



OUR JOURNEY TO SUCCESS:

Early Education for Children in
Indigenous Migrant Families



Introduction

I want my child to be a doctor or lawyer...a professional.

— *Mixtec mother*

This resource was developed together with indigenous migrant families with young children and the organizations that serve them. It is based on indigenous leaders' and families' powerful stories of courage and hope¹ and their expert advice on family and community needs and assets. The purpose of this resource is to recognize, affirm, and build on family and cultural strengths as a pathway to school readiness. It fills a current gap in materials by supporting the importance of indigenous culture and language to children's achievement in school and to long-term child and family well-being.

Agency staff can use the flip chart format with groups of parents or with individual parents, at home or in the agency.

Tips for using this resource:

- Each of the three key messages in this resource begins with photos of indigenous families. Use these photos to stimulate discussion among parents about the message.
- On the back of each photo collage page are
 - key research-based information on the topic,
 - suggested activities, including lists of materials needed that can be found in the classroom or home
- In the back of this book there are on-line resources for additional information.
- When using this resource, begin where the parents are most comfortable; there is no required order for topics or activities.
- Remember that each individual and family is different. The best sources of information about any group of people are the people themselves.

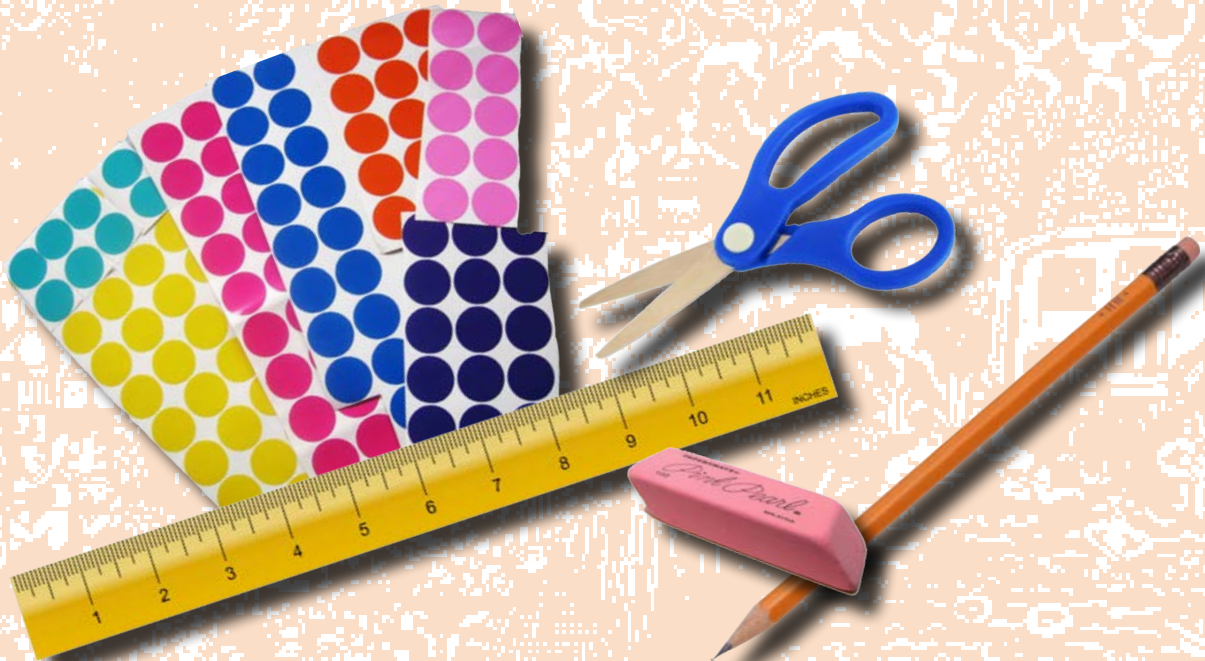
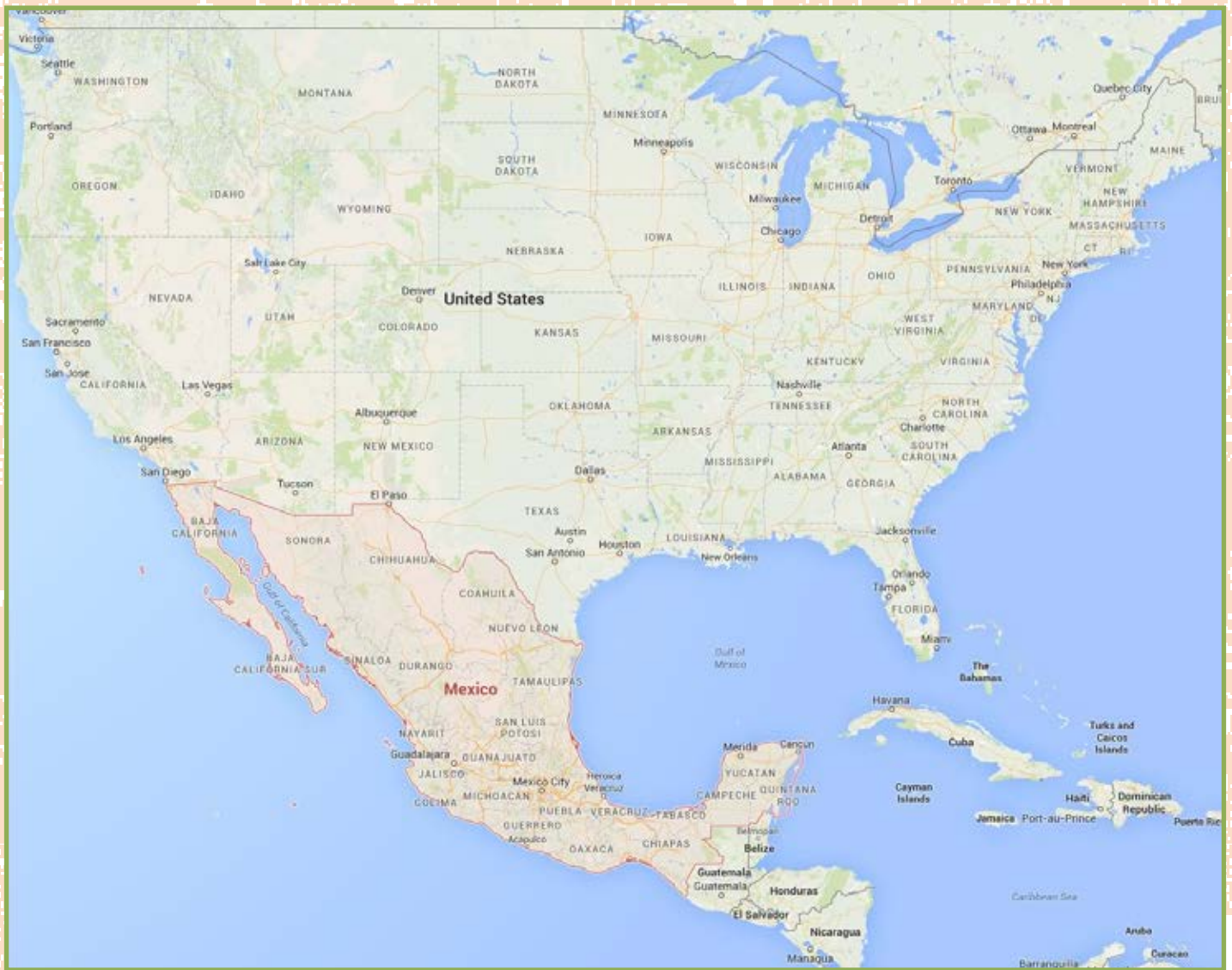
This resource for families focuses on three key messages to help support their children's successful journeys in life:

1. Strong families and communities promote the well-being of children and their readiness to learn.
2. Maintaining home languages and healthy cultural traditions benefits children.
3. Healthy development is vital for the journey to success.

