



*Beyond Words
Part II*



*Effective
Collaboration
& Teaming with
Cultural Mediators
&
Bilingual
School Liaisons*

**December 5,
2017**

Sponsored by: CDE
Exceptional Services Unit,
Preschool Special Education &
Child Find
www.puentes culturales.com

CULTURAL MEDIATORS CONNECT FAMILIES & EDUCATORS



Cultural Mediators connect families and educators, How?. By Understanding “the life ways” of each and everyone’s culture to then understand the perspectives and differences that are relevant to building successful engagement with family members during the process

Susan: Yes This matching of culture and language can build trust with the families who may not understand or know what to expect. Well prepared cultural mediators can build the trust with each team members and enhance the families feeling of welcome as well as their understanding of the process.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- **Understand** the importance and relevance of specific role and effective use of cultural mediator/cultural liaisons with culturally and linguistically diverse families in the Child Find process.
- **Apply** key knowledge and strategies that contribute to successful integration and collaboration of the cultural mediator/liaison as a key member of the team to enhance team function and effectiveness of services provided to each and every family.
- **Utilize** information to action plan how both cultural mediators/liaisons and team members can enhance team function and knowledge of evidence based culturally responsive practices through team building activities and experiences.



Let's take a moment to review and understand our learning outcomes for today. Let's read these together and please feel free to ask questions as we review this information.

- Understand the importance and relevance of specific role and effective use of cultural mediator/cultural liaisons with culturally and linguistically diverse families in the Child Find process.
- Apply key knowledge and strategies that contribute to successful integration and collaboration of the cultural mediator/liaison as a key member of the team to enhance team function and effectiveness of services provided to each and every family.
- Utilize information to action plan how both cultural mediators/liaisons and team members can enhance team function and knowledge of evidence based culturally responsive practices through team building activities and experiences.

UNDERSTAND CULTURE & ENHANCE COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES



www.somaliamerican.org

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Understand Culture and enhance communication with families,,,Omar is a Cultural Mediator an di n with several years of experience with different agencies and systems in the U.S He will share with us his cultural perspective regarding services for families who may be recent immigrants from Somali were he also come from.... He is currently working with the Somali population in the school district working with students and their families. Lets listen to Omar, Think about what you have heard and why students and families from this specific culture benefit from having a cultural guide as they learn to navigate Child Find services and supports.



Increase understanding when cultural conflicts....Listening to Omar can give us a more in-depth perspective of why it is so important to learn from Cultural Mediators / Liaisons as they understand and discover and relate to the past experiences of the student and family, and how the concerns about the educational and emotional well being of the student needs to be addressed. This information is critical to us as a team members... to understand and consider how best to proceed to build the relationship that can support culturally responsive interactions with the family and also the success for this student.

Ask...As a team do you or can you take the time to learn about the culture of the family from your Cultural Mediators?

Where in your process is the opportunity to explore learning from the cultures of all the team members as a foundation for understanding of diversity? Share in the microphone your thoughts.

Do you all agree confidentiality is necessary to talk about these topics among all the team members?.....

CREATING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

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As we continue with this webinar to see how we can build positive relationship, because THAT is what it is all about.... let's listen to another perspective from Lisa that focuses on socio-cultural and historical perspectives and can help us look at the positive relationship we can have with all our families.

In this situation, there was not actually a linguistic difference per say but the point that culture and language are intertwined when this parent notes in was not an accepted practice to advocate for your child ...actually you listened to the teachers as expert. African American families would also would agree that the historical racism and prejudice against their culture and life ways continues to exist in many settings stemming from the history of forced segregation in our schools and unequal treatment and opportunity for their children this then has become an issue of trust ... The same can be said of many Hispanic Latinos who have come to this country and suffered from lost opportunities and discrimination. Rather than assimilation, we now focus on acculturation that would imply honoring and respecting the backgrounds, prior experiences, traditions, values and life ways of each and every child and family...including many families who choose to maintain the growth and development of the first language in their home, their cultural life ways as well as learn English so their children can thrive in school and succeed . We now know this is inextricably tied to formation of self identity and self worth and prevents marginalization or being caught between two cultures. We know many families in the past who have rejected their backgrounds thinking only English is the way to proceed The benefits of bilingualism have been documented in terms of educational,

economic, and social-emotional development... we now know children who learn two or more languages can experience cognitive advantages that help them learn English or a second language more completely. So a parallel process exists underlying success for our DLLS and families need this information to make informed decisions about what language their children will learn as well as what cultural traditions and life ways will be maintained impacting young children's identity formation.

