

Barriers to Full Participation in the Individualized Education Program for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Parents

Arpi Tamzarian, Holly M. Menzies, and Leila Ricci,
California State University, Los Angeles

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004) mandates that schools facilitate parent participation in planning the Individual Education Program (IEP). However, culturally and linguistically diverse parents are less likely to feel fully included in the IEP process. In this article we examine three sources of cross-cultural communication difficulties: verbal and non-verbal communication styles, bureaucratic procedures, and cultural assumptions about disability and intervention. We conclude by suggesting schools use an empathetic approach to improve communication in the IEP process.

Keywords: Individual Education Program, culturally and linguistically diverse, communication, disability, special education