describe students who are in the process of acquiring English language skills and have not yet reached proficiency.
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	An older term that is still used in some legal and educational contexts to describe students whose primary language is not English and who have limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. According to TESOL, "terms such as this reinforce the damaging colonial view of English as the ideal language to be learned; stigmatize the learner as being somehow less important and capable than others; and fail to recognize the diverse languages, skills, and knowledge that the learner brings with them." Therefore, avoid using this term.
Dual Language Learner (DLL)	Often used for younger children, particularly in early childhood education, who are learning two languages simultaneously, typically their home language and English.
Newcomer	Refers to recently arrived immigrants or refugees who are new to the U.S. school system and are in the initial stages of learning English.
Long-term English Learner (LTEL)	Describes students who have been in U.S. schools for several years (usually 5 years or more) but have not yet achieved proficiency in English.

Pause to Reflect!

1. Reflect on your experiences in schools as either a student, caregiver, teacher, or other support staff. List the terms that were used to describe and categorize children from diverse linguistic backgrounds.
2. Determine if those terms fall into asset or deficit based categories. Describe your rationale.
3. How does the use of deficit-based language when discussing linguistic diversity affect the perception and self-esteem of multilingual students?

Table B: Terms and Categories for Programs for Children from Diverse Linguistic Backgrounds

Term	Description
Bilingual Education	Programs that provide instruction in both the student's home language and English.
English as a Second Language (ESL)	Programs focused on teaching English to students whose first language is not English. This instruction is typically provided in English and may be integrated into regular classes or provided in separate settings.
English Language Development (ELD)	A specific approach within ESL programs that focuses on developing proficiency in English, often using structured methods and curricula.
Sheltered Instruction	A teaching approach that uses simplified English and visual aids to help ELs understand content in subjects like math, science, and social studies.
Transitional Bilingual Education	Programs that initially use the student's home language but transition to English over time, with the goal of moving students to English-only instruction.
Two-Way Immersion (TWI) or Dual Language Immersion	Programs that aim to develop bilingualism and biliteracy by providing instruction in two languages to both English learners and native English speakers.

Pause to Reflect!

1. Visit an early childhood center or school.
2. Which programs are offered for children from diverse linguistic backgrounds?
3. What are the goals and objectives of those programs?
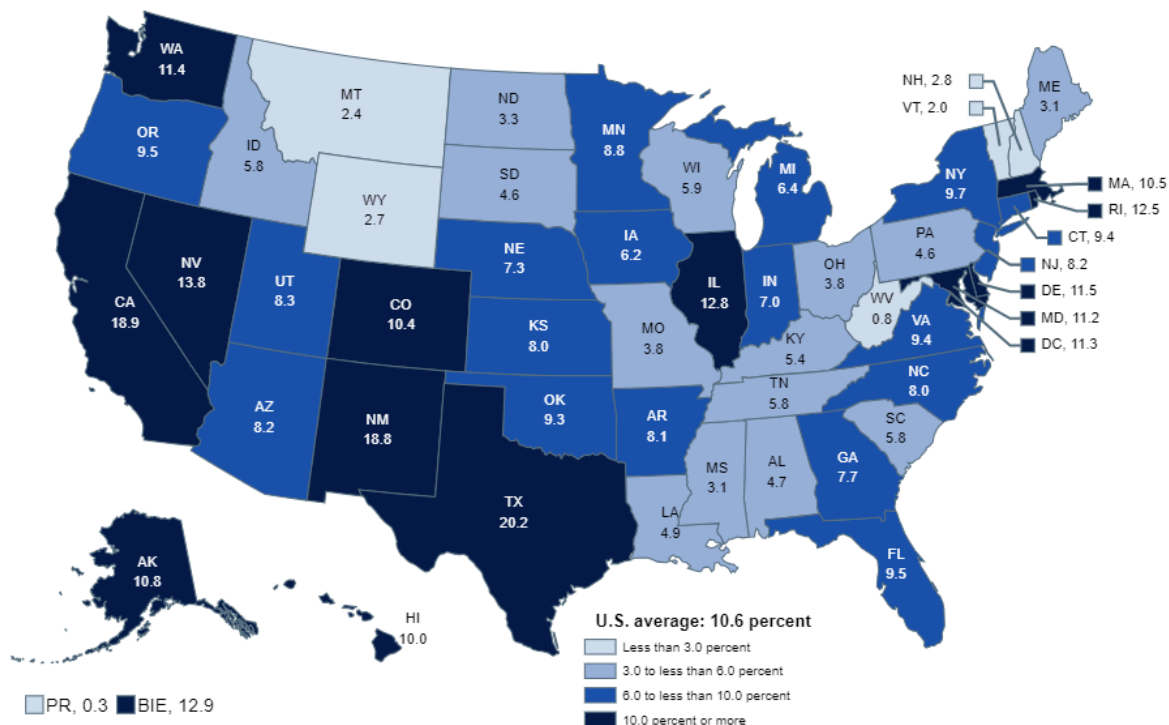4. How are the programs marketed to families?

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- Descriptive Terms

DATA AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Linguistic diversity in schools in the United States is significant and growing. The data reflects a wide array of languages spoken by students and underscores the importance of addressing the needs of children from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Here are some key statistics and insights about linguistic diversity in U.S. schools from the National Center for Education Statistics:

Figure 1. Percentage of public school students who were English learners (ELs), by state or jurisdiction: Fall 2021

WA 11.4, MT 2.4, ND 3.3, MN 8.8, NH 2.8, VT 2.0, ME 3.1, OR 9.5, ID 5.8, SD 4.6, WI 5.9, MI 6.4, NY 9.7, MA 10.5, RI 12.5, WY 2.7, IA 6.2, OH 3.8, PA 4.6, CT 9.4, NV 13.8, UT 8.3, NE 7.3, IL 12.8, IN 7.0, WV 0.8, NJ 8.2, CA 18.9, CO 10.4, KS 8.0, MO 3.8, KY 5.4, VA 9.4, DE 11.5, MD 11.2, DC 11.3, AZ 8.2, NM 18.8, OK 9.3, AR 8.1, TN 5.8, NC 8.0, SC 5.8, MS 3.1, AL 4.7, GA 7.7, TX 20.2, LA 4.9, FL 9.5, AK 10.8, HI 10.0

U.S. average: 10.6 percent
- Less than 3.0 percent
- 3.0 to less than 6.0 percent
- 6.0 to less than 10.0 percent
- 10.0 percent or more

PR, 0.3   BIE, 12.9

NOTE: U.S. average is for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Includes all ELs, regardless of program participation. Excludes ELs who are enrolled in prekindergarten. Data for the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) include programs designed for Native American students learning and studying Native American languages. Data for Puerto Rico are for students with "limited Spanish proficiency" or Spanish learners (SLs), instead of "English Learners," as Spanish is the language of instruction in Puerto Rico. However, Title III-A requires that an outcome of such programs be increased English proficiency. Figures are plotted based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education," 2021-22; and EDFacts file 141, Data Group 678, 2021-22. See Digest of Education Statistics 2023, table 204.20.

The data table represented in the map is at the end of this chapter.

Pause to Reflect:

1. Which three states had the highest percentages of English Learners (ELs) in their public school populations in fall 2021?
2. What was the range of percentages for states that identified at least 6.0 but less than 10.0 percent of their students as ELs?
3. How did the percentage of ELs in Massachusetts compare to the percentage in West Virginia, and what does this tell you about the regional differences in EL populations?

Figure 3. Percentage of public school students who were English learners (ELs), by grade level: Fall 2021
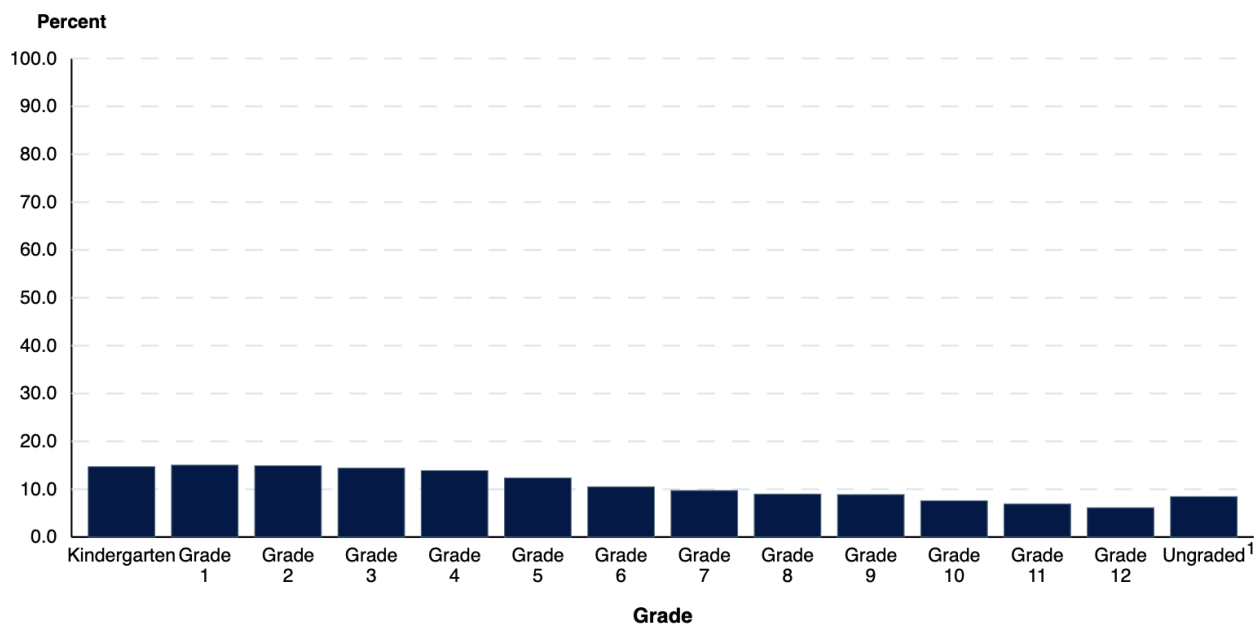
[1] Ungraded students can include elementary/secondary school students of any age. Also includes students reported as being enrolled in grade 13.

NOTE: Data in this figure represent the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Includes all students identified as ELs--both those participating in EL programs and those not participating in EL programs. Excludes ELs who are enrolled in prekindergarten. Figures are plotted based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, ED*Facts* file 141, Data Group 678, extracted December 12, 2023, from the ED*Facts* Data Warehouse (internal U.S. Department of Education source); and Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary and Secondary Education," 2021-22. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2023*, table 204.27.

The data table represented in the map is at the end of this chapter.

Pause to Reflect!

