Partnerships Families and Communities in Early Childhood (Canadian) 6th edition Wilson Solutions Manual

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Chapter 1
The Changing Face of Canadian Families

Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, the student will be able to

1. describe families in today's society

2. identify various factors affecting families in Canada today

Suggestions for Classroom Activities

In order for students to understand and work effectively with families, it is important that they understand their own family unit within the context of their own culture and their local and global community, and how this will affect their interactions with others.

1. At the beginning or end of the first class, read one of the many children's books on family life (see suggestions from this text). Discuss whether or not all family types are included in the book. Ask students to describe their experiences regarding representation of their family in books and in the media.

2. Collect a variety of children's books that represent families. Give several books to small groups and have them analyze the collection for biases. Which families are not included in the sample books? Are there books about families that deal with difficult issues such as unemployment, mental illness, poverty, incarceration, homelessness etc.? Save books on particular topics to be introduced as they arise; for example, a collection of children's books on divorce, separation, and/or blended families to be introduced when covering Chapter 9. Students will then have an opportunity to see that there are many books to provide support for difficult issues faced by families with whom they will be working. Parent Books at **https://www.parentbooks.ca** has an exceptional collection of books on a wide range of topics.

3. Encourage students to begin their own collection of books on families. These books can then be loaned to families or caregivers when the need arises. These books will become part of the graduate student's personal library.

4. Encourage students to bring to class any new children's books on topics raised in the course to be shared with their peers at the beginning of class.

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5. In their teams, have students create a dictionary definition of the word *family*. Read definitions from a range of sources to the group. Which definition is most inclusive? Together, have the group write the definition on which most agree.

6. In their teams, have students use mind maps to create a picture of the traits and characteristics of a healthy family unit followed by a list of words to describe the picture. In the centre of a large piece of blank chart paper, write the words *Healthy Family*. Students should draw a picture that represents a healthy family and then list words to describe their picture. Students can then share their mind maps with other groups. Once this is done, students may consider the factors that influence a family's ability to be effective in their roles as parents.

7. Create graffiti charts by placing Robert Frost's quote, "Home is a place where, when you go there, they have to let you in" in the centre of a piece of chart paper. In their teams, students write their thoughts about this quote freely on the paper. They then exchange their paper with another team. The second group, using a different coloured marker, clusters similar comments together. Each team can then record comments on the blackboard for further discussion.

8. Have students think about their own family and how it has changed in the last few generations. Students can have a few minutes on their own to think about their possible responses to the following questions. They can then pair up with another student and share answers. Think, pair, share!

   If their family is new to Canada:

   - What factors influenced them to leave their home country?
   - What challenges did they and their parents/grandparents face?
   - With whom did they socialize once they arrived?
   - Did they come from an urban or rural environment and how did that affect where they settled?
   - Were they able to secure employment in the occupation in which they were trained/educated?
   - What were the economic implications of the move?
   - How was the adjustment period different for the female and male members of the family?

   For all families:

   - How were boys and girls treated in the family unit?
   - How have they been influenced by their parents/grandparents experiences?
   - How have the roles of mothers and fathers changed in their family?
   - Have roles and responsibilities evolved with changes in the family/children's ages and stages etc.?

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9. Place chart paper around the room. Halve the sheets by drawing a line down the centre. At the top of one side write the word *Mother* and on the other, *Father*. Under the appropriate heading, write one of the following jobs: household tasks, care-giving, behaviour guidance, decision making, etc. Have the students rotate around the room listing who completes these tasks in their home. Ask students to be specific. For example, under *Mother,* a student might write "bathing the children, feeding the children" and under *Father* she might write "stories before bed." Compare and discuss.

