Addressing Disparities in Access to Mental Health Services

An Orientation to the



RAICES/ Promotoras **Model**

and Associated Training Curriculum

Linking **Community Helpers & Services** with Schools Serving **no Families**



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The Promotoras model truly defines how Family and School Support Teams can best serve Latino children and families in coordination with the community and school system. The curriculum is a great tool and one that will offer consistency during future trainings.

—Stephen Marta Project Director Children's Future Hillsborough

Linking Community Helpers and Services with Schools Serving Latino Families

An Orientation to the RAICES/Promotoras Model and Associated Training Curriculum

The purpose of this orientation guide is to introduce and describe a model and associated training curriculum designed to support communities in their efforts to strengthen partnerships that better link Latino children and families with school personnel and service providers. The curriculum was developed as part of the RAICES/Promotoras Field-Initiated Research Project of Hillsborough County, Florida, a collaborative initiative serving at-risk limited English speaking and Spanish monolingual Latino children or those with serious emotional disturbance enrolled in grades K-5 and their families. It is intended for communities with committed service providers—mental health, education, child welfare, juvenile justice and other agencies—dedicated to ensuring families have access to the services and supports they need to achieve successful outcomes. Hillsborough County partners include:

- Family and School Support Team (FASST)/Children's Future Hillsborough
- Hispanic Services Council
- Success 4 Kids & Families, Inc.
- · Children's Board of Hillsborough County
- Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute/University of South Florida
- School Board of Hillsborough County



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Introduction

Currently, one third of the Latino population in the United States is under the age of 18, and by the year 2025, it is projected that 25 percent of students in grades K-12 will be of Latino origin. Rural Latinos are one of the most underserved populations by health care systems in the United States, which has an effect on all aspects of family life, including school involvement. Many children and families face language barriers and family factors that can af-

fect school achievement and put them at-risk for developing serious emotional problems. The need to have educational, behavioral and mental health supports in place is a growing concern in many communities, and

particularly, the need to have effective communication with parents about their children in a manner reflective of Latino cultures.

A promising new model implemented in rural areas of Hillsborough County Florida is improving school progress for children K – 5, providing culturally appropriate services for families by blending two proven programs, the Family and School Support Teams (FASST), which provides voluntary school and in-home services for children and their families, and a community empowerment model known as Promotoras, in which community members use their knowledge of local resources and their neighborhood's health and social issues to help community residents access needed health and social services. These two practices were brought together through the RAICES (Resources, Advocacy, Integration, Collaboration Empowerment and Services) project, coordinated and managed through the University of South Florida's Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute. RAICES, or "roots" in Spanish

By the year 2025, it is projected that 25 percent of students in grades K-12 will be of Latino origin. symbolizes building healthy families upon the foundations present within the family and community.

The main product of the RAICES project is a training curriculum that provides useful in-

formation and skills training needed for the development of successful Family and School Support Teams that include bilingual promotoras. The curriculum provides a concise method for training promotoras to provide effective case management and service referral, based on System of Care principles that emphasize family and childfocused planning, cultural competence, and community-based care. It can easily be adapted to reflect local context and conditions, particularly with regard to local school district programs and county policies or procedures.

"This past year the FASST program made great improvements. Families and children referred to FASST received immediate attention. Meetings held with the families were focused, and follow through with assistance was immediate. I noticed children being tutored after school. I had one mother tell me this summer that because of the assistance through FASST, she and her husband were able to keep their home, and in turn they were able to save their marriage thus far. We are very pleased with the FASST/Promotoras program and are grateful to have this assistance for our families."

—Lisa Tierney, M.Ed., Principal, Cypress Creek Elementary



Maria Pinzon, Director of the Hispanic Services Council (HSC) in Hillsborough County recently asked a promotora how HSC could help in a "backto-school" effort for students. It was explained to her that while helpful, the depth of need faced by migrant families goes beyond new backpacks stocked with pencils and papers. One of the most basic needs are towels, as some families have only one towel to share each morning, and alarm clocks, because parents are in the fields working before children get up for school. Also, the desire to have the right clothes to "fit in" is constant. The needs are many before the student even picks up the backpack to go to school. When these basic needs aren't met, success in school is often limited.