1. What trend was observed in the percentage of English Learners (ELs) across different grade levels in fall 2021?
2. How does this data inform programming and support services for schools and communities?

Number and percentage distribution of English learners (ELs) in public schools and number of ELs as a percentage of total public school enrollment, by the 10 most commonly reported home languages of ELs: Fall 2021

Home Language	Number of ELs	Percentage distribution of ELs[1]	Number of ELs as a % of total enrollment
Spanish, Castilian	4,023,289	76.4	8.4
Arabic	130,917	2.5	0.3
English[2]	116,771	2.2	0.2
Chinese	95,584	1.8	0.2
Vietnamese	75,070	1.4	0.2
Portuguese	50,205	1.0	0.1
Russian	39,403	0.7	0.1
Haitian, Haitian Creole	31,122	0.6	0.1
Hmong	30,181	0.6	0.1
Urdu	26,567	0.5	0.1

[1] Detail does not sum to 100 percent because not all home language categories are shown.

[2] Examples of situations in which English might be reported as an English learner's home language include students who live in multilingual households and students adopted from other countries who were raised speaking another language but currently live in households where English is spoken.

NOTE: Data in this table represent the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Includes all students identified as ELs–both those participating in EL programs and those not participating in EL programs. Excludes ELs who are enrolled in prekindergarten.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, ED*Facts* file 141, Data Group 678, 2021-22, extracted December 12, 2023. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2023*, table 204.27.

Pause to Reflect!

1. Which home language was the most commonly reported among EL public school students in fall 2021?
2. Which languages do you see represented in your own community and schools?
3. Which languages are you familiar with? Unfamiliar with? Where are these languages spoken?

Data table represented on Figure 1's map and Figure 3's graph:

Figure 1. Table Percentage of public school students who were English learners (ELs), by state or jurisdiction: Fall 2021 [National Center for Education Statistics]

State or jurisdiction	Percentage low to high
Less than 3.0 percent	
Puerto Rico	0.272795577
West Virginia	0.754194365
Vermont	2.037511164
Montana	2.376244216
Wyoming	2.725231757
New Hampshire	2.836387165
3.0 to less than 6.0 percent	
Mississippi	3.076244344
Maine	3.129059262
North Dakota	3.326088445
Ohio	3.794163976
Missouri	3.843172375
Pennsylvania	4.57892551
South Dakota	4.627513145
Alabama	4.672753564
Louisiana	4.871665769
Kentucky	5.416063549
Idaho	5.780918863
Tennesee	5.798984458
South Carolina	5.842141794
Wisconsin	5.944711518
6.0 to less than 10.0 percent	
Iowa	6.203920017
MI	6.383767681
IN	6.96973351
NE	7.304832033
GA	7.683147842

State or jurisdiction	Percentage low to high
NC	7.965785987
KS	7.984154059
AR	8.122108402
NJ	8.229420256
AZ	8.239682198
UT	8.298042939
MN	8.806831889
OK	9.294457103
CT	9.365411929
VA	9.394750423
FL	9.513459406
OR	9.537296881
NY	9.691425118
10.0 percent or more	
HI	10.02032591
CO	10.43689679
MA	10.54669011
United States **AVERAGE**	10.64791982
AK	10.78695438
Maryland	11.18211696
Washington, DC	11.28694831
Washington	11.44213304
Deleware	11.53892879
Rhode Island	12.47708673
Illinois	12.81890861
Bureau of Indian Edu.	12.86933481
Nevada	13.76826782
New Mexico	18.80265795
California	18.92036689

State or jurisdiction	Percentage low to high
Texas	20.15188778

Media Attributions

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- Percentage ELL by State © Education. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. Retrieved 11/5/2024

LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Pause to Reflect!

When COVID-19 began, a Sudanese refugee father of three elementary-aged children tried to get information from his children's school about distance learning. The school provided most information in English and Spanish, but he spoke Arabic and very limited English. He appreciated when his children's teachers called, but he didn't understand anything they were saying. Therefore, he was at a loss for how to best support his children's learning while they were home.

1. What challenges did the father face in understanding the information provided by the school?
2. How could this situation affect the emotional well-being of both the father and the children?
3. What strategies could the school implement to better communicate with non-English

speaking parents?

4. How can schools leverage community resources to bridge language gaps?

Schools and communities adhere to a set of legal responsibilities, rights, and laws as they relate to working with families with diverse linguistic backgrounds. Legal responsibilities, rights, and laws aim to promote inclusivity and engagement between families, schools, and communities. They ensure equitable access to education. This section focuses on translation, interpretation, and key legal frameworks.

[What are the legal requirements related to language access?](#)

Table C: Legal Frameworks for Translation and Interpretation Services

Act Name	Provisions of the Law
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964	Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Public schools must ensure that language barriers do not impede any student from equal participation in school programming. This includes discrimination based on language. Public schools are required to translate or interpret all documents and communications with caregivers, who are not fluent in English, into a language they can understand. Joint guidance from the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education states that "schools must provide translation or interpretation from appropriate and competent individuals and may not rely on or ask students, siblings, friends, or untrained school staff to translate or interpret for parents".
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	IDEA mandates that caregivers of children with disabilities must be able to participate in decisions regarding their child's education. For caregivers with deafness or for those whose native language is not English, schools must provide interpreters for meetings (such as Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings) to ensure that parents fully understand the proceedings and can contribute meaningfully.
Equal Education Opportunity Act of 1974	The Equal Education Opportunity Act of 1974 confirms that school districts cannot discriminate against students or families through the failure to provide ways to overcome barriers that impede equal participation, including language differences.
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)	ESSA requires that schools and districts communicate effectively with caregivers of English learners (ELs). This includes providing information about academic standards, assessments, and the child's progress in a language that parents can understand. Interpreters must be available for parent-teacher conferences, disciplinary meetings, and other important interactions.
Examples of state-specific guidance that extend or enhance federal policies	The **Massachusetts** Department of Elementary and Secondary Education requires that public schools provide an interpreter for families whose home language is not English and who are not proficient in English. Specifically, communications with caregivers must be in both English and the primary language of the home. Interpreters must be fluent in the primary language of the home and familiar with educational procedures, programs, and services. If the parents or the student are unable to read in any language or are blind or deaf, communications required by these regulations are made orally in English and with the use of a foreign language interpreter, in Braille, in sign language, via TTY, or in writing. The **Connecticut** State Board of Education requires that schools inventory the language needs of non-English speaking students, provide translation services during "critical interactions with teachers and administrators" (i.e. parent-teacher conferences) on behalf of multilingual learner students and their parents, and establish programming for bilingual education if twenty or more students speak the same dominant non-English language and attend the same school. Connecticut explicitly outlines the right to attend public school, regardless of immigration status.

Pause to Reflect!

1. What are the potential ethical and practical issues of using students or family members as translators during important meetings between caregivers, schools, and communities?
2. How might professional translators better support the accuracy, confidentiality, and effectiveness of these meetings?

Colorín Colorado, an educational service of WETA, stresses that is important to note that bilingual staff and interpreters are not the same thing:

- Bilingual/multilingual staff speak multiple languages. They may also be able to write and translate in those languages, but that is not always the case. They may not have had formal training in translation or interpretation.
- Interpreters have received extensive training related to best practices for interpreting/translation, as well as training on specific legal and educational considerations around matters where they will be interpreting.

Bilingual staff members' ability to communicate directly with families in their home language is a valuable asset for establishing partnerships with multilingual families. However, bilingual staff without formal training should not be responsible for facilitating interpreted communication between families and staff for meetings and events — only trained interpreters should be interpreting for families.

Bilingual Staff ≠ Interpreters

Use Biligual Staff For:	Use Interpreters For:
Communicating directly with families in their native language	Facilitating communication between families and staff ("middle man")
Building relationships with families	Situation that require an unbiased party
Presenting parent workshops in Spanish or whatever language is common among parents	Facilitating at workshops and events that are presented in English
Key access points, like the Front Office	Parent / Teacher conferences
–	Disciplinary situations
–	IEP meetings

Pause to Reflect!

1. What challenges and limitations might arise when bilingual staff members at an early childhood center are tasked with translating all materials into languages other than English?
2. How can dedicated professional translation services improve the accuracy and quality of these translations while supporting staff in their primary roles?

Many tools exist to simplify and streamline legal frameworks and requirements. For example, the United States Department of Agriculture recommends "I Speak Statement Cards" to help schools and agencies identify the language needs of its families and participants.

USDA I Speak Statements

☐ Unë flas **shqip** (Albanian)	☐ Ṅ a po **Klào** Win. (Kru)
☐ አማርኛ እናገራለሁ (Amharic)	☐ ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າເວົ້າ ພາສາລາວ. (Lao)
☐ انا اتكلم اللغة العربية. (Arabic)	☐ Yie gorngv **Mienh** waac. (Mien)
☐ Ես խոսում եմ հայերեն (Armenian)	☐ म **नेपाली** बोल्छु (Nepali)
☐ আমি বাংলা ভাষী। (Bengali)	☐ Mówię **po polsku.** (Polish)
☐ Ja govorim **bosanski jezik** (Bosnian)	☐ Eu falo **Português.** (Portuguese)
☐ ကျွန်တော်မြန်မာစကားပြောသည်။ (Burmese)	☐ ਇ ਸਪੇਆਕ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ (Punjabi)
☐ 我说中文 (Chinese Simplified)	☐ Cunosc limba **Română.** (Romanian)
☐ 我說中文 (Chinese Traditional)	☐ Я говорю **по-русски.** (Russian)
☐ Ja govorim **hrvatski.** (Croatian)	☐ Ou te tautala **faaSamoa.** (Samoan)
☐ اینجانب به زبان فارسی صحبت می کنم (Farsi)	☐ Govorim **srpski.** (Serbian)
☐ Je parle **français.** (French)	☐ Waxaan ku hadlaa **Somali.** (Somali)
☐ Je parle le **Français haïtien** (French Creole)	☐ Yo hablo **español.** (Spanish)
☐ Μιλάω **ελληνικά.** (Greek)	☐ أتحدث **السودانية** (لغوي سوداني) (Sudanese)
☐ હું **ગુજરાતી** બોલુ છું (Gujarati)	☐ Marunong po akong magsalita ng **Tagalog.** (Tagalog)
☐ Mwen pale **Kreyòl.** (Haitian Creole)	☐ ข้าพเจ้าพูด ภาษาไทย (Thai)
☐ म **हिंदी** बालता हूँ (Hindi)	☐ እኔ ትግርኛ ይዛረብ እየ. (Tigrinya)
☐ Kuv hais **lus hmoob.** (Hmong)	☐ Я розмовляю **українською.** (Ukrainian)
☐ Ana m a sụ **Igbo** (Igbo)	☐ میں **اردو** بولتا/ بولتی ہوں . (Urdu)
☐ Parlo **Italiano** (Italian)	☐ Tôi nói tiếng **Việt.** (Vietnamese)
☐ 私は日本語を話します (Japanese)	☐ **ייִדיש** רעד איך (Yiddish)
☐ Mi chat **Jamiekan langwjij** (Jamaican Creole)	☐ Mo gbọ **Yoruba** (Yoruba)
☐ ខ្ញុំនិយាយភាសាខ្មែរបានខ្លឹស (Khmer)	
☐ 본인의 모국어는 **한국어**입니다 (Korean)	
☐ ئە ز زمانی **كوردی** دە ئاخفم. (Kurdish)	

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I Speak Statements

The United States Department of Education requires the use of home language surveys. A home language survey is a questionnaire given to parents or guardians that helps schools and schools identify which students are potential English Learners and who will require assessment of their English language proficiency to determine whether they are eligible for language assistance services. A sample of a home language survey is provided below.