Susan this information you just share it is so important for every one in the team to know it and share it with the family. Cultural mediator. School liaison as part of the team need to know this information as they will have many opportunities to use this information with the families in different stages during the process.



Connect and support.....This is especially true for first generation Americans from immigrant families and we can see in this video how the cultural mediator facilitated the communication with school personnel to help both the family and teachers work with a cultural mediator/school Liasion to ease the path .

CULTURAL MEDIATOR/LIAISONS

Connecting in a cross cultural context...

“A Cultural mediator can help establish the emotional connections. Go beyond the cultural differences to see the human beings we really are.”

Alba Niño

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Cultural mediators/School Liaisons connect in a cross-cultural context..... Alba Niño a therapist from Brazil looks at it this way..... Read what she says..... Connecting in a cross cultural context...

“A Cultural mediator can help establish the emotional connections. Go beyond the cultural differences to see the human beings we really are.”

What do you think?...Do you agree with her?.....

PENDULUM

“Cultural Mediators can become the pendulum between two entities (e.g. Family & CF Team) working together in any educational setting...”

Clara Pérez-Méndez



As Clara Perez-Mendez , this is how I have seeing my self as a Cultural Mediator What I am saying is that as a cultural mediaor you move constantly in the motion of a Pendulum ...maintaining the balance of what is needed and that involves moving from one side to another..... Always lisening, in the middle, and listening to both families and teams ... So that positive communication and outcomes for both can be meet

“SEEK FIRST TO UNDERSTAND”... ANCHORED UNDESTANDING...

AS A
TEAM
MEMBER

CULTURE

RESPECT,
RECIPROCIT
Y &
RESPONSIVN
ES

FLEXIBILIT
Y

Going to the THIRD
SPACE



Recommended Reading : Barrera et al., 2012, *Skilled Dialogue* 2nd ED.
www.amazon.com/Isaura-Barrera

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Isaura Barrera and colleagues have written many times about the basic principles of “skilled dialogue”. The focus is on the key skills of respect, reciprocity and responsiveness and the flexibility it takes to not get stuck in dual response of “this way or that way” “my way or the highway” as the only solutions...there are always other solutions to a dilemma ... they would focus on the key of making meaning regardless of differences in perspectives... to discuss all perspectives and use solution focused thinking to look at all alternatives and create options. This disposition is essential to choosing relationship over control in decision making as a team...

A CULTURAL MEDIATOR CAN HELP....

FAMILIES

- Engage in the process
- Be more comfortable
- Gather & share critical information with the team
- Clarify expectations about the process
- Listen to be sure families needs are met



TEAM SPECIALISTS

- Learn about unique cultural aspects of the individual family
- Cultural perspectives that might influence interpretation of child /family observations
- Gather authentic information
- Transfer emotional connection (trust and respect) for the whole team

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Cultural Mediators can help families as well as Team Specialists

Families

Engage in the process

Be more comfortable

Gather & share critical information with the team

Clarify expectations about the process

Listen to be sure families needs are met

Specialists

Learn about unique cultural aspects of the individual family

Cultural perspectives that might influence interpretation of child /family observations

Gather authentic information

Transfer emotional connection (trust and respect) for the whole team

Consider Characteristics of High Performing Teams...

- Relationship & Reciprocity
- 4 C's
 - Collaboration,
 - Culturally Responsive,
 - Communication and
 - Compassion
- Trust & Respect
- Empathy, Caring & Patience
- Knowledge & Expertise in a Cultural context
- Reflective Practice



Let's take a moment to reflect on what makes a team productive, efficient, and effective....