¹ *Journeys of Hope and Courage: Using Storytelling Approaches to Partner with Families* (a video series featuring migrant families). <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/relationship/journeys-hope-courage.html>

Icebreaker: Getting to Know Each Other

Where are you from?
Where have you been?
Where are you now?
Where are you going?





Introduction

Icebreaker:

Getting to Know Each Other:

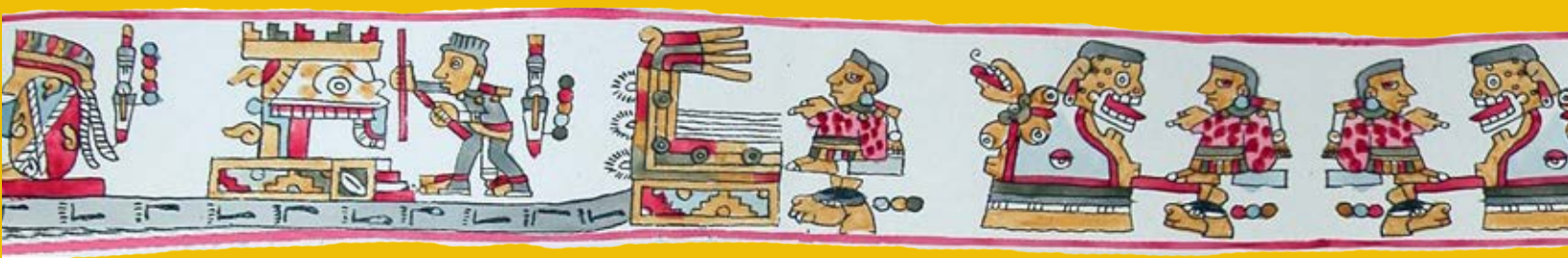
*Where are you from? Where have you been?
Where are you now? Where are you going?*

Using a map of the United States, Mexico, and Central America as a visual aid, ask parents to describe their “journeys.” Information can include where they and their parents were born; where they have lived, traveled, and worked; where they are now; and, where they will likely go next. These questions can lead to discussions about what it is like where their family is originally from, cultural differences within the U.S., and perhaps what they want for their children’s future. Each family can tell the story of their own journey and their vision of “success.”

This map can also be used for activities in the next sections.

Materials:

- A classroom map that includes the United States, Mexico, and Central America, or print a map from the Internet, or draw a map on a large piece of paper (be sure to include details important to the families, such as cities and states in the U.S. as well as cities and states in Mexico, Guatemala, and other countries, as needed).
- Colored stickers, pencils, erasers, markers, crayons
- Rulers, paper glue sticks



Strong Families and Communities Promote the Well-Being of Children





Message 1:

Strong Families and Communities Promote the Well-Being of Children

We should be proud of who we are, our culture, our language.

— Zapotec father

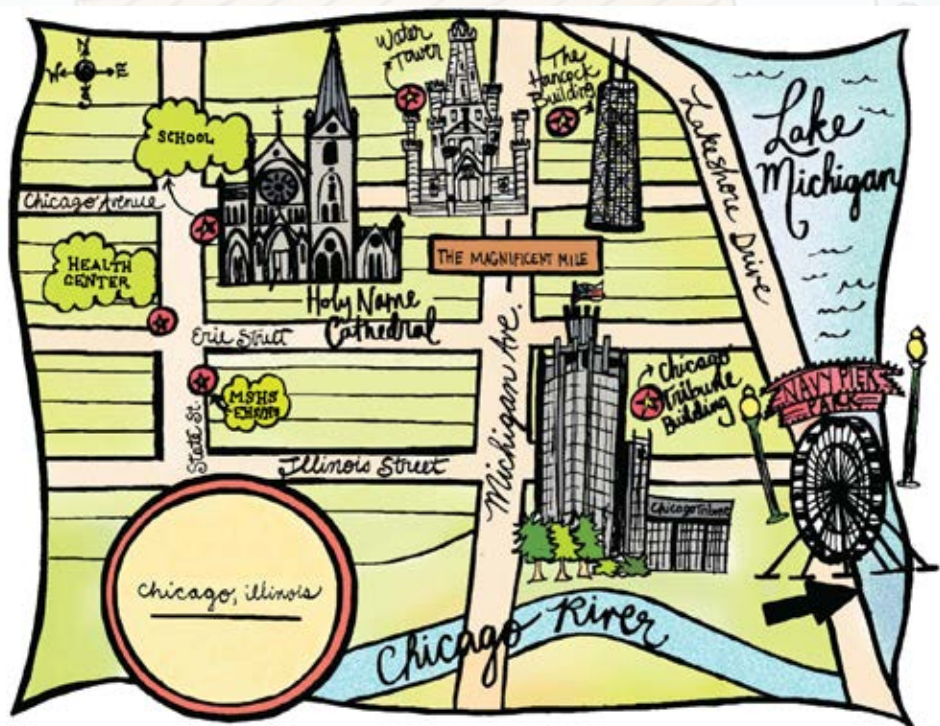
Key Points:

1. Communities and families are strengthened through shared cultural values and traditions.
 - Traditional indigenous cultural values include a strong sense of collectivism and interdependence within families and communities, where members help each other out and take responsibility for their family and community as a whole. These are unique strengths of indigenous families that benefit children.
 - Maintaining family traditions, such as having meals together, or playing music together, can help keep families strong.
2. When families have multiple sources of social and emotional support, they are most likely to be resilient.
 - Transnational social support networks (such as extended family living in the U.S. and other countries) can provide both emotional and concrete assistance in times of need.
3. Families have the right to access community services to meet basic needs.
 - Indigenous migrant families often experience more barriers to community services and benefits (for example, medical and dental care, and social services) than other U.S. residents, due to language and cultural barriers, and sometimes immigration status.
 - Early Head Start and Head Start (EHS/HS) programs, such as Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS), can help connect families to the local community services for which they are eligible. Organizations that specialize in serving immigrants can share information on the legal right to agency-provided interpretation and translation, and other rights in this country regardless of immigration status.



ACTIVITY 1: We Have Strong Families and Communities

My Town, USA



- FOOD
- STORES
- △ MSHS/EHS/HS
- ◇ SCHOOL

Queen Village



Message 1:

Activity 1: We Have Strong Families and Communities

We should be proud of who we are, our culture, our language.

— Zapotec father

Activity:

1. Using the map of the United States, Mexico, and Central America from the previous activity, ask parents to show where extended family members and friends live both within and outside the U.S.
2. Ask families to create their own maps, mark where their family and friends live, and draw lines between them (creating a “network” across the countries).
3. Ask families to create a basic map of the U.S. town where they currently live. Use symbols to identify where family and friends live, as well as important community services, such as the hospital and medical clinics. Be sure to include MSHS and EHS/HS programs, ethnic community organizations, schools, churches, immigrant rights organizations, Embassies or Consulates for countries of origin, health clinics, public library, day care, and other resources.
4. Discuss how these family and community networks and services support families, and any related barriers and concerns. Be prepared with information including their rights in the U.S., how to access specific community services, eligibility, and federal requirements for community services to provide language access. Brainstorm solutions to barriers.

Materials:

- Large piece of paper or other paper that can be used to draw a map
- Colored stickers, pencils, erasers, markers, crayons, magazines, colored construction paper
- Paper glue stick, rulers, scissors



Maintaining Home Languages and Cultural Traditions Benefits Children





Message 2:

Maintaining Home Languages and Cultural Traditions Benefits Children

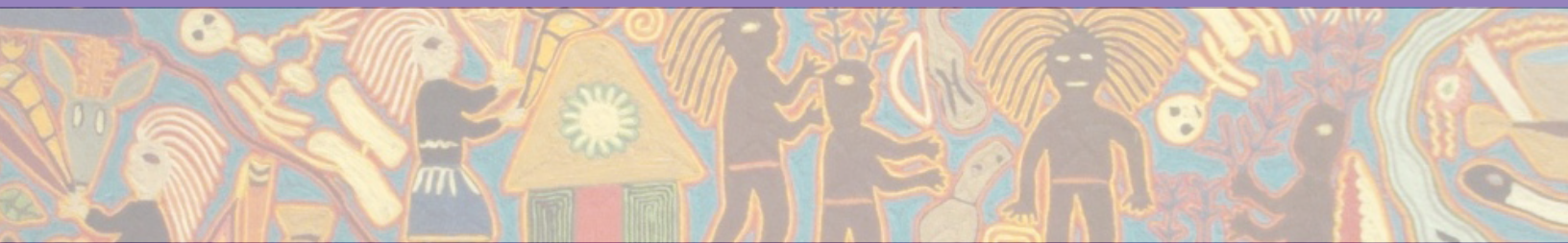
Schools should teach kids to be proud of their heritage and language.
— Mixtec mother

Key Points:

- 1.** Maintaining indigenous home languages while learning Spanish and English benefits children’s cognitive, language, and social-emotional development.
 - Children benefit from learning different languages at the same time.
 - Children who speak multiple languages will show higher levels of self-control, focus, and memory than children exposed to just one language. They also show advantages in language and literacy development.
 - Children who maintain their home language can communicate with parents and other family members, who may not speak English as well, and can receive more support and guidance from them.
- 2.** Practicing healthy cultural traditions with children can help them stay connected to family and community strengths.
 - By staying connected to family and community (their “roots”), children are likely to have a broader base of support, positive cultural identity, and direction in their lives.
 - This strong sense of “roots” can help children navigate such challenges as risky peer behaviors, changing social values, and discrimination.
- 3.** Adaptation to the U.S. includes choosing which ways to adapt and which indigenous cultural values and traditions to keep.
 - All immigrant families experience the need to adapt to their new environment.
 - There is no “right” way to adapt; each family member will adapt in different ways and at different paces.
 - Children often lose their language and memories of cultural traditions if they are not reinforced at home and school.
 - To better understand and support each other, families can discuss and choose, together, which values and traditions to keep.

ACTIVITY 2: Strong Roots and Bright Futures





Message 2:

Activity 2: Strong Roots and Bright Futures

Schools should teach kids to be proud of their heritage and language.

— *Mixtec mother*

Activity:

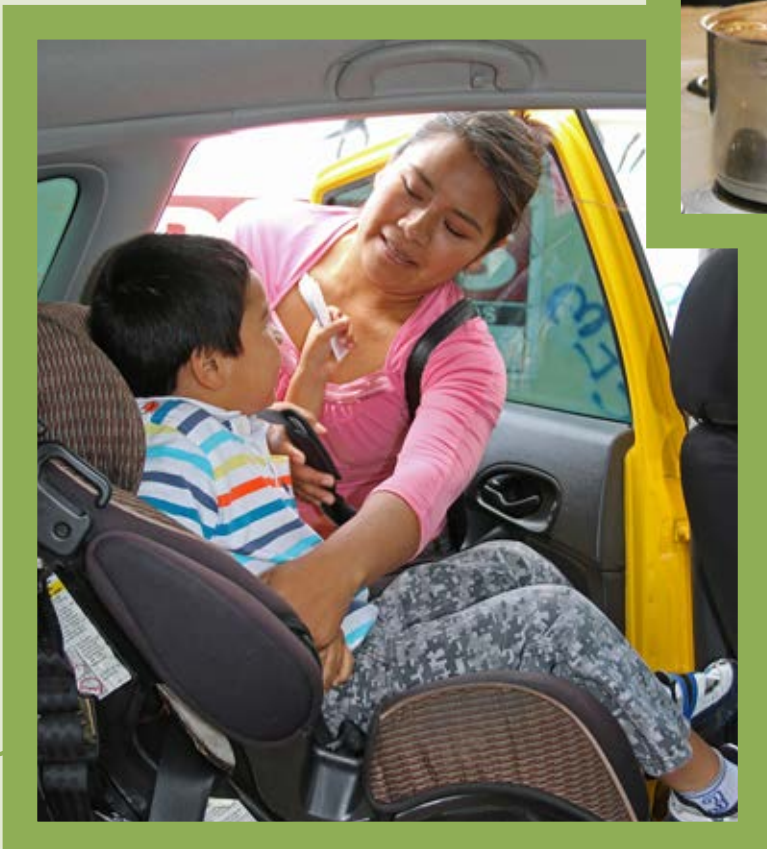
1. Ask families to share traditional songs, stories, and games in their native language/s that can be taught to children at home and in the MSHS or other early learning and child care centers. Each parent can lead a song or game, and teach it to the other parents.
2. If families agree, record them singing traditional songs and stories. These can be played to children at home or in the classroom.
3. Ask families what they consider to be their most important cultural traditions. How will these be taught to their children? (for example, devote one night per week to family cultural traditions, speak with children as often as possible in the native language, teach children at least one new word each day in the native language, teach children to cook traditional foods, teach children to weave, etc.).
4. Ask families which parts of U.S. culture they most want to adopt, and which aspects they most want their children to adopt. Which aspects do they not want to adopt? Which aspects do they not want their children to adopt? Discuss how they might help teach their children these values, now and in the future.