Program Profile

Within the Hillsborough County school system, the school case management program, Family and School Support Teams (FASST), has been in operation since the early 1990s, providing school and in-home services for at-risk Hillsborough County School

District children and their families. FASST promotes academic and developmental achievement in youth by facilitating family involvement in school and connecting families with appropriate community resources

This program is needed by any community with a large non-English speaking population. —Maria Pinzon, Director, Hispanic Services Council

after receiving referrals from the schools. The team involves professionals and paraprofessionals from the school system, mental health providers and other formal and informal agencies in the creation and implementation of a service plan for children and their families. The informal resources upon which a family relies during the course of their daily lives are identified as strengths. Informal resources are extended family members, friends, neighbors, clergy or other religious leaders, and other community residents who provide families support without formal compensation or pay. The RAICES model, funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) and identified as a promising practice by the federal government, helps to make needed modification of the FASST program through the development of a

> more culturally competent method using community helpers, known as promotoras, who link Latino families with FASST and schools.

Once the larger Family and School Support Team is assembled, the team meets to develop (with the

family taking a leading role) a Family Plan. Once the plan has been drafted, the team meets regularly (as agreed to by the team) to address the goals of the plan and work with the family to access needed services. Typically, FASST will work with a student and family for 6 months to a year. If a student and family move to another part of Hillsborough County during their involvement with FASST, services will follow them to ensure completion of the family plan.

Home and school visits may be conducted by all members of the team and are scheduled around parents' needs.



A study conducted by the Latino Coalition in 2000 found that within the Hillsborough County school system, the Latino population was found to have numerous social service needs that were not being met. They included the need for:

- More bilingual and caring school staff;
- Better two-way communication between schools and families, with less blame placed on families;
- Procedures for earlier notification of problems to parents;
- Earlier interventions when problems are noticed;
- Information in Spanish for parents on how to help their children in school; and
- Better dissemination of information about community programs and services with outreach to Latinos.

FASST Guiding Principles

System of Care

A System of Care is a philosophy that guides service planning and delivery and focuses on providing a comprehensive range of services that are organized within a coordinated network to serve children with multiple needs and their families. It includes formal service providers and agencies that can help to meet a child's needs, as well as other family members and informal supports that the family relies on in their daily lives. A community that operates under System of Care values recognizes that child and family needs often don't fit pre-defined service models.



In a System of Care, a child is surrounded by a system of support from their family, agencies, programs, and the community.

Wraparound

Wraparound is a process within a System of Care that individualizes services for children and adolescents with complicated and multi-dimensional problems. The process is as simple as people helping people—both within and outside the formal child serving agencies. It is a process designed to build agreement among a team of professionals, family members, and natural support providers. The goals of the process are to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of supports and services developed for children and their families.

In a Wraparound Process, friends, neighbors, family and service providers gather around a family and ask a crucial question: "What do the members of this family really need to have better lives?"



RAICES Objectives:

- Re-configure the way in which Family and School Support Teams receive referrals and provide services to Spanish monolingual Latino children and their families in rural south Hillsborough County and the West Tampa community;
- Adapt the promotoras model to address mental health issues;
- Adapt recruitment methods for promotoras and Family and School Support Teams; and,
- Modify current training materials that are part of Family and School Support Teams to include the promotora model.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- Improve academic and behavioral outcomes for at-risk Latino children;
- Increase connection to schools for targeted Latino families;
- Cultural competence of the school and mental health service systems;
- Decrease time Latino families spend on waiting lists for bilingual services; and,
- Increase employment opportunities through recruitment of promotoras within targeted communities.



Quotes from Promotoras

"This is the job I have been looking for my whole life. I am so happy I can work with children. Teachers have called me to say the children have changed so much."

"I really liked the training for working with families. I had done outreach before, but there, we always did FOR the families, and FASST empowers them to do for themselves."

"I know the kids appreciate it because they wave to me in the hallway, they give me hugs, and when they see me in the community they come up to talk to me."

"During the training I wondered how the system of care and wraparound philosophy could be implemented but now I use it every day."

"One child that was referred to us in February was below level so we did tutoring and mentoring. The child got on level by May and was passed to the next grade."

The Promotoras Model

The RAICES/Promotoras Training curriculum was designed to provide useful information and skills needed for the development of successful Family and School Support Teams that include bilingual promotoras.

The training emphasizes skills for providing support, helping families identify their strengths and needs, and connecting families to the services they need.

Often, the conditions of Latino children

and families faced with poverty and language barriers are not known very well, and when problems arise, it is important to go beyond the child and evaluate the needs of the whole family. Promotoras can help to better resolve educational issues brought about by academic, behavioral, or absenteeism problems because they know the needs of the family and can help find answers to why a child is having certain issues —Is it because there is no bed to sleep in and the child is tired all the time? Does the child need to stay home with younger siblings so the parents can work in the fields? Can tutoring be provided so the student doesn't have to feel so behind in work and act out in frustration, or can a bilingual psychologist be hired to evaluate him or her? Is there a positive male role model in the student's family, or is a mentor needed? Is transportation an issue for parents to attend necessary meetings? If so, a promotora may know an individual in the community with a car willing to provide transportation for

a stipend. By using the promotoras who know these families and know the community they

Natural helpers may not respond to formal ads and flyers because they do not recognize that they possess the qualifications described.