Reflection is key as you grow your team.

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- Knowledge & Expertise in a Cultural context
- Reflective Practice

Team members have common goals, yet often may have same or different philosophies, approaches and sometimes

Differences in opinions and perspectives but as said the teams consistent elevating goal is focused on what is best for the child and family... An effective team develops and recognizes these attributes and becomes "a culture unto itself!" Think about your own teams journey ... You most likely readily recognize the above characteristics as strengths in your team

Expertise, openness to new ideas, positive solution focused thinking , basic listening to one another's perspectives, transparency, and leaning from each other are traits of a high performing team... if you want a parent and/or family member to join you team in a successful family centered relationship, you need to understand that family and a well prepared and experienced cultural mediator/ liaison functioning as a team member to help all team members accomplish this goal.

TEAMING DEMANDS COLLABORATION



As we said before, teaming means ALL of us collaborating together for one common goal.. The child and the family. In this picture the team professionals are briefing with a cultural mediator to learn more about the family as they plan for an appropriate assessment.

<h3 style="text-align: center;">Key Messages</h3> <p>Cultural Mediators/Liaison need to be an integral member of the team....</p> <p><i>What can this look like?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ First connector with families, especially when linguistic differences ■ Information gatherer for the team with family to learn about life ways, clarify expectations, and language environment and prior experiences and expectations. ■ Share insights and background information about the family with the team and about the process and system with the family ■ Welcome and interpret for the families and also for the team ■ Understands and communicates both family and team perspectives. 	<p><i>Can You Visualize A Cultural Mediator in this Role?</i></p> <p style="font-size: small;">15</p>
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Here are some key messages to use with cultural mediators regarding expectations for the cultural mediator as a team member . I am going to read them and you give a thumbs up or thumbs down. Do you agree?...

Key Messages

Cultural Mediators/Liaison need to be an integral member of the team....

What can this look like?

- First connector with families, especially when linguistic differences
- Information gatherer for the team with family to learn about life ways, clarify expectations, and language environment and prior experiences and expectations.
- Share insights and background information about the family with the team and about the process and system with the family
- Welcome and interpret for the families and also for the team
- Understands and communicates both family and team perspectives.

What else...

- Explain information in a culturally relevant way
 - Be accessible for last minute changes by checking in with family prior or after the assessment
 - “Connector of next steps”
 - Interpret for the child and collect language data during assessment.
 - What else?
- *Feel free to use the chat box or your microphone to tell us about your experiences*

*Can You
Visualize
A Cultural
Mediator
in this
Role?*

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Can You Visualize A Cultural Mediator in this Role?

Explain information in a culturally relevant way

Be accessible for last minute changes by checking in with family prior or after the assessment

“Connector of next steps”

Interpret for the child and collect language data during assessment.

What else?

How to Grow a Cultural Mediator/Liaison

How to begin...

- Find a well prepared, competent bilingual, bicultural, bi-literate, interpreter (e.g. community member, veteran parent), who is;
- A native speaker of the targeted language
- Committed to “giving back” and helping families

*IT TAKES
TIME !*

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You have used interpreters in the process, BUT How can you grow them to be your team Cultural Mediator/Liaison?.... You need to know/understand that it takes time! For the many reasons we have been taking here about

How to begin...

Find a well prepared, competent bilingual, bicultural, bi-literate, interpreter (e.g. community member, veteran parent), who is;

A native speaker of the targeted language

Committed to “giving back” and helping families

Continuing to Grow Your Own!

- Over time, cultivate your cultural mediator to be part of your team with administrative support
- Collaborate with your district ESL team to cross pollinate
- Introduce expectations of the role ...common terms...the process... the importance of family comfort and engagement...

*IT
TAKES
TIME !*

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We have seen several districts who have begun the establishment of this type of collaboration and continue to work on it successfully to understand serve the children and families who may be new to this country or district.

Continuing to Grow Your Own!