Materials:

- Audio recorders (e.g., phones)
- Paper and markers to list songs and games
- Musical instruments, if available



Healthy Development is Vital for the Journey to Success





Message 3:

Healthy Development is Vital for the Journey to Success

Health is the foundation...we need it to do everything.

— Mixtec mother

Key Points:

1. Foundations for Learning: Children’s physical development.
 - Traditional meals use whole grains, fresh vegetables, and fruits. Families can adapt them so that they are quick to prepare, healthy, and use available foods.
 - Playing sports, such as football (“soccer”), and taking walks together can help children stay healthy and make families stronger.
 - Indigenous values include a strong connection to the natural world; outdoor activities help support these values and provide healthy exercise.
2. Foundations for Learning: Children’s social-emotional development.
 - Healthy social and emotional development is important to early learning, identity, and success in life.
 - Children first learn about emotions in their families. Parents can model healthy emotions and help children begin to recognize and manage their own emotions.
 - Children can learn to cooperate with others from a young age.
3. The U.S. Health Care System: Navigating access to local services and benefits.
 - Parents need local information and resources to navigate health care prevention and treatment services and benefits where they live.
4. Indigenous health beliefs and practices: Coordinating with the U.S. health care system for optimal health.
 - Many families in the United States use home remedies and traditional healers together with the U.S. health care system.
 - Many indigenous health beliefs and home remedies have been used successfully for thousands of years and hold deep meaning for families.
 - It is important to go directly to a hospital when a child is injured, has a high or prolonged fever, is in pain, or has a major change in health. For other changes in health as well as regular check-ups, it is important to visit a medical clinic.
 - It is important to know which home remedies can be harmful. For example, some remedies used to treat *empacho* can cause lead poisoning.
 - Coordinating and integrating traditional indigenous and U.S. health systems tends to work best for families.



ACTIVITY 3: Foundations for Health





Message 3:

Activity 3: Foundations for Health

Health is the foundation...we need it to do everything.

— *Mixtec mother*

Activity:

1. Create healthy daily meal plans for one week. Be sure to discuss portion size in addition to food groups, healthy food preparation and safety, types of fats, and salt. Parents can adapt or create their own recipes using pictures from magazines or other sources. Discuss any specific cultural staples that are part of the family's diet.
2. Ask parents to share ways they enjoy exercising with their child.
3. Discuss child safety in the United States. What are car safety laws? How does the child protection system work? What resources are available to families if they become involved in the child welfare system?
4. Ask parents to talk about the traditional health care and home remedies they use. Create a list of traditional home remedies and their uses. These can be used to support pride in cultural knowledge and heritage. They can also be reviewed by a health care professional familiar with traditional medicine, who can advise if any remedies pose risks to families.
5. When do you use a hospital, medical clinic, or emergency room (ER) in the U.S.? Discuss barriers to the U.S. health care system and ways to address them.

