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ECE 210

How often do you find yourself in a situation where you want to speak out about something but can't seem to find the right words? This can make us feel like we are out of place and isolated in a room full of people that share our same ideas and concerns. It can be intimidating and can quickly be overwhelmed and filled with anxiety to speak. This is a mutual feeling that our families and parents that face a language barrier feel daily when they pick up their children from school or at parent-teacher conferences. Immigrant families and parents often rely on community-based resources to stay updated on the happenings in their child's schools. So I must ask you, how can we create a safe and empowering environment so that all parents feel encouraged to be engaged in school activities? We want to build a stronger community with these parents and families to address their concerns to ensure a child's success. The benefits are endless.

Who knows our students better than their parents? We must rely on them to give us information and background about their children. With this information, both educators and families can become educated about how our school system and programs can be beneficial for their young children. We can build a bridge between families and our schools by simply hosting a family event. This event would take place at the beginning of each school year. At this event, families from all different types of cultures and backgrounds are encouraged to come together in our school and share a little bit about themselves with us. It is our job as school administrators and educators to reach out to the parents and families and take the first step into building bridges. With this, we can gain knowledge about the families and the children that we will be working with for the rest of the year. Parents can begin to build a community within themselves and take

on important roles like in the PTA, for example. Parents are encouraged to bring in a cultural artifacts or something that holds value to their own families. We could take a school wide survey regarding what languages they feel comfortable speaking in and what their biggest concerns are for the upcoming year. Opening up school doors before the school year begins allows parents and young children to bring forth more confidence and a higher sense of safety and comfortability about where the child will be in school for the majority of the day.

I will be doing my part in my classrooms by making an effort to relieve some of the stress cause by the language barrier to my students families. But this simple one day event can reach so many more families school wide. Based on my experience, I strongly believe that by having a school event where my mom could've spoken to other families that spoke our home language and understood our concerns, my school experience would've improved positively.