Over time, cultivate your cultural mediator to be part of your team with administrative support

Collaborate with your district ESL team to cross pollinate

Introduce expectations of the role ...common terms...the process... the importance of family comfort and engagement

- Emphasize and require the key element of confidentiality
- Consider and shape positive interpersonal skills
- Allow observation and participation in team meetings
- Mine their knowledge of cultural identity and uniqueness of each family considering processes of acculturation and assimilation
- Provide information of tools and resources for them to share with families

*WHAT
ELSE IS
NEEDED?*

?

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As a cultural mediator who worked for many years with a Child Find team , I have seen this happen.

Emphasize and require the key element of confidentiality

Consider and shape positive interpersonal skills

Allow observation and participation in team meetings

Mine their knowledge of cultural identity and uniqueness of each family considering processes of acculturation and assimilation

Provide information of tools and resources for them to share with families

- The creation and nurturing of a “relationship of reciprocity, mutual respect and trust to create opportunities for growth in their role as “a bridge”, “connector,” “pendulum” and “equal team partner” on your team.

RESULT

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Read this,,,,,, The creation and nurturing of a “relationship of reciprocity, mutual respect and trust to create opportunities for growth in their role as “a bridge”, “connector,” “pendulum” and “equal team partner” on your team and when this becomes a reciprocal value among all the team members you will enjoy the results to have and equal team partnership on your team to better understand and meet the needs of families and the children you serve.



Let's discuss some challenges in the process of developing this team partnership.



We will review these scenarios and look at the role of the Cultural Mediator /liaison.
A parent asks you for your personal opinion. As a Cultural mediator who are you representing ?

The cultural mediators religious beliefs interferes with building trust with the family

You find the team is feeling the parent is only talking to the cultural mediator and are not using him or her to interpret to others on the team

Culturally based perspectives interfere with team function "I think that regardless of culture this mother should introduce cup drinking if this child will be in preschool"

A PARENT ASKS YOU...

During an IEP meeting, a parent asks the cultural mediator for their personal opinion on how much time they think speech language therapy is needed for his or her or if the child should receive more than the amount recommended?.

Lets think together...

Who is the cultural mediator representing ?

How do you handle this situation?

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A parent ask you.....

During an IEP meeting, a parent asks the cultural mediator for their personal opinion on how much time they think speech language therapy is needed for his or her or if the child should receive more than the amount recommended?.

Lets think together...

Who is the cultural mediator representing ?

How do you handle this situation?

How can the cultural mediator explain their role as a team member and turn this question back to the parents and involve other team members in answering this question.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

- This issue speaks to a cultural mediator who is not well prepared in their role to understand that religious beliefs are not to be used to present barriers to the family. This is clearly outside the boundary that cultural mediators should address when talking with family members. The families cultural and religious beliefs are deemed worthy of respect. Respect for another's beliefs or life ways do not mean you necessarily agree but you do not judge. This may be difficult for anyone who does not consider a families actions to follow accepted paths but it means we all need to first seek to understand without judgement unless safety is an issue.

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what you would do?.....

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How can the cultural mediator explain their role

IS THE CULTURAL MEDIATOR/LIAISON INTERPRETING BACK TO THE TEAM?

- You find the team is feeling the parent is only talking to the cultural mediator and are not using him/her to interpret to others on the team
- How can you avoid this situation from happening?
- Preparation of the cultural mediator to explain their role to the parent/family ...they not only interpret for the team to the parent but they need to interpret for the parent back to the team...and they are relying on the team to address any questions from the family as well as share information about their child.
- At time it may be important to ask the cultural mediator to relate what the parent has just said for all the team/team member to understand while looking at the parent and establishing a connection.

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This returns us to the role of a competent interpreter and strategies to insure accurate and consistent sharing of information with the family as it is not the cultural mediator

You find the team is feeling the parent is only talking to the cultural mediator and are not using him/her to interpret to others on the team

How can you avoid this situation from happening?

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At time it may be important to ask the cultural mediator to relate what the parent has just said for all the team/team member to understand while looking at the parent and establishing a connection.

when acting as an interpreter , during assessment, conferences or IEPs. It is not within the role definition for the CM/Liaison to assume to answer questions from the family about the information shared or specifically providing opinions about what the team is sharing.

