

Immigrant Parent Involvement in College Readiness

Challenges: Most immigrant parents want to be involved in helping their children prepare for and access higher education, but they often face a number of barriers including

- Limited understanding of the American school and higher education system
- Limited English proficiency and lack of resources available in languages other than English
- Low income, which may make them believe that a college education is out of their child's reach
- Little knowledge of available financial aid
- Lack of documentation
- Limited knowledge of how to make sure their children are college-ready and on track to graduate
- Different cultural norms about parent involvement in education
- Lack of transportation
- Work schedules
- Feelings of inefficacy
- Lack of culturally and linguistically sensitive outreach to them by schools, government agencies, and

Solutions: It is widely acknowledged that parent involvement in children's education has positive impacts on educational attainment, so involving parents in the college-going process is an important part of ensuring college success. Some ideas for involving parents include

- Making resources available in a variety of languages and in a manner that is culturally appropriate as well
- Providing workshops on financial aid and other college access topics with interpreters and transportation
- Providing consistent college coaching for students and parents throughout their high school career
- Using media in other languages to disseminate information on college access
- Working with community-based organizations that serve immigrant families

Resources: There are several resources and models available for involving immigrant parents in college readiness for their children such as

- Chapter 2 of *Preparing for College: Nine Elements of Effective Outreach* edited by William G. Tierney, Zoe B. Corwin, and Julia E. Colyar, available at http://books.google.com/books?id=a9PFfxOPXgcC&pg=PA1&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false
- This parent guide about college access, available in six languages including simple English from the New York Immigrant Coalition: <http://www.thenyic.org/education/parentguide>
- The LA Cash for College Family Night at the Cash for College Convention where parents and students can get information about financial aid together: <http://www.lacashforcollege.org/familynight/familynight.html>