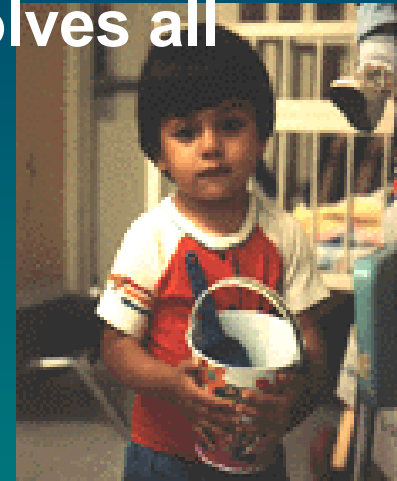


ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL AVANCE HEALTHY MARRIAGE PROGRAM

- The AVANCE Philosophy of service delivery
- A well-planned recruitment strategy that involves all staff
- On going retention efforts
- A comprehensive curriculum
- Acknowledgement of best practices
- A classroom environment conducive to learning
- Supportive services of meals, transportation, referrals and advocacy



ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL AVANCE HEALTHY MARRIAGE EDUCATION PROJECT-cont.

- Care for the children that integrates the objectives of the project
- Staff that is well trained and committed to the success of the couples
- A well planned orientation for couples at the beginning of the course
- Every staff person has a copy of the grant and understand their role in the success of the program
- AVANCE program staff are members of the local coalition focused on Healthy Marriages

THE AVANCE PHILOSOPHY OF SERVICE DELIVERY

- Philosophy of service
 - focus on the family and their children
 - comprehensive services
 - early intervention
 - community-based
 - culturally sensitive
 - preventive in nature
 - long-term
- **Respect** for each individual and for every couple-Respect is an action word
- **Welcoming behaviors practiced by every staff member**
- **Non-judgmental attitudes evident in every staff member**
- **Culturally and linguistically appropriate services and strategies**

On-Going Retention Efforts

- Retention starts with 1st encounter at recruitment phase
- Incentives are helpful
- Weekly reminders/calls when absent
- Flexible class hours: winter/summer work schedules
- Acknowledge barriers and work to correct/eliminate them
- Fit the program to couples not for the convenience of staff
- Provide quality care and experiences for their preschool children
- Provide fun and informative experiences for their adolescent children

Incorporating Best Practices

- Lessons learned from Houston Project 1 experience
- Journaling recommended
- Photos recommended
- Lessons learned from AVANCE's 34 years of serving families
- Lessons learned from HM research

Classroom Environment Conducive to Learning

- Comfortable seating
- Room decors changes to reflect theme of lessons
- Everyone's ideas are welcomed
- Facilitators are prepared and enjoy teaching the class
- Facilitators learn everyone's name

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

- Meals for adults and children
- Transportation help
- Children's component-couples can bring all children with them to class
- Referrals are made when family has a need
- Staff advocate for the families
- Individual and Group Support
- Special Guests
- Recreational Activities
- Educational Field Trips
- Activities for the whole family

CHILDREN'S COMPONENT INTEGRATED WITH THE CURRICULUM

- Adult and children's staff engage in joint planning
- Objectives of each lesson of the "Parejas Unidas" curriculum is reflected in the children's activities

Well-Trained Staff

- Staff are active learners:
 - Conduct own search of the literature
 - Read books, journals, magazines and newspapers to keep abreast of new teaching strategies and approaches in Healthy Marriages Programs

Facilitators Create the Climate

- Positive and negative attitudes show through easily
- If you are comfortable with the material, the couples will be also
- Facilitators don't know it all and don't have to-however, they need to know where to go for answers
- Get to know the couples, greet them by name
- Get to know their couple profile
- Avoid judgments of the couples' comments or behaviors
- Sharing examples from your own couple relationships is helpful

Facilitators Respond to the Couples' Needs

- Many couples will have needs related and non-related to the relationship
- AVANCE staff responds and the Facilitator takes the lead
- AVANCE staff follow-through to make sure they receive the service of help needed

Participants Tell Us:

Participants were asked what types of incentives would keep them coming back, and these were their responses:

- Interesting and motivational topics
- The quality of the program
- An understanding instructor with a good attitude
- Extra help such as counseling
- A relaxing environment
- Being able to learn from others
- Assurance of confidentiality
- Learning new ways to solve problems
- Awards
- Retreats
- Raffles

Ways Attendance and Completion are Calculated

- A data-entry clerk assigned to the program collects attendance on a weekly basis
- A data management report is submitted on a monthly basis for evaluations and attendance records
- Percentage of attendance are calculated and use for completion of program and graduation
- A total of 12 lessons (75%) need to be completed in order for participants to graduate