

Beatriz, Lena, and the other Latino parents once again felt shoved aside. As they left the meeting, Lena turned to her mother and asked, "What about some kind of caring?"

Discussion Questions

Major Issues

The purpose of this case is for educators to consider divergent perspectives on children's development and family-school relations and how school and family cultures shape these views and practices. The case is designed to help educators understand the following:

- The relationships between schools and immigrant families
- The ways cultural beliefs and practices shape families' perceptions of child development and their subsequent school involvement
- The concerns of parents and other caregivers and their efforts to change school practice

Describing the Situation

- What are Maria and Rosa Hinojosa like?
- How does Beatriz Hinojosa view Maria and Rosa?
- How much personalized adult help and supervision does Beatriz believe a first grader needs? What is the principal's, Linda Chang's, perspective?
- What concerns do Beatriz, Lena, and the other first-grade bilingual parents have about the school? What strengths and assets do they bring to the situation?
- How does the spokesperson, Mary Ramos, frame the situation?
- Describe parent-based changes that have already emerged at Sunnysdale Elementary.
- What is the dilemma in this case?

Exploring Contributing Factors

- How and why might a family perspective of the lunchtime situation at Sunnysdale differ from the perspective of a principal responsible for an organization of more than 400 students?
- How do different cultural beliefs and practices, for example, about food and safety, relate to the situation?
- How does Beatriz's view of volunteering and family involvement in the school compare with the principal's view?
- What are Beatriz's underlying beliefs about professionalism versus caring? The principal's? How do these differences contribute to miscommunication in the case?

Articulating Possible Next Steps

- How might Beatriz and her two daughters become more involved in the school PTA? How might this engagement lead to the school becoming more responsive to diverse groups of students and caregivers? What impact might this have on Beatriz's lunchtime concerns?
- If a similar situation happened in your community, what kinds of organizations might help the Latino parents develop a strategy for changing school practices?
- How might the school support informal parent interactions and facilitate parent networking that has organically emerged?

Replaying the Case

- What strategies has the PTA tried to engage parents who are immigrants, non-English-speaking, and lower income that have not succeeded? What else might it do differently given practical constraints?
- Identify situations in the case where teachers and school staff were insensitive to family needs. How might the school better help teachers and school staff develop the attitudes, beliefs, and practices to build stronger

relationships with families?

- How might the principal have responded more appropriately to Beatriz's and other first-grade bilingual parents' concerns? Why was her suggestion of volunteering insensitive?

Looking at the Bigger Picture

- How much supervision does a first grader need?
- How might an administrator manage the organizational needs of a school while remaining responsive to individual family concerns?

Recommended Reading

- Delgado-Gaitan, C. (2001). *The power of community: Mobilizing for family and community*. Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Fine, M. (1993). [A]parent involvement: Reflections on parents' power and urban public schools. *Teachers College Record*, 94(4), 682–710.
- Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. (1978). *Worlds apart: Relationships between families and schools*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Thorne, B. (2005). Unpacking school lunch time: Contexts, interaction and the negotiation of differences. In C. R. Cooper, C. García Coll, T. Bartko, H. Davis, & C. Chapman (Eds.), *Developmental pathways through middle childhood: Rethinking contexts and diversity as resources* (pp. 63–87). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Warren, M. R., Hong, S., Rubin, C. L., & Uy, P. S. (2009). Beyond the bake sale: A community-based relational approach to parent engagement in schools. *Teachers College Record*, 111(9), 2209–2254.



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