Primary/Home Language Survey for
All New Kindergarten and Incoming Students

Instructions for schools in completing the survey:

1. Interview the parents or guardians of ALL new kindergarten and incoming students in grades k–12 and record all information requested.

2. Provide interpretation services whenever necessary.

3. Check to see that all questions on the form are answered.

Student Information (The parents or guardians should complete this section.)	
First Name:_____ Last Name:_____	Date of Birth: (Month/Day/Year)

Questions for Parents or Guardians	Response
What language(s) is (are) spoken in your home?	
Which language did your child learn first?	
Which language does your child use most frequently at home?	
Which language do you most frequently speak to your child?	
In what language would you prefer to get information from the school?	

Parent or Guardian's Signature: _____   Date: _____

Legal frameworks exist to protect the rights associated with equal access to public education. They ensure that families can communicate effectively with school staff about their child and about the educational process. Schools should

● Determine the primary language spoken at home for each student and identify families that need translation or interpretation services.

● Use qualified interpreters who are trained in educational terminology and confidentiality. Schools should not rely on using students, siblings, other family members, or untrained staff for interpretation.

● Ensure that essential documents, such as consent forms, report cards, and notices, are translated into the primary languages of the community.

● Educate school staff on the importance of language access services and how to work effectively with interpreters.

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- Primary/Home Language Survey is licensed under a Public Domain license

WORKING WITH IMMIGRANT, MIGRANT AND REFUGEE POPULATIONS

An immigrant is a person who has been granted permission by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to reside permanently in the United States as a Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR). They are eligible to apply for citizenship after five years. In general, immigrants come to the U.S. voluntarily, while refugees are forced to leave their homeland, often with little time for preparation. Some people entering the U.S. are considered undocumented immigrants (those who enter the country without invitation or application; or who enter legally as a visitor, student, or temporary employee, and stay after their visa expires). In addition, some groups are awarded a temporary status (such as "Temporary Protected Status") by USCIS due to extraordinary and temporary conditions in designated countries that would threaten personal safety. This type of status can be terminated at any time, and it therefore provides an uncertain future to those it covers.

A migrant child is an individual under the age of 18 who moves across international borders or within their own country, either with family or alone, primarily due to economic, social, political, or environmental reasons. This movement often seeks better living conditions, education, safety from conflict, or employment opportunities for the family. Migrant children may face unique challenges, including legal and educational barriers, language differences, and potential risks of exploitation or discrimination. They might be classified differently depending on whether they are accompanied by guardians, unaccompanied, or separated from their primary caregivers. Ensuring their rights and well-being often involves international and national legal protections, as stipulated by conventions such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Refugees are a special class of immigrants who have fled their countries of nationality and have been determined unable or unwilling to return to their countries due to a well-founded fear of persecution. Refugees are screened and approved for resettlement to the United States by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Refugee migration may involve a long and difficult journey, long waits in refugee camps or other countries, extreme deprivation, and/or physical and emotional trauma, including torture. Asylees are approved according to similar criteria, but apply for asylum after they arrive in the United States.

It is important to help refugee, migrant, and immigrant children and youth nurture a strong and positive connection to their ethnic heritage, to maintain their home language, and to develop a positive bicultural identity as Americans. This helps to keep families strong and thereby provides the support that children need to succeed in this country.

Refugee, migrant, and immigrant families come to the United States with a wealth of parenting strengths, drawing on culture, tradition, and family experience. They have often sacrificed tremendously to provide their children with an opportunity for safety and success in this new country. At the same time, families that are new to the U.S. have often experienced incredible loss and trauma, including the loss of extended family members, community, and homeland. They must adapt to new traditions and lifestyles that are often at odds with their own beliefs and practices. Refugee and immigrant families overcome cultural, language, and practical barriers to learn about and access the community services that are available to them as having newly arrived to our country.

It is important for early childhood education programs to use family and community centered, strengths-based approaches with refugees and immigrants. This helps to maximize family and community input and build upon cultural assets in order to successfully engage and serve families who have newly arrived in the U.S.

Pause to Reflect!

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The Demir family, recent immigrants from Turkey, enrolled their young daughter, Aylin, in an early childhood center in New York. Upon her arrival, the center's staff recognized the importance of honoring Aylin's linguistic and cultural background to support her transition and learning.

To create an inclusive environment, the center implemented several strategies. First, they engaged a professional translator to ensure that all communication with the Demir family was clear and respectful of their home language. This included translating enrollment forms, newsletters, and classroom materials into Turkish.

The teachers also integrated Turkish cultural elements into the classroom. They included Turkish storybooks in the reading corner and celebrated cultural events such as Turkish Children's Day, inviting Aylin's parents to share traditions and stories with the class. This helped Aylin feel valued and connected to her heritage.

Additionally, the center encouraged Aylin to use both Turkish and English in her interactions. Teachers used bilingual labels and incorporated Turkish phrases during daily routines, fostering a bilingual learning environment. Peers were taught basic Turkish greetings and phrases, promoting mutual respect and curiosity among the children.

These efforts resulted in Aylin's increased confidence and active participation in class activities. The Demir family felt welcomed and respected.

1. How does honoring a child's home language and cultural background positively impact their overall social-emotional development and sense of belonging in an early childhood center?
2. Based on the experience of the Demir family, how can similar strategies be adapted or modified to support the linguistic diversity of children from other immigrant communities in early childhood education settings?
3. Imagine you are a teacher in an early childhood center where a new child from a different cultural and linguistic background has enrolled. What specific steps would you take to ensure that both the child and their family feel valued and included, while also fostering a supportive learning environment for all children in your classroom?

Some cultural considerations that you should remember as you help families navigate an unfamiliar system of early childhood education:

- Families with limited English skills are likely to have difficulty gathering information about the varied early care and education options and may rely on word of mouth or recommendations from others within their ethnic or religious community.
- Hiring staff from the same culture and language as families and providing opportunities for families from the same cultural or linguistic backgrounds to connect may encourage family engagement and mutual support. However, it is important to identify any areas of discrimination or political conflict that program staff or families from the same region may have experienced.
- Do not assume that staff and families that originate from the country will be free of conflict with each other. Be aware that class, race, or ethnic conflicts may exist, even though they now live in the United States.

Pause to Reflect!

[First image looks copyrighted – do you have attribution? or other image?]

Mariela is a 41-year-old migrant worker who immigrated to the United States from Oaxaca,

Mexico, looking for work and a better life for her family. She now works on a strawberry farm in Florida. Her 4-year-old daughter, Alicia, and 2-year-old son, Mariano, are enrolled in a local Spanish/English Head Start program.

Mariela's first language is Mixtec, an Indigenous Oaxacan language. Spanish is her second language. Mariela struggles with the idea of teaching Mixtec to her children. Mariela says she wants to spare her children the discrimination she felt when she arrived in this country. At home, she only speaks Mixtec with her husband and adult family members. After listening to her concerns, Alicia's teacher suggests that Mariela speak with her children in Mixtec. She encourages Mariela to sing songs and rhymes and ask open-ended questions in Mixtec, Spanish, and English

1. How does Mariela's concern about discrimination reflect broader societal attitudes towards Indigenous languages and cultures?
2. What role can schools and educators play in addressing and mitigating discrimination against students who speak Indigenous languages?
3. How can the Head Start program support Mariela in her efforts to teach Mixtec to her children?
4. What strategies can be implemented by the school to foster a collaborative environment that respects and promotes the use of home languages?

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STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT COLLABORATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS, COMMUNITIES, CHILDREN, AND FAMILIES FROM LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

Schools and communities can employ a variety of strategies to welcome families from diverse linguistic backgrounds, ensuring that they feel included, respected, and supported.

- Hire bilingual or multilingual staff who can communicate directly with families in their home languages.
- Provide translation and interpretation services for meetings, documents, and communications. This includes translating enrollment forms, newsletters, and other important information. Take note that this is a requirement in public schools.
- Use signs and labels in multiple languages throughout the school or community center to create an inclusive environment.
- Offer professional development for staff on cultural competence and the importance of respecting and valuing linguistic diversity.
- Incorporate books, games, and educational materials that reflect the diverse languages and cultures of the families in the community.
- Recognize and celebrate cultural holidays and events from various backgrounds, involving families in

planning and participation.

- Establish open lines of communication with families, encouraging them to share their cultural practices and language preferences.
- Host family nights, potlucks, and cultural events where families can share their traditions and languages with the center's community.
- Form parent committees or councils that include representation from diverse linguistic backgrounds to ensure their voices are heard in decision-making processes.
- Implement dual language or bilingual education programs that support the development of both English and the home language.
- Provide resources and activities that encourage language development in both English and the home language, such as bilingual storytime or language learning apps.
- Encourage families to continue speaking their home language at home, reinforcing the benefits of bilingualism for cognitive and academic development.
- Partner with local community organizations, cultural centers, and language services to provide additional support and resources for families.

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PART VIII

EXPLORING THE CORE COMPETENCIES OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Learning Objectives

- 7.1 Differentiate between the terms parent involvement, family involvement, family engagement, and family learning.
- 7.2 Integrate the Dual Capacity-Building Framework into our understanding of family engagement.
- 7.3 Reflect on how the Family Engagement Core Competencies from the National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement can inform your work with children, families, schools, and communities.

Introduction

In the field of Child and Family Studies, professionals are guided by sets of core competencies that outline the intellectual, personal, and social and emotional proficiencies necessary to foster positive and collaborative relationships between families, schools, and communities. Collaborative relationships honor funds of knowledge, equitable processes, cultural humility, and trust. Exemplar core competencies incorporate those concepts into their mission statement, domains, and objectives.