If this is occurring then the team may need to work on its process and continue to reestablish guidelines for interactions and in some cases trust the CM is providing explanations to help the family understand what is being said or reassuring the parent but patterns of interactions need to be debriefed and discussed so all are comfortable with the interactions.

CULTURAL CONFLICTS/DILEMMAS

Culturally based perspectives interfere with team function “I think that” regardless of culture this mother should introduce cup drinking if this child will be in preschool

Lets think together how to handle this dilemma...

Why is this perspective being discussed ? What needs to be discussed when addressing this issue ? What information do both the family and this team member need?

How do you facilitate this discussion?

Preparation is Key! Go to the “Third Space...”

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In the case of a Cultural Conflict or dilemmaWhat do you think ?... Is this an opinion or a evidence-based practice that needs to be followed for every child to enter preschool? Culturally based perspectives interfere with team function “I think that” regardless of culture this mother should introduce cup drinking if this child will be in preschool

Lets think together how to handle this dilemma...

Why is this perspective being discussed ? What needs to be discussed when addressing this issue ? What information do both the family and this team member need?

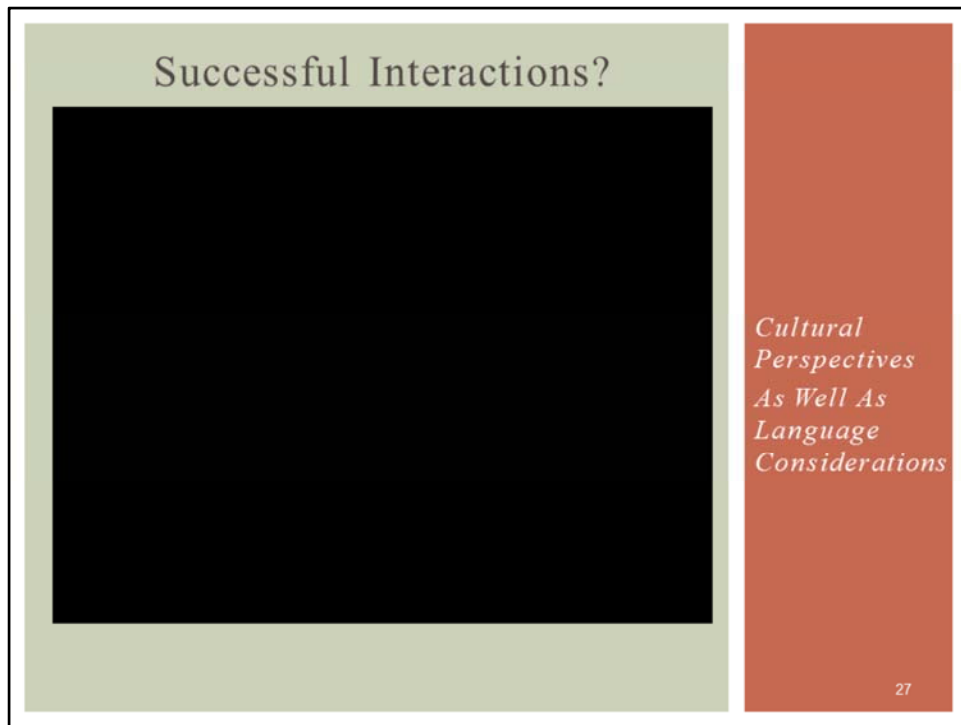
How do you facilitate this discussion?

Is their only one way to resolve this issue?

It is important for all on the team to share their perspective for transparency to the family even if a conflict or difference in perspectives...It is also necessary to address issues and beliefs with respect.