> live in, available resources can be found to offer a number of supports.

The promotoras model is adaptable as evidenced by its use in addressing a number of community issues, including HIV/AIDS, diabetes and other chronic illnesses, and community organizing. While their roles, job titles, responsibilities and activities may vary depending on client or community needs, some specific examples of what promotoras do include:

- Individual and community needs assessment;
- Coordination of care and case management;
- Education of institutions about community culture, needs and strengths;
- Education of families about prevention and access to care; and,
- Organization of community initiatives.

The RAICES/Promotoras Curriculum Overview

The RAICES/ **Promotoras** Training Manual was designed to provide useful information and skills training needed for the development of a successful Family and School Support Team (FASST) that includes bilingual promotoras. Participants learn about important service delivery concepts, including the System of Care and Wraparound Principles and Cultural Competence.

The training emphasizes building skills that include providing support, helping families identify their strengths and needs, and connecting families to the services they need.

The RAICES/Promotoras Training

Manual contains materials for eight structured training sessions that can be adapted to meet specific program and participant needs. (This particular training program has been designed to train FASST teams working within Hillsborough County schools but chapters can be adapted to fit another community context.) Each chapter includes instructions for leading the session, along with handouts, discussion questions, and ideas for presenting information on the topics

covered. Articles of interest, resources for obtaining teaching materials, and a bibliography of additional reading also are included in this manual.

The structured workshop sessions are designed for eight weekly meetings from six to eight hours each. However, some flexibility is recommended. In practice, discussions of parenting issues have been known to become lively and individual participants have been found to need

Latino families are the fastest and largest growing segment of our county population. We have a critical need to provide outreach to these families with culturally competent services.

—Luanne Panacek Executive Director, Children's Board of Hillsborough County extra support and processing time, for instance, when personal memories are triggered or discussed.

The RAICES/ Promotoras Training Manual is divided into two sections: chapters that present Found chapters that

dational Knowledge and chapters that present Core Skills for preparing Family and School Support Teams (FASST) teams to work with promotoras. The chapters and their sub-sections are listed on the next pages with a brief summary and an outline of the training objectives for each.



Stephen Martaus of Children's Future Hillsborough and Glenn Brown from the Children's Board of Hillsborough County review areas in need of FASST/ Promotoras services.

Characteristics of Successful Promotoras

- Friendly and outgoing personality
- Ability to teach and present information
- Personal strength, motivation, and capacity for self-directed work
- Open-minded and non-judgemental attitude
- Ability to develop relationships and integrate local beliefs into their work
- Ability to encourage participation
- Length of residency and knowledge of community

Successful Methods of Recruitment

- Asking for referrals from area organizations
- Asking people in key occupations who know the community (teachers, ministers, storekeepers, etc.
- Recommendations from community advisory groups/task forces

