

◆Additional Parenting Tasks for Families of Color◆

Although all families serve similar functions for their children, families of color often face additional burdens and tasks in ensuring that their children grow up to be healthy and productive citizens:

.They often must not only impart the values and beliefs of their culture, but also ensure that their children are familiar and comfortable with the values of mainstream United States--which may be contradictory to some of their own beliefs and practices. Thus, they have the burden of training their children to function in at least two cultures.

.They must find mechanisms to ensure that their children develop positive personal and group identities in a society in which their group is often viewed as inferior and subject to racism and discrimination. The negative images and constant messages of inferiority are reinforced by the key education/information institutions in United States society such as the schools and the media.

.In many urban areas, families must struggle to keep their children protected and safe in environments that are extremely violent and where those who enforce the laws view every child of color a suspect rather than someone to be protected.

.Many more families of color must struggle in near poverty conditions--even when family members work full-time.

.Many families of color must deal with the impact that lack of employment, substance abuse, and incarceration have on males in their culture.

.Families of color must work to instill hope and future aspirations in their children when everyone else has limited to no expectations for their futures.

.Adaptations in the family structures, due to migration and other changing socioeconomic conditions, are resulting in more different types of families that are fragile and without recognition. For example, in African American and Hispanic communities, there are grandmother-headed households (due to drugs, HIV/AIDS, and incarceration levels.) In Asian and Hispanic immigrant families, there are peer-to-peer households (due to immigration decisions, war-related deaths and disabilities, relocation policies, etc.).

Source: *Cultural Competence Train-the-Trainer Manual*, Pennsylvania CASSP Training and Technical Assistance Institute, 1995.