Professionals in the field of Child and Family Studies have access to many core competencies from reputable organizations. Below are examples from national or state education and outreach associations that Child and Family professionals may connect with:

- National Association for the Education of Young Children
- Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care
- Head Start
- National Family Support Network
- National Education Association
- National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement

Core competencies are critically important in helping to guide the field of Child and Family Studies. They outline the core values and strategic vision of organizations. They incorporate the voices of families and communities. They outline the professional development areas for staff and serve as the philosophical foundation for the development of programming for their members. This chapter will draw heavily on the core competencies presented by the National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Choose two of the organizations listed above that you are interested in learning about.
2. Read through the organizations' mission statements and core competencies.
3. Create a table of that information that summarizes the key points.

4. Based on what you have read, determine if the organizations' core competencies reflect funds of knowledge, equitable processes, cultural humility, and trust.

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EXPLORING THE LANGUAGE OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Before we can begin to apply the core competencies of family engagement, we must create a shared understanding of the language that describes engagement and involvement. From this lens, we will differentiate between language and phrases that are all too often used interchangeably:

Engagement and Involvement Terminology

Parental Involvement	Family Engagement	Family Learning
• Opportunities for parent participation in a variety of program activities that support child and adult development, including policy and program decision-making. • Primarily the responsibility of family services staff (or parent involvement specialists, home visitors, or transition specialists). • Revolves around outputs—for example, the number of parents who show up at a meeting. • Works with a small percentage of families involved in leadership opportunities (policy council, parent meetings, special events). • Collects specific data about individual or small group interactions with parents.	• Ongoing, goal-directed relationships between staff and families that are mutual, culturally responsive, and that support what is best for children and families both individually and collectively. • Embedded in the work of all staff members, management systems and leadership priorities. • Focuses on evidence of positive, goal directed relationships, for example, that result in family progress in one (or more) of the outcome areas as defined by the organization. • Engagement of family members in a variety of goal-directed ways related to parent and family engagement outcomes. • Engage families to use child and family data to improve services. These programs help families understand and use child data to support their children's progress and development.	• Encourages family members to learn together as and within a family, with a focus on intergenerational learning. • Designed to enable parents to learn how to support their children's learning. • Recognizes the role of the parent as the first educator. • Family learning programs may include family literacy, parenting skills, language and numeracy, health and well being science, and wider family learning outcomes.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Contact an early childhood center or local school.
2. Conduct an inventory of parent involvement, family engagement, and family learning strategies and events that are facilitated there.
3. Is the early childhood center or local school using "parent involvement", "family engagement", and "family learning" as interchangeable words?
4. Categorize the strategies and events into "parent involvement", "family engagement", and "family learning".

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DUAL CAPACITY BUILDING FRAMEWORK

Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler Model of Parental Involvement Process

Family engagement models begin by asking three primary questions:

1. Why do (and don't) families become involved with their childrens' communities and schools?
2. What do families do when they are involved?
3. How does family involvement make a positive difference in child outcomes?

These questions serve as the foundation to the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model of parent involvement (1995, 1997):

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model is broken up into 5 levels leading from the caregivers'' motivators, perception of invitation to be involved, and life context variables up through student achievement. It outlines the role that caregiver involvement plays in modeling collaborative relationships with schools and communities for children so that student achievement is impacted positively. The model suggests that caregivers' involvement is motivated by

- how the caregiver involvement role is constructed and
- if the caregiver has a sense of efficacy for helping the child succeed in school.

Level 1

Personal Motivators	Parent's Perception of Invitations to be Involved	Life Context Variable
• Parental Role Construction for Involvement • Parental Efficacy for Helping Student Succeed in School	• General School Invitations • Specific Invitations from Teacher(s) • Specific Requests/Invitations from Student	• Parental Knowledge & Skills • Parental Time & Energy • Family Culture

Caregiver motivators are central to Level 1. It asks us to centralize the idea that the caregiver wants the child to succeed and is seeking opportunities to support them. It identifies outreach and invitation from the school or teacher as key components for involvement. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler did not directly link that outreach and invitation to the cultural capital of the family. However, when we create that theoretical extension, we honor the caregivers' demands of work and personal life on the time and energy balance for relationship formation between the caregiver and school/teacher.

Level 1.5

Parent Involvement Forms

- Values, Goals, Expectations, Aspirations
- Involvement Activities at Home
- Parent/Teacher/School Communication
- Involvement Activities at School

The invitation is the focus of Level 1.5. Successful caregiver involvement forms when home/school communication reflects the goals, values, expectations, and aspirations of both the caregiver and the teacher/school. It assumes that involvement is a result of effective communication between the caregiver and school/teacher and that both the home and school activities are honored in that communication exchange.

Levels 2 & 3

Learning Mechanisms Used by Parents during Involvement Activities

- Encouragement
- Modeling
- Reinforcement
- Instruction

(Mediated by) Student Perceptions of Learning Mechanisms Used by Parents

- Encouragement
- Modeling
- Reinforcement
- Instruction

Level 2 looks at *how* caregivers are involved. It identifies four primary actions: encouragement, modeling, reinforcement, and instruction. Effective caregiver and school/teacher communication offers transparent recruitment into relationship formation by clarifying "how" so that caregivers can balance their time commitment with responsibilities and also best use their talents and abilities to support the child and the relationship to the school/teacher. The "how" is mediated by the child's perception of the involvement.

Level 4

Student Attributes Conducive to Achievement

- Academic Self-Efficacy
- Intrinsic Motivation to Learn
- Self-Regulatory Strategy Knowledge & Use
- Social Self-Efficacy for Relating to Teachers

Level 4 focuses on the child. It assumes that the child will develop both social and academic self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, and self-regulatory behaviors that are influenced by Levels 1 through 3. Level 4 assumes that effective caregiver and school/teacher collaborations result in a well-supported child who demonstrates student achievement in Level 5.

Student Achievement

It is important to note that the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model does not put full responsibility for parent involvement on the parent. It calls into question how parent involvement is defined by a school or community and how parents are invited or recruited to be involved. For example, if schools and communities do not honor funds of knowledge, equitable processes, cultural humility, and trust, then movement from Level 1 to Level 2 will not be achieved. Furthermore, in order to achieve family engagement, this model helps us to outline, in Level 1.5, the critical role of the design of family learning and parent involvement activities.

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Review Level 1.5 of the Hooper-Dempsey Sandler model.
2. What factors must a school or community consider when designing parent/teacher/school communications?
3. What factors must a school or community consider when designing parent involvement or family learning activities?
4. Design a Family Engagement event that will be hosted at a school, hospital, or community center. Family and Community Engagement may be a useful article for you to review:

   - Describe your event. Who is the target audience?   What is the purpose? Where will it be held? When and at what time will it be held? Will you invite representatives from the micro- or meso- systems outlined in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory?
   - Develop a promotional flier for your event that demonstrates your understanding of funds of knowledge, equitable processes, cultural humility, and trust.

Case Study (A)

In Massachusetts, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education requires that a school district or charter school operating a language acquisition program for English Learners (ELs) serving 100 or more English Learners or in which English Learners comprise at least five percent of the district's or charter school's student population, whichever is less, are required to establish an

English Language Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC). ELPACs are intended by law to advise school districts and schools regarding matters that impact ELs, such as providing advice on English learner education programs, meeting regularly with school officials about educational opportunities for ELs, and providing input on school or district improvement plans as they relate to ELs.

You are in your second year of teaching English Learners at a Massachusetts charter school and have been invited to join the ELPAC as a teacher representative. You attend the first two meetings and are surprised that there are no caregiver representatives at the meetings.

You learn that the school has tried, unsuccessfully, for two years to launch a successful ELPAC. It has tried to recruit caregivers via email and phone calls. It has planned in-person and Zoom-based meetings. It offers bilingual facilitators and translators. However, because there have been many staffing changes since the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been inconsistent outreach and leadership.

You value the input and advice of caregivers and are committed to making the ELPAC successful. You decide to develop a strategic action plan to improve the ELPAC.

Review the definitions of Parent Involvement, Family Engagement, and Family Learning and apply those concepts to your strategic plan.

Using the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model, along with theoretical extensions of the definition of family, cultural capital, and inclusivity, what new strategies will you bring to your leadership team?
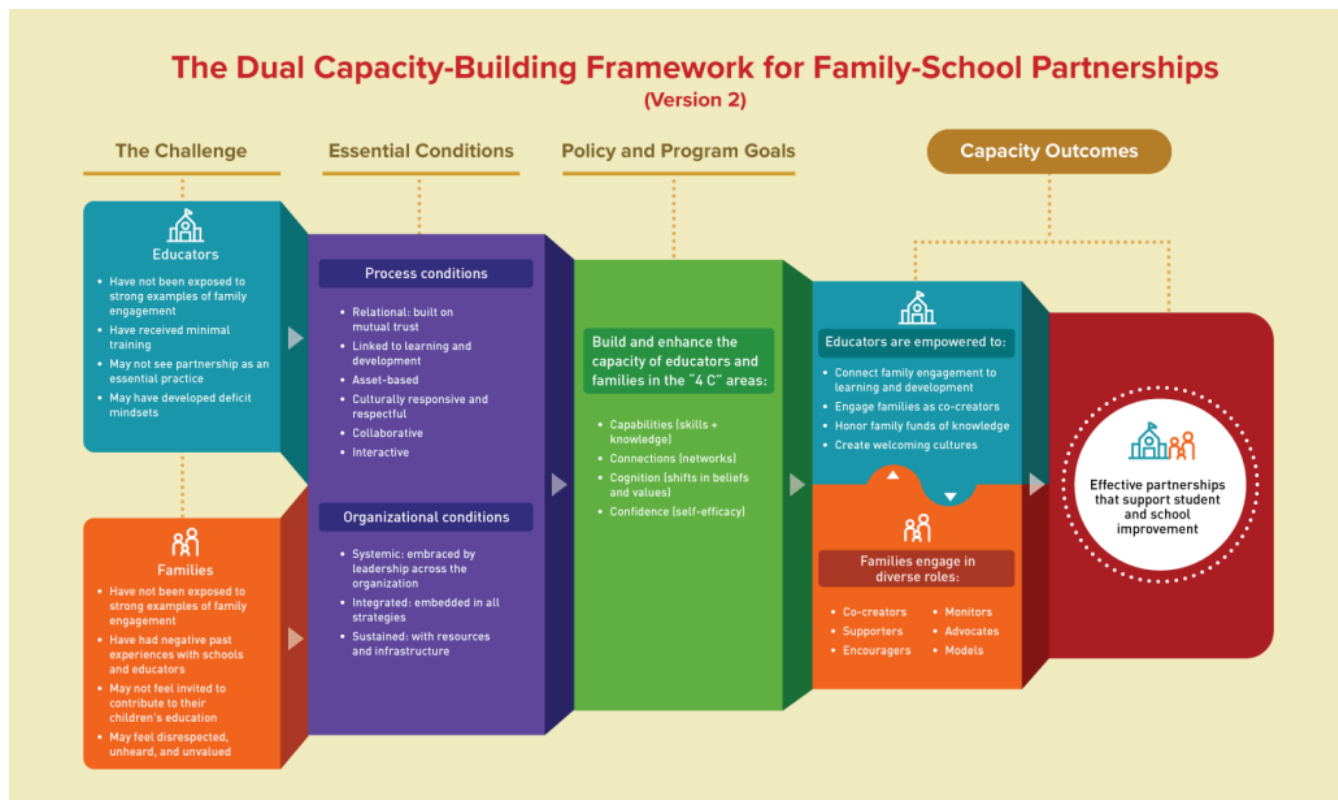
Dual Capacity-Building Framework

The Dual Capacity-Building Framework was originally developed by Dr. Karen Mapp in 2013 to describe the objectives and conditions that are essential for effective family-school engagement and collaboration.

