



# Engaging All Families

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# Why engage parents in early education?

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- Research demonstrates that:
  - Parenting matters
  - Family involvement matters
- Children benefit academically when parents and educators work together
  - *(US Department of Education, PIRC report)*



# Tenets of Early Childhood Education

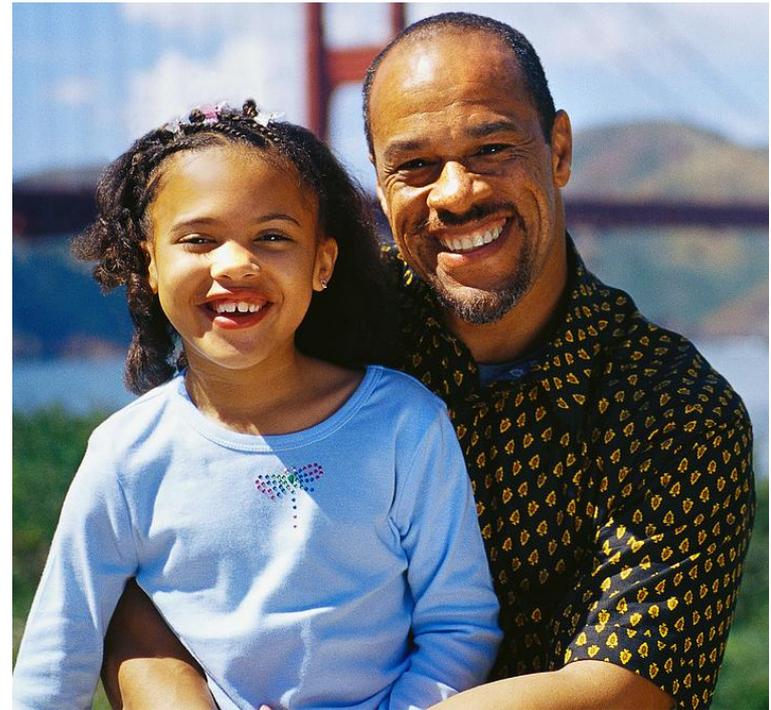
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- Educating the whole child
  - Cognitive, social/emotional and physical
  - Health
- Supporting the family
  - Social services
  - Parents as children's first teachers

# Changing Conceptualizations of Parents in Early Childhood Education

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- Involvement
- Education
- Engagement