10. Have students create a colour portrait of significant others who have influenced their lives. Have students agree upon the colour selections in advance of the exercise. Have the students draw a figure of themselves in the centre of a blank piece of paper. Have students cut out one square of red for each person in their life who they feel are most important and have had the greatest influence on their lives, both positive and negative. Write the names of those people on the red squares. Have students place the red squares on the paper with those most important placed closest to their own bodies. Use a set of yellow triangles with names for those people who influence the student but not as strongly as those named on the red squares. Place these in the appropriate position on the paper. Cut out green circles for those who are important but not as important as the yellow or red shapes. Once the exercise is complete and the shapes have been placed, have the students review each shape, placing a + sign for those who have been positive influences and a – sign for those who have not. Have students total the number of + and – signs. Discuss how the number of + and – may have affected their self-esteem. Were there any teachers on their squares? If so, what made them positive or negative influences? What type of significant other do students want to be in the lives of the children with whom they will be working? Another strategy could be to have students draw a small circle in the centre of a piece of paper and write their name in the centre. They then draw three circles around the outside of the first circle for strong, not as strong, and least important influences. They can then write in the names of people in the appropriate circle and then follow the + and – instructions.

11. Have students brainstorm their beliefs about families by creating their own Personal Belief Inventory (see below). Students can then discuss their list with other members of their team. They can look for similar or dissimilar responses and discuss.

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Personal Belief Inventory

Name:_____ Group:_____

Complete your own Personal Belief Inventory by completing the following ten sentences.

Example:
I believe families ...
I believe families are the most important influence in shaping a child.

1. **I believe families ...**

2. **I believe families ...**

3. **I believe families ...**

4. **I believe families ...**

5. **I believe families ...**

6. **I believe families ...**

7. **I believe families ...**

8. **I believe families ...**

9. **I believe families ...**

10. **I believe families ...**

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12. Identify and discuss possible biases toward family structures. Once the following My Comfort/Experience/Exposure Profile is completed, have students discuss in their teams. Collect these responses from students and keep them, in confidence. At the end of the course, give out a new form and have the students complete it again. Return their form from the beginning of the year. Has the course made a difference in the responses? Discuss.

My Comfort/Experience/Exposure Profile

Name:_____ Group:_____

Beside each of the following family types, indicate your level of comfort and experience/exposure.
1 indicates comfortable/lots of experience/exposure
2 indicates some comfort/some experience/exposure
3 indicates lack of comfort/little or no experience/exposure

Family Type	Comfort Level	Experience/Exposure
Native families	_____	_____
Teen families	_____	_____
Multiracial families	_____	_____
Older-parent families	_____	_____
Grandparents raising grandchildren	_____	_____
Foster families	_____	_____
Adoptive families	_____	_____
Gay and lesbian families	_____	_____
Separated, divorced, or joint custody families	_____	_____
Lone-parent families	_____	_____
Blended families	_____	_____
Immigrant families	_____	_____
Refugee families	_____	_____

Using the above information and an Excel graphing program, enter the statistical information for the whole class. Copy this information in a PowerPoint presentation and bring the graph to the next class to demonstrate the students' comfort level and experience with each of the family types. This visual means of representing the students' information gives the teacher insight into where more emphasis needs to be placed in the development of the course material. It also provides students with insight into where they need to focus their attention during the course.

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13. What values or attitudes may impede a student's ability to build strong family–teacher relationships? Have students write a value statement about a family that might make a strong relationship with those families a challenge. Have each student crumple up the paper and throw it into the middle of the room. Mix the papers up. In turn, have each student select a paper and read the comment. Comments can be categorized; note which family type presents the greatest number of value statements etc. Students can then discuss ways of being nonjudgmental, suspending judgment until they know the family etc. These suggestions can be recorded and posted in the room.

14. As a class, create a list of advantages and disadvantages of having children in today's society. How do students feel about couples or singles who have made a conscious decision not to have children? How do they feel about single women who decide that they want to parent a child/children without a partner? What cultural influences are at work in these decisions?

15. In a large group, have students share traditions that were common in their families. Consider remedies for illness, food served at celebrations, and how weddings, funerals, coming of age, holidays are celebrated, etc. To expand on this idea, students can be asked to bring in a photo or object that reflects celebrations in their families to be shared in the larger group. Look for similarities across cultures.