The Framework builds on existing research suggesting that partnerships between home and school can only develop and thrive if both families and staff have the requisite collective capacity to engage in partnership. Many school and district family-engagement initiatives focus solely on providing

workshops and seminars for families on how to engage more effectively in their children's education. This focus on families alone often results in increased tension between families and school staff. Families are trained to be more active in their children's schools, only to be met by an unreceptive and unwelcoming school climate and resistance from district and school staff to their efforts for more active engagement. Therefore, policies and programs directed at improving family engagement must focus on building the capacities of both staff and families to engage in partnerships (Mapp & Kuttner 2013).

In 2019, the Dual Capacity-Building Framework was updated to Version 2 to include Mapp's collaborative research with Marissa Alberty, Eyal Bergman, and the Institute for Educational Leadership. Its foundational philosophy underpins the belief that successful engagement requires both educators and family members to develop essential beliefs, knowledge, skills, confidence, and social relationships that are bound to a shared understanding of funds of knowledge, equitable processes, cultural humility, and trust. While the framework is focused on partnerships between educators and families, it does provide useful guidance for partnerships between educators and youth or between schools and community organizations.

The Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships (Version 2)

The Dual Capacity Framework builds upon four interrelated categories:

1. **The Challenge** helps us understand the reasons why educators and families have struggled to build trusting and effective partnerships.

   ◦ Educators: The framework assumes that educators have not been exposed to strong examples of family engagement and have received minimal training in this area. As such, they may not understand "partnership" and may approach families from a deficit-based model.
   ◦ Families: The framework assumes that families are not considered true "partners" in most educational institutions. Therefore, families may feel disrespected, unheard, and unvalued, resulting in negative experiences with schools.

2. **The Essential Conditions** offer research-based guidance for best practice to cultivate and sustain partnerships. Our capacity-building process must be relational, asset-based, culturally sustaining, collaborative, and interactive. Finally, it must link to learning and development. We must foster organizational conditions that are systematically supported by leadership and aligned with strategic initiatives. Those conditions must also be sustained via resources and infrastructure.

3. **Policy and Program Goals** highlight the goals and outcomes that should emerge for educators and families when the Essential Conditions are met. This area of the dual capacity-building framework builds and enhances the capacity of educators and families. It seeks to reinforce and honor a shared understanding of

   ◦ Capabilities
   ◦ Connections
   ◦ Cognition
   ◦ Confidence

4. **Capacity Outcomes** show how improvements in capacity lead to educators and families working in mutually supportive ways, leading to student and school improvements.

   ◦ Educators engage families through culturally sustaining strategies that honor cultural capital and funds of knowledge. Educators connect family engagement to learning and development and create welcoming school climates and cultures.
   ◦ Families co-create learning activities and advocate for the needs of their children in partnership with educators. They support the work of the school and of the educator, thereby impacting student support and school improvement.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

https://rotel.pressbooks.pub/children-families-schools-communities/?p=138#h5p-10

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Review The Challenge as described in the Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships (Version 2).
2. Interview an educator about their understanding of family engagement. What training have they received in this area? Do they approach family engagement as an equitable process? Do they approach family engagement from a strengths- or deficit-based process?
3. Interview a family of a child who attends school about their relationship with the school. Have they been invited to contribute to their child's education? What opportunities or barriers exist for them to collaborate with the school?
4. Do those interviews support or negate the assumptions made in the Dual Capacity-Building Framework?

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FAMILY ENGAGEMENT CORE COMPETENCIES

According to the National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement, "the purpose of the Family Engagement Core Competencies is to create a nationally agreed upon and unifying set of professional competencies for the family engagement field." It contextualizes the role of bias, stereotypes, equity, and social justice in family engagement and strives to honor funds of knowledge, equitable processes, cultural humility, and trust. The National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement challenges family-facing professionals to self-reflect on their own practices and beliefs as they relate to the four domains of the core competencies:

The Family Engagement Core Competencies

Adapted from The National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement

Reflect

1. Respect, Honor, and Value Families

- Examine, respect, and value the cultural and linguistic diversity of families and communities.

- Explore, understand, and honor with families how children develop, grow, and change from birth through adulthood across settings and how these changes affect families.

2. Embrace Equity Throughout Family Engagement

- Look inward to develop cultural humility, cognitive flexibility, and perspective-taking skills to practice anti-bias and equitable family and community engagement

- Reflect on how history and social context influence family engagement systems and practices

Connect

3. Build trusting, Reciprocal Relationships with families

- Cultivate mutual trust

- Communicate effectively

- Create welcoming environments

- Reach out actively to families, especially those who might be most underserved

4. Foster Community Partnerships for Learning and Family Well-Being

- Build Community partnerships to support children and families

- Establish systems to expand how families link to community resources

- Cultivate social support networks and connections among families

Collaborate

Family-Facing Professional's Reflection Tool

The Family Engagement Core Competencies from the National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement created a self-reflection tool that outlines research-based and effective strategies for working with families in ways that are culturally relevant, honors funds of knowledge, and center around true collaboration:

Reflection Questions	Proficiency	Ways to Improve
How do I respect, value, and honor families? Ask yourself: In what ways do I respect and value the cultural and linguistic diversity of families and communities? How do I understand and honor families regarding how children develop, grow, and change from birth through adulthood across settings, and how might these changes affect families?	1 2 3 4 5	
How well do I champion equity through family and community engagement? Ask yourself: How do I demonstrate cultural humility? How do I utilize cognitive flexibility, and perspective-taking skills to practice anti-bias and equitable family and community engagement? In what ways do I see history and social context influencing family engagement systems and practices?	1 2 3 4 5	
How well do I build trusting reciprocal relationships with families? Ask yourself: In what ways do I cultivate mutual trust with families? How do I communicate with families? How do I create welcoming environments? In what ways do I reach out to families, especially those who might be most underserved?	1 2 3 4 5	
How well do I foster community partnerships for learning and family well-being? Ask yourself: What are the community partnerships that support children and families? How do I expand ways for families to access these resources? How am I cultivating social support networks and connections among families?	1 2 3 4 5	

Reflection Questions	Proficiency	Ways to Improve
How well do I co-construct learning opportunities with families? Ask yourself: How do I build from family knowledge as resources for learning? How do I join with families in planning, implementing, and evaluating learning opportunities and services?	1 2 3 4 5	
How well do I link family and community engagement to learning and Development? Ask yourself: How do I ensure that data are accessible to every family? How do I create conversations around developmental progressions and academic progress in clear and understandable ways? How do I expand on family learning in the home and community?	1 2 3 4 5	
How well do I take part in lifelong learning? Ask yourself: How do I identify and participate as a member of the family engagement profession? How do I engage in professional learning to grow my family engagement knowledge and skills? In what ways do I use data to assess, evaluate, and improve family engagement practice?	1 2 3 4 5	
How well do I advocate with families for system change? Ask yourself: How do I identify and examine new and existing policies and practices to advance family and community engagement for all families? In what ways do I champion equity in my family and community engagement practice? How do I help reframe the conversation around family and community engagement to expand public understanding?	1 2 3 4 5	

Pause to Reflect!

Discuss the following questions.

1. Rate yourself in the Family-Facing Professional's Reflection Tool.
2. Based on what you have learned from your reading, identify ways that you can develop and improve in your collaborative work with children, families, schools, and communities.

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PART IX

FOR INSTRUCTORS: SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

Introduction

This course examines how children, families, schools, and communities collaborate with and influence one another. The course explores ecological theory to contextualize diversity and relationships among children, families, schools, and communities, linkages between family-school-community engagement and student achievement, and cultivation of culturally sustaining family and community collaboration.

As you move through this course, I will challenge you to think about your own implicit, explicit, and confirmation biases about children and families. You will examine, closely, how funds of knowledge and cultural capital impact collaboration with schools and communities.

Please watch the following video to further your understanding of the framework for this course:

[Expanding the Definition of Family | Amanda Bastoni & Anthony David | TEDxKeene](#)

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS - I. WHAT IS A FAMILY?

Introduction

This course examines how children, families, schools, and communities collaborate with and influence one another. The course explores ecological theory to contextualize diversity and relationships among children, families, schools, and communities, linkages between family-school-community engagement and student achievement, and cultivation of culturally sustaining family and community collaboration.

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Discussion

- Reflect on a time when you experienced or witnessed a micro-aggression in a family, school, or community. Describe what happened. What was the hidden message?

Reading Review

1. Focus on the case studies that contrast the U.S. Census Bureau's definition of family to a modern definition of family. Write your own case study that shows this contrast.
2. Choose three *Pause and Reflect* questions found in Chapter I. Answer them.

Reflection

1. Read Chapter I.
2. Review *Table 1: Family Structures*. As you answer the following questions, think about implicit, explicit, and confirmation bias both for and against the diversity of family structures.
3. Choose **one** of the following questions to answer.

   ◦ Imagine that you are working with families in a school or community setting. What level of

comfort do you have in working with diverse families? What may be challenging for you? What are some strategies that you could use to help you in working on the biases that you may have?

- What judgments or assumptions do I have about different family structures?

Optional Bonus Choice A

1. Read [Public Has Mixed Views on the Modern American Family](#) written by Kim Parker and Rachel Minkin from the Pew Research Center.
2. Identify one data point about the public perception of the Modern American Family that you already know or suspected to be true.
3. Identify one data point that surprised you about the public perception of the Modern American Family
4. Describe how the diverse views on the future of marriage and family in the United States., as reflected in the data, potentially impact early childhood centers or schools or community centers or other family support systems.

Optional Bonus Choice B

1. Identify one official form that a family member may fill out on behalf of a child. Examples might include a school district enrollment form, Head Start enrollment form, or a form for a pediatrician or other medical professional.
2. Examine the form for inclusive language. Does it include the parental choices of "mother" and "father" or are they more flexible in their labels of parents, guardians, and/or other caregivers? Describe your findings.
3. If the form is not inclusive, edit it by describing how to make them more inclusive and consistent with a modern definition of family.