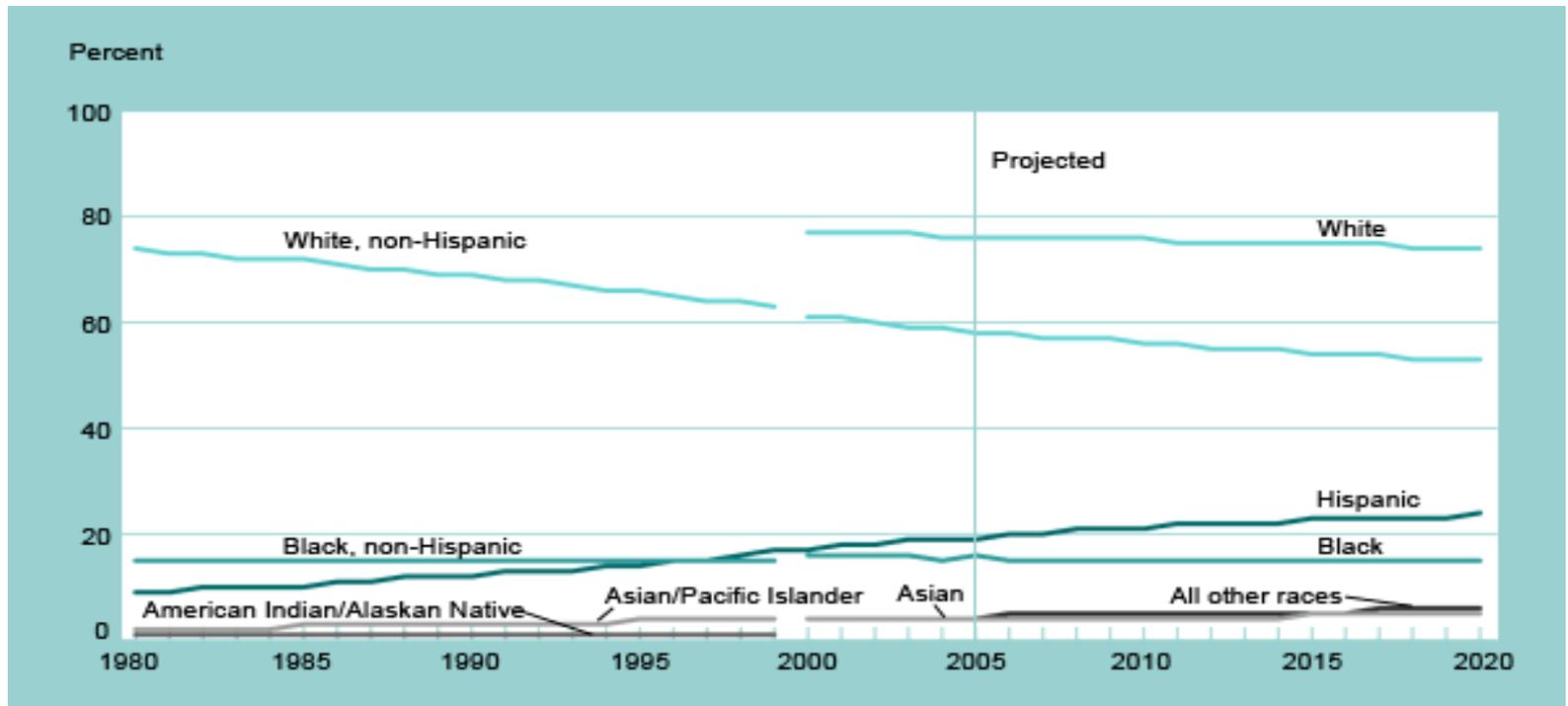
# Family Involvement Matters

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- For children of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- The most at-risk children and families benefit most



# Changing Demographics



Percentage of U.S. children ages 0–17 by race and Hispanic origin, 1980–2004 and projected 2005–2020  
(U.S. Census Bureau, [www.childstats.gov](http://www.childstats.gov))



# Emergent Majority Children

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- More likely to be poor
- Fewer likely to have stable medical care
- More likely to be behind in school
- ***Plagued by systemic failure to thrive***



# Assumptions Matter In Approach

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- Parents want what's best for their children.
- Parents know best what they need to be better parents.
- Parents learn best when they are involved in selecting the topics and activities they want to focus on.
- Given the proper information and resources, parents will make the best choices for their children.