16. Have students create a story bag. On the outside of a brown paper bag, have students attach objects or pictures that depict information about their family. Inside, place objects or pictures that the other students do not know about their family. Students can share their story bags with each other in their teams and decide which of the items inside the bag they wish to share, if at all. An alternative to the story bag is for each student to create a shadow box that reflects their family; post these boxes around the room.

17. Students could also create flash cards with the words *wedding, funerals, holidays, birthdays* etc.; use one set for each group in the class. Turn the cards over, then students pick a card and share a story with their team about how each of these events is marked in their family.

18. The preparing of tea is a common practice among many cultures, yet each is unique. Faculty and students may organize a tea party together. Each student could bring in materials that reflect how tea is prepared in his or her home. Students may also bring in some type of food that often accompanies the tea ceremony. Students then can share with each other how tea is prepared, served, and consumed. Reflect on how sharing food/tea provides an opportunity for people to come together and how this might be implemented in early childhood environments.

19. Using Bronfenbrenner's Human Ecology System, label four pieces of chart paper

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with the four systems—*microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem,* and *macrosystem*—and its corresponding definition. Give students a playing card as they enter the room. Have all the students who receive a card with hearts go to the microsystem chart, spades to mesosystem etc. At each chart, have the students record all of the influences that they can think of for their system. Have students rotate to all four charts, adding only new information as they rotate. Come back to the larger group and discuss the influence of each system on the family unit.

20. Religious diversity is increasing in Canada while connection to formal religions is declining. Discuss how religion impacts the family. Have students share their experiences and have them bring in religious symbols that represent their religious beliefs. Discuss how religious practices might affect their work with families.

21. How has work for both men and women changed over time? What impact has this had on the family unit? Have students share their personal stories.

22. Invite a Human Resource person who represents a progressive company in your community come to class and discuss how that organization is dealing with challenges facing families trying to balance their work and family responsibilities.

23. Discuss stress with the students. Have them draw a picture of themselves in the centre of a page and around that write the factors that create stress for them in their lives. Contrast the results of students in the class who are raising children and those who are not. What are the common factors among all the students? How might classmates support each other to reduce stress? How might an early learning environment help to reduce stress for families? What stressors might also be present for these same families (e.g., cost of child care, not able to place two of their children in the same early learning environment, differing philosophies, etc.)?

24. Have students discuss how poverty is affecting their community. What resources are available to support families affected by poverty? What actions are being taken in their community by local government, school boards, child-care centres etc. (e.g., breakfast programs, food banks, shelters, or hostels). Students could create a list of possible resources from this research that could to be posted on their bulletin board in field placement with the permission of the supervisor.

25. Have students examine how the feminist movement has impacted on the changing roles of men and women. Invite a professor who teaches a course on feminist thought to speak to the students.

26. Invite a stay-at-home dad or a father on paternity leave to class and discuss how his decision to stay home has affected his family, attitudes of friends, his work,

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etc.

27. Ask students to bring in examples of popular music that represent issues in family relationships. Have students share examples, choose one from each team, play, and discuss in the larger group. What insights does the music provoke?

28. Examine a range of children's music and discuss the issues that arise in this artistic form in relationship to the family (e.g., songs about sleep —an issue for many working families who are trying to balance their work and family life).

29. Students could research proverbs or sayings that relate to families such as the Chinese saying, "That if you know the family, you do not need to know the individual"; the Jewish adage, "God could not be everywhere and therefore he made mothers"; the Africa saying, "A person who has children does not die"; and the North American belief that "The apple does not fall far from the tree," etc.

30. Explore how culture and family roles impact behaviour; for example, in some Asian families, children may see their father served first at meals and receive nods and deep bows from other family members. A Chinese saying is "Strict father, kind mother." In Mexico and Spain, women as mothers belong to the City of God, set apart in protecting the home. Motherhood is a sacred value in Mexico. One Mexican saying is that "The house does not rest upon the ground but upon a woman. Discuss.

