



# Considerations for Professionals Working with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families

by Catalina Angel

## **IDENTIFY FAMILY ORIGIN**

Assess how unfamiliar you are with the family's culture, then begin your research.

## **ASK ABOUT PREFERRED COMMUNICATION**

Keep in mind that families might not have access to internet.

## **USE VISUALS**

Offer written materials with visuals. Use graphics and condensed wording.

## **ACKNOWLEDGE THAT ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL**

For example, families from Latin America are coming from 35 countries with Spanish as the official language; however, there are more than 400 dialects, and some people coming from Latin America speak Portuguese and French.

## **MAKE RELEVANT COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS**

Link families to, and work in collaboration with, other organizations and agencies working with specific communities. Community based organizations have the trust of their participants. Families follow their advice and seek their help easily.

## **INCREASE YOUR CULTURAL and LINGUISTIC COMPETENCY**

Take the role of ally-ship and break down systematic barriers. Visit the National Center for Cultural Competence at Georgetown University to learn more: [nccc.georgetown.edu](http://nccc.georgetown.edu).

## **LOCATE PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT**

Connect families with culturally appropriate peers who are ahead of the path and willing to provide support and explain services in their own language.

## **BROADEN NETWORKS of SUPPORT**

Encourage families to stay connected with broader networks of support through their communities and the government systems, such as the education system and Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). When families learn what is available, opportunities open for their loved ones with disabilities in their own communities.

## **APPROACH DIFFERENCES WITH CURIOSITY**

People from other cultures will share about themselves if they feel welcome and respected.

## **BE COMPASSIONATE to YOURSELF and OTHERS**

We all make mistakes. Assume the best intent.