Materials:

- Large piece of paper
- Colored stickers, pencils, erasers, markers, crayons, magazines, colored construction paper
- Paper glue sticks, rulers, scissors



Activity Resources

INTRODUCTION ICEBREAKER: Getting to Know Each Other

National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. Journeys of Hope and Courage: Using storytelling approaches to partner with families.

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/relationship/journeys-hope-courage.html>

ACTIVITY 1: We Have Strong Families and Communities

Center on Immigration and Child Welfare. Practitioner Resources.

<http://cimmcw.org/resources/practice/>

Head Start Locator. <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/HeadStartOffices>

Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Center Locator.

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/states/collaboration/locator.html>

Overview of Immigrant Eligibility for Federal Programs.

<http://www.nilc.org/overview-immeligfedprograms.html>

The National Association of Community Health Centers. <http://www.nachc.com/findahealthcenter.cfm>

ACTIVITY 2: Strong Roots and Bright Futures

Maya Heritage Community Project at Kennesaw State University.

<https://www.facebook.com/KSUMHCP/videos?fref=photo>

Maya Heritage Community Project at Kennesaw State University and National Pastoral Maya Network. Children of the Guatemalan Maya: A Handbook for Teachers.

<http://www.brycs.org/maya-toolkit/upload/maya-teachers-handbook.pdf>

Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP). Aprendiendo con Mama y Papa.

<http://miciudadoxnard.com/micop-organizacion-comunitaria-del-proyecto-mixteco-indigena/>

The Importance of Home Language Series. <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/home-language.html>

ACTIVITY 3: Foundations for Health

Healthy Development

Healthy, Active Living. <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/healthy-active-living>

Maya Health Toolkit for Medical Providers. <http://www.brycs.org/maya-toolkit/index.cfm>

Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP). Bebe Sano (Baby Wellness).

<http://mixtecoadvocate.org/ed/bebe-sano>

Raising Young Children in a New Country: Supporting Early Learning and Healthy Development and Family Well-Being Tip Sheets: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/refugee-families/refugee-families.html>.

Una Vida Sana. <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Espanol/salud/Health/docs/flip-chart-esp.pdf>

Child and family safety

Center on Immigration and Child Welfare. Practitioner Resources.

<http://cimmcw.org/resources/practice/>

On the Road to Social Transformation: Utilizing Cultural and Community Strengths to End Domestic Violence. http://www.dvalianza.org/images/stories/ResourcePubs/booklets_info/Cultural_competency.pdf

The National Domestic Violence Hotline. <http://espanol.thehotline.org/>



Traditional and U.S. health care systems

Abriendo Puertas / Opening Doors Curriculum. <http://ap-od.org/curriculum>

Center on Immigration and Child Welfare. Practitioner Resources (includes resources for families).
<http://cimmcw.org/resources/practice/>.

Effective Partnerships Guide: Improving Oral Health for Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Children and their Families. <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/states/collaboration/docs/effective-partnerships-guide-oral-health-mshs-v3.pdf>

Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Mental Health Services Checklist.
<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED536784.pdf>

Raising Young Children in a New Country: Supporting Early Learning and Healthy Development

English: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/fcp/docs/raising-young-children-in-a-new-country-bryc5.pdf>

Spanish: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Espanol/aprendizaje/nccdr-esp/docs/bryc5-handbook-spanish.pdf>

Family Well-Being Tips Sheets: Prenatal Care; Health; Hygiene; Oral Health; Nutrition; Bedtime
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/refugee-families/refugee-families.html>

Taking Charge of your Health (example from Minnesota).

<http://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/navigate-healthcare-system>

World Health Organization (WHO). Traditional Medicine: Definitions.

<http://www.who.int/medicines/areas/traditional/definitions/en/>



Additional Resources

KEY MESSAGE 1: Strong Families and Communities Promote the Well-Being of Children

Binational Center for the Development of Oaxacan Indigenous Communities.