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS - II. THEORIES THAT HELP US UNDERSTAND FAMILIES

Introduction

Chapter II is dense with theory. You will focus on five primary theories that help us to frame and understand how families function and interact with communities and schools. You will find it helpful to review the following preview videos to pair with your reading:

[Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems: 5 Forces Impacting Our Lives](#)

[Bowen Family Systems Therapy: Short Explanation by Dr Kirk Honda](#)

[Functionalism | Society and Culture | MCAT | Khan Academy](#)

[Conflict theory | Society and Culture | MCAT | Khan Academy](#)

[Symbolic interactionism | Society and Culture | MCAT | Khan Academy](#)

Discussion A

1. Choose **one** of the theories covered in Chapter II.
2. What stood out to you and why?
3. Give **two** specific examples of how you will use theory to gain a better sense of how to engage with families.

Discussion B:

1. Think of yourself at a particular time in your childhood (e.g., age 10).
2. Describe how each system in the bioecological systems theory model directly impacted your development. Identify your influencers in each system.

Reading Review

1. In 1-2 paragraphs, create a profile or case study of a family. This might be your own family, a fictional family, or a family that you work with on a professional level. Your profile or case study should include a description of each family member, their roles and responsibilities, and any other relevant information that helps the reader to visualize your description. Then, in 2-3 paragraphs, analyze the family from one of the theories presented in Chapter II. In other words, if we were to consider how the family roles and

responsibilities were shaped OR how the family engages with communities and schools OR how the family influences the child, which theory would apply? Identify the theory and provide a detailed description that relates to your case study.

2. Choose and answer **two** of the following *Pause and Reflect* questions in Chapter II.

Reflection

1. Read the case studies below.
2. Choose **one** to examine and analyze closely.
3. Choose one theory covered in Chapter II that closely relates to the case study.
4. Analyze the case study from the perspective of that theory.

Case Study 1 :

The mom has six children and has never worked outside of the home. The dad owns a small convenience store and is almost never home. The children range in age from 5 to 22. The youngest, a 5 year old boy, is preparing for kindergarten in the fall, but has never attended any kind of program or school outside of the home. The child is extremely "street smart" but cannot identify his letters or numbers. The other children (a 7 year old boy, a 9 year old girl, a 13 year old boy, and a 15 year old boy) go to school and then return home to help mom around the house. The boys go to the business to assist dad, as well. The children are often at the convenience sstore late at night and struggle to get to school on time. The 9 year old daughter is already learning how to cook meals, do laundry, and clean the bathrooms and bedrooms. The 22 year old boy assists with the business. If he ever wants a night with friends, it becomes a struggle with mom and dad because he still lives at home. They tell him he's not setting a good example for his siblings, that he needs to take care of the family if dad is still at work, that there's work to do around the house. He was not allowed to enroll in college after high school because he was expected to continue the family business. He drives a nice vehicle that his dad pays for and has been told that if he moves out, he will lose the vehicle.

Case Study 2:

In a blended family, there are 8 people. Bob married Kate. They each had 3 children of their own from previous relationships. The siblings don't use the "step sibling" label. Bob's biological children are Corinne (age 30), Corey (age 24), and Olivia (age 21). Kate's biological children are Jaylynn (age 20), Jordan (age 17), and Joey (age 14). While Kate and Bob are the parental figures and caregivers, Corinne, being much older than her siblings, also fulfills a caregiver role. Joey was 2 when the family started living together. Corinne, who was 18 at the time, took the initiative with Joey's potty training. She was a mother figure to Joey. Kate's children's biological father is problematic. His aggressive outbursts required intervention from the Department of Children and Families.

Case Study 3:

In the Zebo family , the grandparents are the guardians of their grandchildren. The grandchildren are a 5 year old girl (Zivi) and a 9 year old boy (Ralph). They lost their mother to a drug overdose. Their father is not present in their lives. The grandparents are from Russia and are raising the children in that culture. Zivi is angry: she lashes out verbally when things don't go her way. Ralph battles over control and fairness. The grandfather is easy-going, believing that their behaviors are not problematic and that they are "just being kids." The grandmother is the disciplinarian.

Optional Bonus

1. Identify a community resource that is available to children and families in your community that addresses a system in the bio-ecological systems theory model.
2. Provide the address, phone number, and web site.
3. How does this resource connect to the specific system level?

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS - III. A CLOSER LOOK AT PARENTING

Introduction

Chapter III overviews parenting. Parenting styles influence the development of children's social and emotional growth. It is a major area of study for developmental psychologists. We will examine a variety of parenting styles and analyze how culture impacts them. We will also define attachment theory and discuss its application to our evolving definition of "family" that we explored in Chapters I and II.

You will find it helpful to review the following preview videos to pair with your reading:

5 Parenting Styles and Their Effects on Life

The Attachment Theory: How Childhood Affects Life

Discussion Prompt A:

1. Read Chapter III
2. Listen to the following podcast: She wanted to vaccinate their kids against COVID. He didn't. A judge had to decide
3. Consider the co-parenting model and debate presented to the caregivers in the story. Choose 2 of the questions below to respond to.

   ◦ What questions would you ask the caregivers in this story about their parenting relationships?
   ◦ What questions would you ask the caregivers in this story about their co-parenting future?
   ◦ What questions would you ask the children in this story?
   ◦ What strategies would you offer to this family as it moves forward into the future?

Discussion Prompt B:

1. Read Chapter III.
2. Think back to your own childhood and consider the rules, discipline strategies, warmth, and support of your household.
3. What socioeconomic or cultural factors influenced your childhood experiences with rules, discipline strategies, warmth, and/or support in your household?

Discussion Prompt C:

1. Read Chapter III.
2. Give an example from popular media for each parenting style discussed in Chapter III.

Reading Review

1. Read Chapter III.
2. Choose and answer 2 of the following *Pause and Reflect* questions.
3. Review Lemaster and Defrain's Model of Parenting.
4. Create a case study or identify a family in popular media that exemplifies one of the categories of parenting outlined by Lemaster and Defrain's Model of Parenting.

Reflection

1. Chapter III discusses parenting styles. Refer back to the Bio-Ecological Theory Model from Chapter I and think about the connections between this model and the content of Chapter III.
2. Choose **one** of the following questions:

   - Which parenting style were you raised in? How did you determine this? Connect this to a memory.
   - If you are a parent now, which style are you? If you are not a parent, which style do you believe you will follow? Why?
   - How did your parent's parenting style impact you as a child, and as an adult today? Connect this to the Bioecological Model.

Optional Bonus

Recommend strategies for educators on how to work with children who display insecure attachments.

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS - IV. WHAT IS GENDER AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Introduction

Chapter IV overviews gender. In this chapter, we will explore the social constructs of gender and intersectionality. Social constructs challenge, and often reinforce, our understanding of human behavior, leading to dangerous stereotypes, microaggressions, implicit bias, explicit bias, and confirmation bias. We will determine how our ideas about gender support or harm our collaborative relationships with children, families, schools, and communities.

You will find it helpful to review the following preview videos to pair with your reading:

[Pink and Blue: Communicating Gender to Children | Anthony Schullo | TEDxNorthCentralCollege](#)
[Sex vs Gender vs Orientation](#)

Discussion Prompt A

1. Choose one of the podcasts from the [How to Be a Girl](#) series and listen to it.
2. Summarize the podcast that you listened to, emphasizing your key takeaways.

- What questions would you ask the caregivers in this story about their parenting relationships?
- What questions would you ask the children in this story?
- What strategies would you offer the schools and communities in this story to best support this family as it moves forward into the future?

Discussion Prompt B

1. Listen to [Breaking the Binary: Expanding Gender Identity and Expression](#)

- Reflecting on Nick Alm's journey and experiences as a non-binary individual navigating both personal and professional spaces, discuss a time when you had to confront societal expectations or norms that didn't align with your authentic self. How did you handle the situation, and what support or resources would have been helpful for you during that time?
- Dr. Angela Kade Goepferd emphasizes the importance of creating inclusive environments for trans and non-binary individuals. Share an example of a time when you witnessed or participated in fostering

inclusivity for gender diverse children or caregivers. What actions were taken, and what positive outcomes resulted from those efforts?

Reading Review

1. Read Chapter IV.
2. Identify and read at least 3 children's book published in the last 10 years that highlight trans or non-binary characters.
3. Summarize each book and describe the main characters.
4. Are the character(s) story presented from a strengths or deficit based lens?
5. How is gender or socialization presented in the stories?

Reflection

1. Choose **one** of the following questions to answer.

- Reflect on how microaggressions might manifest in interactions with families that are transgender or LGBTQ+. Consider the potential impact of these microaggressions on the children and their families. How can early childhood educators create a more inclusive and supportive environment that actively counters these subtle forms of discrimination?
- Reflect on how gender stereotypes influence the way children engage in play. Consider the ways in which these stereotypes might limit a child's exploration and expression. How can early childhood educators create an environment that encourages all children to explore a diverse range of play activities, free from the constraints of traditional gender roles?

Optional Bonus

Girls State and Boy State are leadership and citizenship programs designed for high schoolers girls, typically rising seniors, in the United States. The programs are sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary. They aim high schoolers about government, politics, and civic engagement by immersing them in a mock governmental environment.

During Girls State and Boy State, participants (often referred to as "citizens") form their own mock state government, complete with executive, legislative, and judicial branches. They run for various offices, draft and debate bills, and learn about the responsibilities and functions of state and local government. The program usually includes activities such as:

- Participants run for elected positions, conduct campaigns, and vote in elections.
- Citizens draft, discuss, and pass mock legislation in a simulated legislative process.

- Attendees learn about the workings of various government offices and agencies.
- Guest speakers, including elected officials and community leaders, provide insights into government and leadership.
- Participants engage in activities that promote civic responsibility and leadership skills.

The purpose of Girls State and Boy State is to inspire highschoolers to take active roles in their communities and to provide them with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective leadership. The program also emphasizes the importance of civic participation and the democratic process and encourages attendees to become informed and active citizens.

Girls State and Boys State run as separate programs.

Instructions:

1. Read [A new documentary follows hundreds of high school girls forming a mock government](#)
2. Optional: If you have access to Apple TV+, watch the documentary [Girls State](#).
3. Choose one of the following questions to respond to:
    1. Reflect on the differences observed between the Girls State and Boys State programs as highlighted in the interview and/or documentary. How do these differences, such as the initial hesitance of the girls to engage in political discussions and the gender-specific rules like dress codes and buddy systems, illustrate broader societal gender norms and expectations? How can understanding these dynamics inform your approach as an educator to foster a more equitable environment for all genders?