RAICES/Promotoras Training Curriculum Overview

Chapter Title	Chapter Topics	Chapter Summary	After Completing Chapter, Participants will Demonstrate the Following Objectives:
Chapter 1 - Systems of Care and Wrap- around	 Introduction to FASST The System of Care Wraparound Values and Principles Ethics and Confidentiality 	Provides an introduction to the System of Care philosophy and the Wraparound service delivery concept. The chapter also provides an orientation to the FASST program, which is based on the Sys- tem of Care philosophy and provides Wraparound services to K-5 students with severe emotional disturbance (SED) or at-risk of SED and their fami- lies. The chapter concludes with specific emphasis on ethical service delivery and the importance of maintaining family confidentiality throughout the service delivery process.	 Familiarity with the FASST program, its history and its services; Knowledge of the System of Care philosophy and its core values; Knowledge of the principles of the Wraparound process and its role in a System of Care; Awareness of the ethical issues involved in working closely with families; and An understanding of the importance of confidentiality in your work.
Chapter 2 - Achieving Cul- turally Compe- tent Practice	 What Is Culture? Principles of Cultural Competence Culturally Competent Practice Culturally Competent Service Delivery 	Provides an introduction to help participants recognize the importance of culture in daily life by providing exercises to develop training partici- pants' awareness of their own culture and how to build cross-cultural relationships. This chapter provides participants with working definitions for the following concepts: culture, family culture, and cultural competence, as well as training on how to apply these concepts and cultural competence principles in providing services to diverse families.	 An awareness of one's own culture(s) and how to build relationships with people from many different cultures; Familiarity with the principles of cultural competence; Awareness of the necessary skills to interact, on a culturally competent basis, with the families that you serve; and An awareness of how agencies can increase the effectiveness of service delivery to families through culturally competent practice.
Chapter 3 - Understanding the Elementary School System in Hillsbor- ough County	 Understanding Elementary Schools in Hillsborough County Exceptional Student Education Programs (ESE) English as a Second Language Programs (ESL) 	Provides important information on the elementary school system in Hillsborough County and im- portant programs available to elementary school students and their families.	 Knowledge of school administration and personnel in district elementary schools, overall, and target school(s), in particular; Knowledge of existing ESE programs and student/family rights and respon- sibilities within the special education system; and Knowledge of student/parent rights and responsibilities within (ESL) programs.
Chapter 4 - Understanding Child Mental Health and Well-Being	 A Framework for Child Mental Health and Well- Being Developmental Domains & Milestones Healthy Relationships and Nurturing Environments Facilitating Child Mental Health and Well-Being 	Provides a general framework for understanding child mental health by focusing on enhancing child well-being through building of healthy relationships and nurturing environments. General child development milestones and strategies for understanding child mental health of elementary school-aged children are presented within this framework.	 Knowledge of a general framework for describing child mental health and well-being; General understanding of develop- mental domains and milestones in young and school age children; Awareness of signals of child mental health and distress; and Knowledge of strengths that can facilitate child mental health and well- being.

Chapter Title	Chapter Topics	Chapter Summary	After Completing Chapter, Participants will Demonstrate the Following Objectives:
Chapter 5 - Address- ing Student and Family Needs with Wraparound	 Essential Components of the Wraparound Process Implementing Wrap- around Utilizing Family Strengths in Wraparound The Family Team 	Outlines the Wraparound Process in detail, and how to incorporate the components of Wrap- around Process within a Family and School Sup- port Team (FASST) that includes bilingual promo- toras. The chapter provides training on how to help families identify their strengths as a first step in meeting family needs and provides an impor- tant introduction to family safety planning	 Familiarity with the basic steps of the Wraparound Process; Understanding of the central role family strengths play in Wraparound Planning; Awareness of the importance of identifying individualized needs; and Knowledge of how the Family Team operates in the Wraparound Process.
Chapter 6 - Managing the Family Plan	 Case Management: The Basics Collaboration with Providers and Agencies Collaboration with Families Monitoring the Family Plan 	Provides an introduction to the case manage- ment process and how to successfully link families to needed resources and services based on the Family Plan developed by the FASST team with significant family input. The chapter also provides training on how to transition from the beginning to the end of the FASST program.	 Familiarity with the basic functions of case management; Understanding of how FASST teams collaborate with providers and agencies; Understanding of how FASST teams collaborate with families; and Basic knowledge of how to monitor family progress.
Chapter 7 - Conducting Home Visits	 Home Visits: What to Know Before You Go Establishing a Successful Support Relationship The Three Stages of Home Visiting 	Provides important information on conducting home visits and establishing successful support re- lationships with families who are receiving FASST services. Training is provided on how to prepare for effective home visits by developing a plan and associated checklist. Training exercises are also in- cluded to help in identification of the three stages of home visiting, and interactive exercises provide practice for learning how to conduct home visits at each stage.	 Ability to identify the advantages of using home visits for providing families with services; Ability to prepare a plan and checklist in preparation for your first home visit; Ability to identify and practice the stages of successful home visiting; Knowledge of how to apply commu- nication skills to establish a successful support relationship with families; and, Practice skills for communicating re- spectfully and diffusing conflict that may arise during home visits.
Chapter 8 - Facilitating Effective Family Team Meetings	 Assessing Our Use of System of Care Values Assessing Implementation of Wraparound Principles Facilitating Effective Fam- ily Team Meetings 	Provides training on how FASST teams can assess implementation of System of Care and Wraparound concepts in their work with families through the Family Team. Facilitation of effective team meetings is also emphasized to support family strengths and participation in the develop- ment of an effective FASST Family Plan for service delivery.	 Knowledge of how to apply System Of Care principles to create a system- oriented Family Team; Knowledge of how to apply Wrap- around Values during Family Team Meetings; and Understanding of the factors that can influence the degree to which Wrap- around Principles are implemented within Family Team Meetings.