<http://centrobinacional.org/2009/06/707/>

Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration for Children, Youth, and Families, Children's Bureau. (2015). 2015 Prevention Resource Guide: Making Meaningful Connections. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/guide.pdf>

Funds of Knowledge.

English: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/spring/funds-knowledge.html>.

Español: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Espanol/aprendizaje/ncclr-esp/fondos-conocimiento.html>.

Maya Heritage Community Project at Kennesaw State University.

<https://commons.kennesaw.edu/maya-project/welcome>

<https://www.facebook.com/KSUMHCP>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/MayaHeritage>

MICOP. Mixteco Culture and Communication.

<https://prezi.com/8psph7i0r-e8/mixteco-culture-and-communication-micop/>.

Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP). <http://mixteco.org/>

KEY MESSAGE 2: Maintaining Native Language and Cultural Traditions Benefits Children

AED Center for Early Care and Education. (2006). Bilingual Infant/Toddler Environments: Supporting Language & Learning In Our Youngest Children. A Guide for Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Programs. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED520113.pdf>

HHS/ACF/OHS. (2009, updated 2014). Ready for Success: Supporting Dual Language Learners (DLLs) in Head Start and Early Head Start. http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/Dual%20Language%20Learners/prof_dev/conferences/ReadyforSuccess.htm

OHS National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness (NCCLR). (2014).

Important to Know: Dual Language Learner Facts, Figures, and Findings.

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/fcp/docs/important-to-know.pdf>

KEY MESSAGE 3: Healthy Development is Vital for the Journey to Success

Abriendo Puertas / Opening Doors Curriculum. <http://ap-od.org/curriculum>

Effective Partnerships Guide: Improving Oral Health for Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Children and their Families. <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/states/collaboration/docs/effective-partnerships-guide-oral-health-mshs-v3.pdf>

Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Mental Health Services Checklist.

<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED536784.pdf>

Raising Young Children in a New Country: Supporting Early Learning and Healthy Development

English: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/fcp/docs/raising-young-children-in-a-new-country-bryc5.pdf>.

Spanish: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Espanol/aprendizaje/ncclr-esp/docs/brycs-handbook-spanish.pdf>

Family Well-Being Tips Sheets: Prenatal Care; Health; Hygiene; Oral Health; Nutrition; Bedtime

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/refugee-families/refugee-families.html>

Over the past twenty years, there has been an increase in speakers of indigenous languages among migrant families eligible for Early Head Start and Head Start (EHS/HS) and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) programs. Many of these indigenous immigrants are from southeastern Mexico and the Western Highlands of Guatemala. These families are from rich and accomplished cultures which have been in existence for thousand of years. These proud indigenous peoples have also been subjected to centuries of oppression and discrimination.

Many indigenous families have taken courageous and perilous journeys to the United States, fleeing poverty and violence in their home communities, in order to give their children better lives. They arrive with many strengths, including networks of support, relatively good health, and a desire for their children to succeed in school. However, over time in this country, separation from family and community members due to migration can result in decreased support and increased isolation and vulnerability. In addition, given the stress and poor working conditions of migrant labor, the health of indigenous migrants may decrease, rather than improve, over time in this country. The approach taken here builds on indigenous cultural strengths that promote health, early learning, and well-being over time and is based on the latest research literatures on health and migration, acculturation, early learning, dual language learners, funds of knowledge, and preservation of social networks and key cultural and language protections.

Please see the accompanying resources for serving indigenous families:

- The Mixtec, Zapotec, and Triqui Indigenous Peoples of Mexico
- The Mixtec, Zapotec, and Triqui Indigenous Peoples: Historical Timeline

These publications are available in Spanish and English.

This project is a partnership between the Office of Head Start (OHS) Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Collaboration Office, the OHS National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness, local MSHS programs, indigenous community leaders and organizations, and the indigenous families themselves.

This resource would not have been possible without the full engagement and expertise of the following partners:

- Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP) – www.mixteco.org
- Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County (CAPSLO) MSHS programs – www.capslo.org
- Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA) – www.rcma.org
- East Coast Migrant Head Start Project (ECMHSP) – www.ecmhsp.org