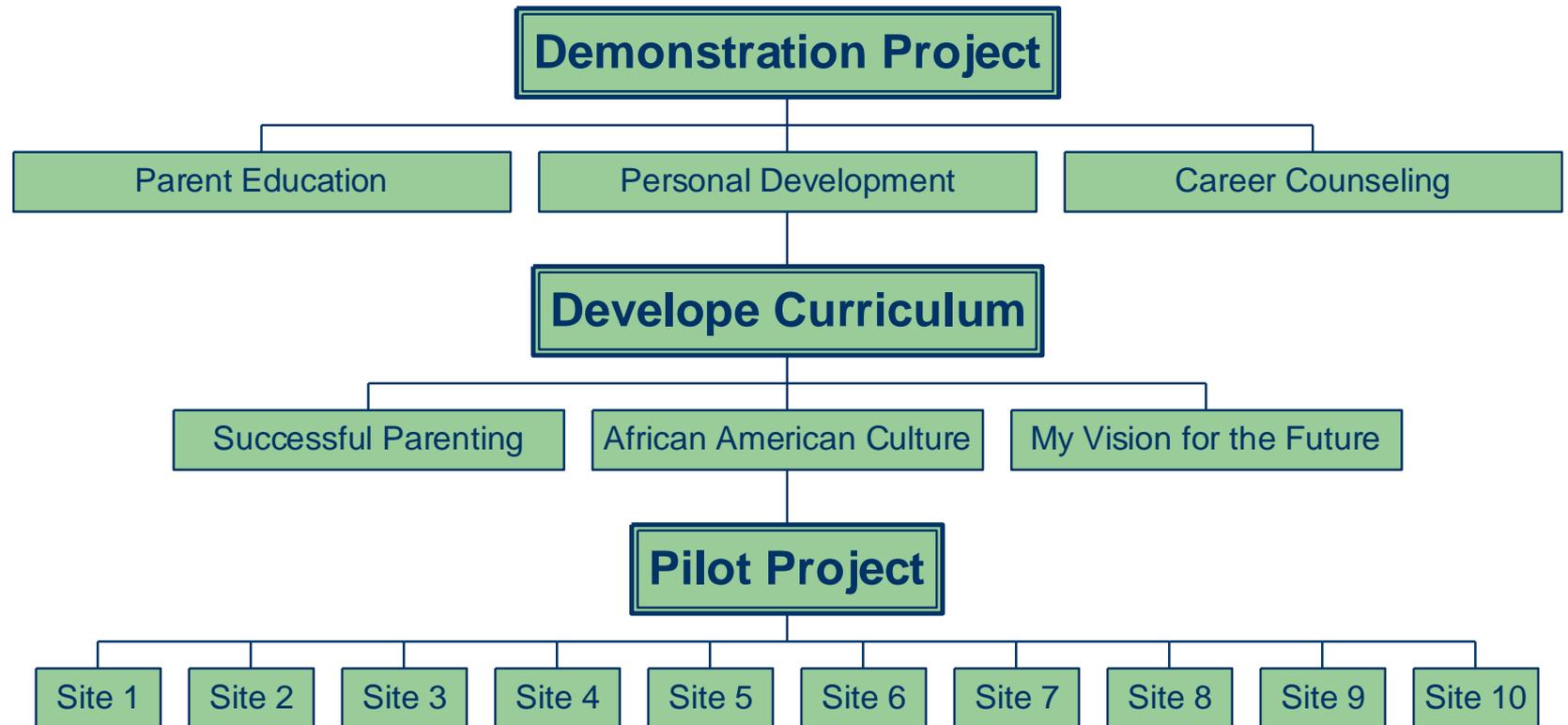
# Parent Empowerment Project - PEP

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- Active, parent-driven curriculum designed primarily for and by lower-income African-American parents
- Components that build on cultural strengths
  - Successful Parenting
  - African American Culture
  - Latino American Culture
  - My Vision for the Future

# Implementing PEP

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# PEP Pilot Project Sites

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- Audrey L. Smith CDC  
San Francisco, CA
- Hartford Elementary,  
Baltimore, MD
- Bedford Hills  
Correctional Facility,  
Bedford Hills, NY
- Pine Bluff Public  
Schools, Pine Bluff, AK
- Penn Center, USC,  
Beaufort, SC
- Gray's CDC,  
Milwaukee, WI
- Florida First  
Start, Cocoa, FL
- Cameo House, San  
Francisco, CA
- Tenderloin CDC, San  
Francisco, CA
- YMCA Garfield,  
Chicago, IL



# Principles of PEP

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- Focusing on building trusting collaborative relationships among teachers, families, and community members;
- Recognizing, respecting, and addressing families' needs and any class and cultural differences;
- Embracing a philosophy of partnership where power and responsibility are shared



# Outcomes of PEP

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- A respectful relationship within the parent group that is based on trust and caring.
- Changes in parenting behaviors that lead to appropriate cognitive development of children.
- A conscious awareness of parents' role as their child's first teacher.
- Positive behavior change in the way parents function with their children and within their families.

# Promising Practices

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- Many models have demonstrated strategies for successfully engaging culturally diverse parents



- Harlem Children's Zone
- Parent Involvement Resource Centers
- Incredible Years Parenting Program



# How do we know when programs are effective with diverse populations?

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- Community based programs have experienced a wide range of evaluation
- Need a “pipeline” to become fully evaluated
- Important to build upon community based programs with strong relationships with culturally specific communities

# Challenges Moving Forward

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- Systemic embrace of parent engagement



- Accountability for engaging diverse families

- Evaluation challenges for community-based programs



# Essential Recommendations

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- Support development and refinement of culturally specific and culturally sensitive parent engagement strategies
- Build an evaluation pipeline