Coach John Mayo (right) from Success 4 Kids, and Maggie Sanchez (left corner), FASST Supervisor from Hispanic Services Council provide on-going coaching to promotoras

"I want to recommend it to other parents because childhood only lasts a short time and we need to help our children now. It has been a big help with my child and a great change for the family, too."

—Parent



RAICES Success Equals On-Going Coaching & Flexibility

It is important that community partners working together understand the need for flexibility and extra training when necessary. During curriculum consultation and coaching, John Mayo realized the promotoras in Hillsborough County needed more in-depth training on the development and management of an appropriate service plan, known within the school system as the Family Support Plan. This case management tool identifies ways to access needed services, monitor service delivery, and advocate for families' needs.

During the additional training session, John Mayo discussed how to describe and document certain emotional and behavioral measures, which then need to be translated for families to understand in their own language. Maggie Sanchez from the Hispanic Services Council asked the promotoras to describe the word "tantrum" in Spanish. Each respondent gave different transla-

tions, depending on their country of origin, which revealed that although words may be the same, meanings can be very different. Jorge from Colombia said Francis's translation from Mexico would be insulting to his community members. This reinforces the need to hire individuals in their own communities who understand complexities of mono-lingual families. "It's OK to ask parents to explain to you what you just said," added Maggie. "It's extremely important to ensure community members have help from someone who really speaks their language and knows how the community will respond to certain words."

The training session revealed the importance of ensuring that promotoras receive on-going coaching and that families be given a tool they can understand—a family support plan translated into their own language.

What do Partnerships Look Like? Mapping The Connections

The RAICES project involves a large collaboration of human service agencies. A brief description is provided here, mapping out how community partners come together to create an integrated System of Care for young children and their families.

The Hispanic Services Council and Family and School Support Teams are part of a larger network of providers, known as Children's Future Hillsborough, Inc. All management and administrative functions of the Children's Future Hillsborough collaborative are the responsibility of Achieve Tampa Bay, Inc., which operates as the Management Services Organization (MSO) for the project. All major Family and School Support Team initiatives must first pass through the Leadership Council, a body of Children's Future Hillsborough agency representatives that serve as the project's Board of Directors.

One of four agencies operating Family and School Support Teams in Hills-

borough County, the Hispanic Services Council serves as the lead administrative agency in areas serving large segments of Spanish speaking families. The core team consists of three family support coordinators, four promotoras, and one supervisor. The Family Support Coordinator fulfills the role of the primary case manager within the team. Promotoras serve as the primary advocate for the parents of children in the program, while also providing the community with additional outreach and information on FASST services that are available to community residents. Promotoras assist in the referral process by identifying students who have not been referred to the FASST by school personnel, but who could benefit from services.

A larger team is built around this core to include the referred child and/or parents, informal supports, formal providers, school personnel, and anyone else the family feels may help them reach their goals for success.

What's Needed Before Implementation?

RAICES/Promotoras Model Top Ten Community Start-Up Needs

- 1. Establish Steering Committee/Board of Directors
- 2. Develop Community Partnerships and Funding Sources
- 3. Establish Case Management Programs in Schools
- 4. Establish Implementation Plan
- 5. Hire and Train Trainers
- 6. Hire and Train Promotoras
- 7. Engage Families In Need of Services
- 8. Develop Evaluation Plan
- 9. Confirm Partners for Long-term Commitment
- 10. Ensure Availability of Long-term Coaching and Support



"It helped my son learn the importance of school. He didn't care about school before. Now my husband and I help him with his homework, and he has his own chores. Before he wouldn't put his laundry in the right place and complained every time I asked him to take out the trash. Now he does it without being told. And when I ask how things went in school he says "good," then he goes to his room and does his homework."

—Parent

What Parents Are Saying About FASST

"The school noticed the behavior of my son. It was the teacher and the social worker that made the referral. My son wasn't quiet in class. He interrupted the teacher and fought with other students... I had also noticed that he was very active, different than other children, and thought FASST could help."

"The FASST program helped me have patience with my son during difficult times. I am now able to talk with him, and he is behaving better and is calmer. He was really bad, hitting other students, hitting me and shouting. He never was quiet, but now I notice he is so much calmer. He is very happy with his teacher now, too. She was impatient before and got mad at him, but he says she doesn't get mad at him anymore. He is also doing well on his progress reports."

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For additional information, contact Linda Callejas at 813-974-6328, callejas@fmhi.usf.edu, or to download the guide and curriculum, visit the RAICES website at: http://cfs.fmhi.usf.edu/cfspubs/RAICES/

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