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS - V. BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Introduction

As you move through your degree in education, you will take very specific coursework on teaching children with exceptionalities- or students with disabilities. Note that both phrases are socially acceptable and are written in person-first language. This is when we put the person before the adjective. It helps us to first notice the person BEFORE we place a value judgment on how to describe them. Notice how students with disabilities changes disabled students. It emphasizes that the student is a student. How that student is described at the moment is secondary.

Another popular linguistic prescription is the identity-first language, as in "disabled people." Many use this style to celebrate disability pride and identity or simply because they prefer this. There is no unanimity on which is the more respectful style, it comes down to personal preference.

If someone is willing to disclose their disability, it is best to ask them how they want you to refer to (or not refer to) their disability. In addition to word choice, it is important to note that people may want different levels of disclosure. In other words, some people may feel more comfortable discussing their disabilities than others or may feel differently about disclosure in different situations. One suggested middle-ground is to use these two styles interchangeably to acknowledge and respect the individual preferences of an exceptionally diverse group of people.

We will look at how to best collaborate and support families of children with exceptionalities. All too often, families are not seen as true collaborators with schools in the Individual Family Service Plan and/or Individualized Education Plan process. Families act as advocates. They deserve respect to be at the table as true collaborators. And, children with exceptionalities must be seen from a strengths-based perspective. Their strengths should center our work with them and their families. As you move through this module, consider how those perspectives shape our equity work.

You will find it helpful to review the following preview videos to pair with your reading:

10 Self-Advocacy Tips for Young People with Disabilities

Parents of Children with Special Needs Have Needs, Too | Debra Vines | TEDxOakParkSalon

Discussion Prompt A

1. Read Chapter V.
2. Re-read the introduction.
3. Identify at least one additional example of disability as a social construct.
4. Based on what you have learned in Chapter V, describe how microaggressions or bias about a disability impacted the ways in which families and schools communicated or collaborated with one another.

Reading Review

1. Visit or call a school or early childhood center.
2. Gather information about how families with children with disabilities collaborate with and are included in communications, translation, scheduling, etc. Summarize that information in 1-3 paragraphs.
3. Identify at least two best practices and two challenges that need to be addressed. List them and give a 1-2 sentence description for each.
4. Identify at least two additional recommendations to foster inclusive and collaborative relationships with families with children with disabilities. List them and give a 1-2 sentence description for each.

Reflection

Reflect on the issue of overrepresentation of students of color in special education programs.

- How do implicit and explicit biases, as well as structural biases within the education system, contribute to this issue?

Consider the role of standardized assessments and their potential biases against students of color.

- How might these biases influence the identification and labeling processes?

What steps can you, as a future educator or professional, take to address and mitigate these biases to promote equity in special education?

Optional Bonus

1. Read Chapter V.
2. Interview a child with a disability or a family with a child with a disability about the key themes presented in the chapter:
    1. How was the child assessed? Was it a biased assessment?

2. How does the school collaborate with the child and family to create an inclusive plan?

3. Describe the language used during meetings and on forms. Is the language readable? Understandable?

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS - VI. WHAT IS CULTURE AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Introduction

The role of culture in our daily interactions is extraordinary. It frames our body language, our understanding of one another, and our implied and explicit statements. Culture, cultural differences, and cultural similarities can make or break the collaboration between children, families, schools, and communities. While this module is not a comprehensive look at cultural capital, it does offer a glimpse of how important it is in our daily educational settings to create inclusive spaces for children and families.

Cultural capital refers to the non-financial social assets that influence an individual's social mobility and success. These assets include

- education,
- intellect,
- style of speech,
- dress, and
- physical appearance.

You will find it helpful to review the following pre-view videos to pair with your reading:

Cultural Capital

Learning About a Child's Family Culture

Discussion A

1. Reflect on your own school experience as either a student or a teacher. Describe a time when culture played a significant role in how families, teachers, and students interacted with one another. In your description, explore norms, symbols, and language that surfaced during those interactions.
2. Identify bias during those interactions.
3. Offer at least one concrete recommendation to improve the interaction.

Reading Review

Discuss the following questions.

1. Reflect on how ethnocentrism and/or xenocentrism affect the dynamics between families and schools. How can recognizing and addressing ethnocentrism and/or xenocentrism improve relationships and outcomes in the school community?

2. How do cultural biases and assumptions from both educators and parents influence communication, expectations, and the educational experiences of students?

3. Reflect on a time when cultural humility, cultural capital, and/or funds of knowledge were integral to the outcome of a school or community based discussion. Who participated in the discussion? Describe the purpose of the discussion. Describe the emotion within the discussion. Was the outcome positive or negative? Were all stakeholders collaborative and equitable? Recommend additional strategies for highlighting cultural humility, cultural capital, and funds of knowledge in that discussion.

Reflection

1. Describe two unwritten cultural rules and expectations of your school or community. How do those unwritten rules create or dismantle barriers for inclusive collaboration of families and children?

Optional Bonus A

1. Review the Communications with Families slideshow.
2. Read Recognizing and Addressing Microaggressions in Teacher-Family Relationships
3. Choose a microaggression that you have experienced or witnessed in an educational setting:

- Describe what happened.
- What is the hidden message?

Optional Bonus B

1. Read the Anti-Bias Education and Holidays
2. Review Chapter VI.
3. Summarize the article.
4. Identify 2 key takeaways that you will bring into your professional practice.

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS - VII. HONORING LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

Introduction

Linguistic diversity is a reflection of the broader cultural diversity within a community. Community bonds are strengthened when schools and communities show an understanding and appreciation for different languages. Families feel connected, welcomed, respected, and are more likely to participate in community activities and school events. This engagement leads to stronger partnerships between families and schools which fosters a supportive environment for children's development.

In this chapter, you will explore linguistic diversity from a strengths based perspective. You will learn about key legal terms and data that will help you contextualize and frame linguistic diversity in your community.

You will find it helpful to review the following preview videos to pair with your reading:

[Supporting cultural and linguistic diversity in early childhood](#)

[Embracing Multilingualism and Eradicating Linguistic Bias | Karen Leung | TEDxWWU](#)

Discussion A

1. Read [Celebrating Linguistic Diversity in Your Classroom](#)
2. Choose one of the following prompts to respond to and discuss:

   ◦ Reflect on a meaningful language experience from your life. Describe a moment when language played a crucial role in shaping your identity. How did this experience influence your perspective on language diversity in your community or classroom?

   ◦ Create your own language portrait. Use different mediums such as writing, drawing, or multimedia to depict the languages you think in, speak with family and friends, learn, and aspire to learn. Reflect on why these languages are important to you and how they contribute to your sense of identity and connection with others.

   ◦ Imagine organizing a language diversity celebration at your school. Describe what activities, performances, or displays you would include to showcase the languages spoken by students and their families. How would you involve the entire school community in recognizing and appreciating the richness of linguistic diversity?

Reading Review

1. Read Chapter VII.
2. Identify and read at least 3 children's book published in the last 10 years that highlight linguistically diverse characters.

   ◦ Summarize each book and describe the main characters.
   ◦ Are the character(s) story presented from a strengths or deficit based lens?
   ◦ Reflect back to *Table A: Terms and Categories for Children from Diverse Linguistic Backgrounds*. Which category best describes the main characters?

3. Reflect back to *Table B: Terms and Categories for Programs for Children from Diverse Linguistic Backgrounds*.

   ◦ Research your community or cities and towns in your state for programs for children from diverse linguistic backgrounds.
   ◦ Identify at least one specific program for each category.
   ◦ List the name of the program, its contact information, and its vision or mission statement.

Reflection

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education uses the [Blueprint for English Learner Success](#). It's vision statement outlines that "English learners in Massachusetts attend schools in which all educators share responsibility for their success, engage effectively with their families, and value and nurture their linguistic and cultural assets. English learners are taught by effective, well-prepared, and culturally responsive educators who hold them to high standards and have the materials and professional learning they need to advance students' academic and linguistic development simultaneously. English learners have equitable access to meaningful and rigorous learning opportunities that build on their cultural and linguistic assets and the academic, linguistic, social, and emotional supports they need to excel. English learners thrive in high school and graduate with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to be successful in college and/or a career of their choice, and to contribute to civic life in a global community."

1. Review strategies for the classroom, school, district, and state for [Pillar 1: School Culture, Building Block 2: Effective Family Engagement](#).
2. Reflect on your experiences as a child in school, as a parent of a school-age child, or as an educator. Describe a time when you witnessed a family and school collaboration that exemplified a strategy identified in the classroom, school, district, or state.

Optional Bonus A

1. Work though Teaching English Language Learners: Effective Instructional Practices from the IRIS Center Peabody College Vanderbilt University.
2. Complete the Assessment questions.

Optional Bonus B

1. Work through one of the following modules from the Virtual Lab School's Supporting Language Diversity: Direct Care
    1. Promoting Language Diversity in the Early Years and Beyond
    2. Environments and Experiences to Promote Language Diversity
    3. Engaging Language Diversity in Adults: Families, Coworkers, & Communities
2. Complete the Apply and Demonstrate sections for the module you chose.

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS - VIII. EXPLORING THE CORE COMPETENCIES OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Introduction

This chapter explores frameworks for understanding family engagement as outlined by core competencies. These core competencies outline the required attitudes, practices, and opportunities that are embedded into programs that work with families, schools, children, and communities. They lay the framework for how we interact with one another, and how programs are designed from a strengths-based and collaborative perspective. There are a variety of core competency models. For this course, you will be introduced to the National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement. You will find it helpful to review the following preview videos to pair with your reading: Dr. Karen Mapp's 3 Prerequisites of Effective Family and Community Engagement   Culturally Responsive & Sustaining Family Engagement Explained in 6 Minutes

Discussion Prompt A:

1. Read *Exploring the Core Competencies of Family Engagement*
2. Interview a family of a child who attends school about their relationship with the school. How have they been invited to contribute to their child's education?
3. Categorize those contributions into parental involvement, family engagement, or family learning.
4. What opportunities or barriers exist for them to collaborate with the school?
5. Recommend strategies for the school to increase the number of parental involvement, family engagement, and family learning opportunities.

Reading Review

1. Interview an educator about their understanding of parental involvement, family engagement, and family learning.

- Can they define how these concepts are different from one another?
- What training have they received in these areas?
- What strategies do they employ to create an equitable and strengths-based process for parental

involvement, family engagement, and family learning?

2. Compare the interview to what you have learned in *Exploring the Core Competencies of Family Engagement*. Where does the interview align or misalign with what you have learned?