31. The following summary of a questionnaire answered by 24 ECE teachers indicates that working with families is one of the more challenging aspects of their work. Have students identify three of the following comments that have the most impact on them and discuss in their team.

What were your biggest concerns or worries about families when you first graduated?

- I wouldn't be able to speak with authority on difficult or controversial issues.
- I was afraid that they wouldn't trust me because I was young and I was a new graduate.
- I was worried about how to approach them.
- They wouldn't like me or trust me.
- I was nervous about approaching them with concerns or issues.
- They would have trouble relating to me if our cultures or ethnicities differed.
- I was concerned about a lack of respect; I didn't want to be treated like a babysitter.
- How to establish a meaningful rapport.
- Respect and appreciation for educators as professionals.
- Willingness to work as a team with teachers.
- They wouldn't feel confident enough about my abilities when leaving their children in my care.

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32. Discuss the advice given below.

As a seasoned professional, what advice would you give to students just graduating from the ECE program for developing positive relationships with families?

- Take the initiative when building relationships.
- Put aside your own personal biases.
- Know each parent–teacher relationship will be different. With some parents, you will be very relaxed and be able to talk about personal things; with others, you will have only a professional relationship—both work well.
- Support parents' efforts.
- We need to encourage parents: meet them where they are and do not focus on weaknesses.
- Don't be afraid, be honest; it's okay to tell parents you are new.
- Let parents know you value their opinion and feelings.
- Relax, smile, and be yourself.
- Remain open-minded, sensitive, non-judgmental, and patient.
- When appropriate, find opportunities to chat about issues outside child care.
- Parents seek an open and honest relationship.
- Respect parents' concerns.
- Listen attentively and follow up when you promise to do something.
- Take extra courses associated with family–teacher relationships.
- Respect parental decisions even if you don't agree; parents are the child's primary caregivers.
- Be flexible.
- Be open about parents' family structure, cultures, values, child rearing, etc.
- Be open to feedback.
- Establish communication right from the start and keep in mind that not all parents communicate in a positive manner; therefore, be self-confident.
- When a problem arises in the playroom, don't be afraid to tell parents that discussion about it needs to take place in a private place.
- Parent–teacher interviews are very beneficial.
- Conduct home visits whenever a new family arrives; these are a valuable opportunity to begin the relationship on a positive note.

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Scenarios for Chapter 1

In each chapter of this Instructor's Manual, a variety of scenarios are presented that can be used to promote discussion about issues raised in the text.

Jeremy and Courtney are parents to two children, ages 2 and 3 ½. Jeremy drives a taxi during the day and Courtney is a nurse who works the night shift. They have created this work pattern so that one parent will always be at home with the children. Their combined income is too much to allow them to apply for subsidized child care and yet they can't afford the cost of child care for both children. Consider how this type of sequential parenting may affect the roles Jeremy and Courtney play and how this also affects the family unit. Role-play a typical transition time for this family as Jeremy returns from work and Courtney is about to leave.

Gail has been awarded a new position at a fledgling computer software company. Her husband, Manjit, has a very demanding job as a lawyer in a relatively new firm. He expects to be a partner within the next year, if things go as planned. Gail and Manjit have two children, ages 5 and 10. Gail was completely unaware of the amount of time and energy this new job would take. She is excited about the work and enjoys the high-energy environment. However, after several months, the workload is taking its toll. She is expected to be available at all times and must check her email even at home. This 24/7 commitment is a difficult one to maintain with two children. When she stays late at work, she worries about the time she is missing with her children, and when she is at home she is often working on her computer or completing other tasks needed for the next morning. Several times she has been late picking up the children from the school-age program when Manjit was also unavailable. The children are becoming resentful of the time she spends away from them. Gail has never earned as much money and she loves the work, but she is torn between the work and her family life. Role-play an exchange between Gail and Manjit.

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