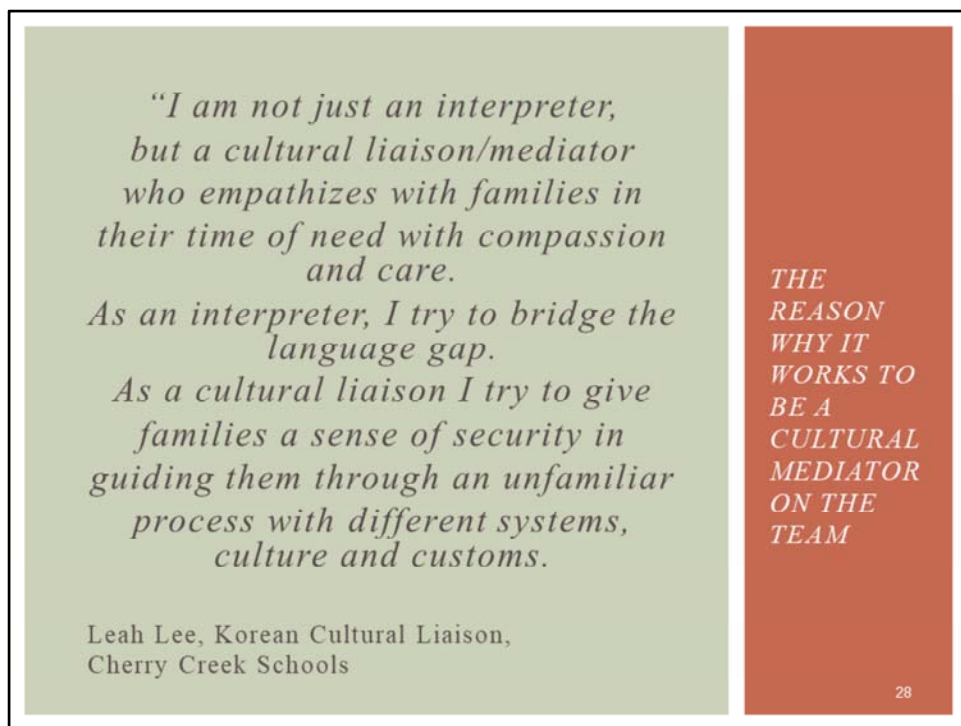
I don't know... in some cultures three year olds not drinking from a cup is totally okay developmentally and also in some cultures children are potty trained before two. How could we handle this dilemma

In positive way so they parents understands and feels they are not at fault in the way they bring up their children or that the child has a problem



Here we have Rhonda, a parent and Cultural Mediator telling us her story. Lets listen to her.....

As Rhonda reminds us we may have families who are unfamiliar with the special education system and we cannot assume that they understand the benefits and supports that are available when first introduced to the concept. Many family may also have personal prior experiences with the edcuational system or other system that raise questions in their mind about what is really meant bu a special education referral. The socio-cultural and historical or past experiences may influence their acceptance of these referrals. If we want to engage parents and family members in full partipcation in the process we need to build a system that takes these factors of influence into account. It more that language that might present barriers that need to be addressed. The use of Cultural mediators/school liaisons can in many instances faciliate this process



It works, and Leah Lee a Korean School liaison from Cherry Creek was very kind to share with us the reason way it works!

*"I am not just an interpreter,
but a cultural liaison/mediator
who empathizes with families in
their time of need with compassion and care.
As an interpreter, I try to bridge the language gap.
As a cultural liaison I try to give
families a sense of security in
guiding them through an unfamiliar
process with different systems, culture and customs.*

Leah has being and Interpreter/Korean Liason to the distric for more then 10 years at Cherry Creek, But the Child Find team has made the change to TEAM Together to be one team as they present thier selfs to the families.



What do all you think? It is a responsibility of every one in the team to know about community resources for the families we serve?....
Here are some ideas and recommendations available in the metro area and how to look out of the “roof” of the school system.



THANK YOU

Thank you for joining us and for your participation... Be sure to complete your feedback about this webinar. The url link will be sent to you by CDE.

NOTE: Visit www.puentes culturales.com for handouts, additional information and resources!

Clara & Susan

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We want to thank you for your interest in this webinar series and hope you will share with others webinar I, Effective use of interpreters is already available on the CDE website and this webinar II, expanding the use of interpreters and discussing the benefits of developing a cultural mediators/liaisons as a team members can add value to all you do with families you serve, who may be new to your districts and are culturally and linguistically diverse .