Reflection Option A

1. Rate yourself in the *Family-Facing Professional's Reflection Tool.*
2. Based on what you have learned from your reading, identify ways that you can develop and improve in your collaborative work with children, families, schools, and communities.

Reflection Option B

Read Families: An Introduction and choose one of the trainings outlined in the Family Engagement series from The Virtual Lab School:

- Promoting Family Engagement
- Promoting Family Engagement: Helping Staff Communicate With Families
- Working With Families of Children With Special Needs
- Strengthening and Supporting Military Families and Families Facing Challenges

1. Determine which activities in the module align with parental involvement, family engagement, and/or family learning.
2. Reflect on the ways that the module aligns or misaligned with concepts of inclusion, cultural humility, funds of knowledge, and/or cultural capital.
3. How might you use the module in your own professional or personal life?

Optional Bonus Activity A

1. Contact an early childhood center or local school.
2. Conduct an inventory of parent involvement, family engagement, and family learning strategies and events that are facilitated there.
3. Categorize the strategies and events into "parent involvement", "family engagement", and "family learning".
4. Is the early childhood center or local school using "parent involvement", "family engagement", and "family learning" correctly?

Optional Bonus Activity B

Complete the self-paced module <u>Cultural and Linguistic Differences: What Teachers Should Know</u> from the IRIS Center Peabody College Vanderbilt University. Turn in your answers to the Assessment section.

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ADVOCACY PROJECT: CHILDREN, FAMILIES, SCHOOLS, AND COMMUNITIES

Advocacy Project Overview

This semester-long project is designed to help you link course content to your understanding of how to enhance collaborative relationships between families, schools, children, and community. You will identify an issue at your school or community that needs solving or highlighting. You will

- draft an advocacy statement,
- interview stakeholders,
- research the issue, and
- create a public service announcement or op-ed piece that demonstrates what you have learned.

The project is scaffolded into four assignments, each building off of each other:

1. Advocacy Statement (10 points)
2. Stakeholder Interviews (25 points)
3. Annotated Bibliography (30 points)
4. Fostering Support (35 points)

After each assignment, you will receive significant feedback. The success of each individual assignment and final project depends on your positive response to and ongoing improvement based on that feedback.

Examples of successful Advocacy Projects from previous semesters include

- Convincing the city council to set aside funds to install an additional crosswalk and traffic light in front of a preschool located in a high traffic area;
- Requesting funds from the school administrator to purchase children's books in multiple languages;
- Creating a grant proposal from an after-school program that sought to create a program to send dinner home to families in danger of food insecurity;
- Developing protocols for events at a community center that outlined, clearly, the food selection, preferences, allergies, and religious observances of community members;
- Petitioning a school to offer Individual Education Plan meetings in the evenings, weekends, and/or via Zoom to increase access for families.

Note that you are not required to implement your Advocacy Project this semester. This renewable assignment is designed to help you brainstorm a project, and develop resources around it prior to implementation. Many prior students in this course have implemented their projects at the end of the semester in their communities or places of employment. Implementation, not required but recommended, is not part of your final grade.

Step One: Advocacy Statement

- *Due approximately ¼ of the way into a semester*
- *10 point total*

The purpose of your Advocacy Project is to

- examine areas of strength and needed improvements within communities, schools, and families.
- identify relevant intervention strategies to support strengths and weaknesses.
- develop an advocacy statement that supports the intervention strategy.

Instructions:

1. Determine if you will create an Advocacy Project for your community, school, or family structure.
2. Identify three strengths of that community, school, or family structure.
3. Identify three areas of needed improvement for that community, school, or family structure.
4. In one-two sentences, define your advocacy statement.
5. Your total submission for Assignment #1 should not exceed two, double-spaced pages or a 3-minute or less video.
6. After receiving feedback, you have the option to revise and resubmit your work if you received 8 or fewer points.

Grading:

Your Advocacy Statement is worth a total of 10 points toward your semester-long project.

Criteria	Points	Comments
Student concisely indicated and explained 3 accurate strengths	__/4	
Student concisely indicated and explained 3 accurate areas of needed improvement;	__/4	
Student identified a clear and precise advocacy statement that connects to strengths and areas of needed improvement.	__/2	
If applicable if a student receives 8 or less points: Student revised the assignment based on instructor feedback in any of the criteria listed above.	__/2	

Step Two: Stakeholder Perspective

- *Due approximately 1/2 of the way into a semester*
- *25 point total*

Instructions:

1. Review your Advocacy Statement and relevant instructor feedback.
2. Interview a minimum of three community stakeholders that are important for your project. Stakeholders are individuals who have a "stake" in the outcome of a debate or project. They range from direct users, to business people, to politicians, etc. Your task in this assignment is to collect qualitative data about the strengths and weaknesses of your Advocacy Statement. Interviews will help you to answer
   1. Has this work already been done and you just don't know about it?
   2. Would the community support your idea?
   3. Would the community outright reject your idea?
   4. What are the angles that you have not yet considered?
3. You may also gather data on stakeholder support or debate about your advocacy statement through attendance at community meetings, reputable news sources, or reputable social media posts.
4. Your interviews or attendance at community meetings should last approximately 45 minutes- 1 hour each.

5. For each interview or data collection source, submit the name, contact information, and a maximum two-page, double-spaced summary of what you learned.

6. You will submit your assignment in a single document, ensuring that each interview is separated by a header. I will provide feedback on your document, so watch for a graded, annotated file.

7. After receiving feedback, you have the option to revise and resubmit your work if you received 20 or fewer points.

Grading:

Criteria	Points	Comments
Names and contact information included for each stakeholder.	__/2	
Maximum of 2 double-spaced pages for each stakeholder interview.	__/2	
Summary from each stakeholder of what you learned that identifies ● At least one key theme from each interview that helps you confirm the strengths and areas of needed improvement that you identified in the first assignment. ● At least two quotes from each interview that helps you confirm the strengths and areas of needed improvement that you identified in the first assignment. (7 points per interview)	__/21	
If applicable if a student receives 20 or less points: Student revised the assignment based on instructor feedback in any of the criteria listed above.		

Step Three: Annotated Bibliography

- Due approximately 3/4 of the way into a semester
- 35 point total

Instructions:

1. Review your Advocacy Statement and relevant instructor feedback.
2. Review the data you collected in your Stakeholder Interviews and relevant instructor feedback.
3. Research information relevant to your Advocacy Statement. Your research must originate in the college Library databases and other reputable sources. Simple Google searches will not suffice.
4. Begin your submission by placing your Advocacy Statement at the top of your document.
5. Turn your Advocacy Statement into a Research Question. Place this directly under your Advocacy Statement at the top of your document.
6. Write an Annotated Bibliography in APA 7th edition format with a minimum of three research-based sources related to your Advocacy Statement and stakeholder interviews. Each annotation must include a summary, evaluation and reflection on your source. Each annotation should be approximately one page in length, or approximately 4-8 sentences. Your Annotated Bibliography must be double-spaced.
   1. The OWL Writing Center at Purdue University offers fuller explanations and examples of annotated bibliographies if you are unfamiliar with this format.
   2. Your college Librarian can also be helpful for this assignment!
   3. Check out this interactive slideshow tutorial if you need additional guidance with APA formatting.
   4. Check out this interactive tool if you need additional guidance with the anatomy of an annotated bibliography.
   5. After receiving feedback, you have the option to revise and resubmit your work if you received 24 or fewer points.

Step Four: Fostering Support

- *Due at the end of a semester*
- *35 point total*

Instructions:

1. Review your Advocacy Statement and relevant instructor feedback.
2. Review the data you collected in your Stakeholder Interviews and relevant instructor feedback.
3. Review the research you outlined in your Annotated Bibliography and relevant instructor feedback.

4. Your task is to foster community support for your Advocacy Project. Create a video-based Public Service Announcement or a Letter to the Editor or Op-Ed about your Advocacy Statement. Your Public Service Announcement must be no longer than 3 minutes and must include a mixture of image and voice. Your Letter to the Editor or Op-Ed must be no longer than 600 words.

- Penn State University offers examples and a description of elements to consider when creating a Public Service Announcement.
- Tips for writing effective Op Ed pieces
- More tips for writing effective Op Ed pieces, with step by step instructions

You must include evidence from Assignments 1, 2, and 3 in your Public Service Announcement or Letter to the Editor or Op-Ed. Think carefully about how to integrate qualitative, quantitative, and research-based evidence into your outreach for support and funding. You must include an APA style Works Cited page.

Grading:

Criteria	Points	Comments
Student adheres to length guidelines and includes a properly formatted Works Cited page in APA or MLA style.	__/3	
Student includes evidence from Advocacy Statement. This should include the statement itself, strengths, areas of needed improvement, or some combination of those above.	__/8	
Student include evidence from Stakeholder Perspective. This should include at least one direct quote or paraphrase from stakeholder(s).	__/8	
Student includes evidence from Annotated Bibliography. This should include at least two direct quotes, paraphrases, or data points from your research.	__/8	
Public Service Announcement or Letter to the Editor or Op-Ed engages with a specific audience or stakeholder type. This is evidenced by the images, language, and messaging used to convey the advocacy statement and key convincing points.	__/8	
If applicable if a student receives 28 or less points: Student revised the assignment based on instructor feedback in any of the criteria listed above.	__/7	

NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS: ABOUT THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Note to Instructors
Advocacy Project:
Children, Families, Schools, Communities

This semester-long, scaffolded project is designed to synthesize content, debates, explorations, and student-choice, and student-interest. It addresses the following course-level learning outcomes:

- Understand how children, families, schools, and communities collaborate with and influence one another;
- Identify strengths-based approaches to creating culturally sustaining collaborations.

Please note that this assignment and assessment checklists were designed for a course using an "un-grading" strategy. Rubrics are not used in this particular course. The checklists are designed to guide students on areas of priority and needed improvement. All assignments in this project can be revised and resubmitted based on instructor feedback.

GRANT INFORMATION

The U.S. Department of Education, the granting agency for the ROTEL (Remixing Open Textbooks through an Equity Lens) project, requires information about the grant be included in the back matter. The text for this section is provided below.

The ROTEL (Remixing Open Textbooks through an Equity Lens) Project is 100% funded by the U.S. Department of Education's grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, (FIPSE). The contents of the OERs do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and an endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

For more information about the ROTEL Project, please visit our [project website](#).

VERSION HISTORY

Below is the version history for *Children, Families, Schools, and Communities*

Version	Publication Date	Changes
First Edition: link to first edition	March 6, 2023	Version History
Revised Edition: link to revised edition	November 13, 2024	**Added:** • Chapter IIV – Honoring Linguistic Diversity • Chapter IX. For Instructors: Sample Assignments • Advocacy Project with a Note for Instructors **New References:** • To support additional quoted materials and added re **Stylistic improvements** throughout