

CentroNía demonstrates the partnership that the Affiliates of the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) form with Latino families. Nationally, nearly 300 of these organizations provide community and workforce development, education, social services, immigration, citizenship and other services. Collectively, the Affiliates serve millions of Hispanic Americans and immigrant families. "Day in and day out, our Affiliates work to strengthen families and communities," says Janet Murguía, President and CEO of NCLR. "Together, we are creating more opportunities for Latino parents to build a better future for themselves and their children."



CENTRONÍA

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Award-winning Program:

Family Literacy Program

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CHILDREN DO WELL WHEN THEIR FAMILIES
DO WELL, AND FAMILIES DO BETTER WHEN
THEY LIVE IN SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

2006 FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

LITERACY STRENGTHENS FAMILIES

Immigrant parents in Washington, DC, join CentroNía's Family Literacy program to strengthen their English language skills to support their children in achieving maximum educational opportunities. As they discover the full array of CentroNía's services, many of these parents are able to achieve a broader range of family goals. Such goals may include securing employment with wages and benefits that enable them to support their families and participating in workshops and trainings that prepare them to meet the challenges of an increasingly demanding workforce.

"Though literacy development may be the impetus that attracts parents to CentroNía," says Eda Garcia, Family Literacy Director, "parents begin to seek out other support services within the Center that strengthen the whole family. CentroNía's strength-based approach gives families the tools needed to sustain self-reliance within the Latino community.

Through CentroNía's Family Institute, parents can also access programs on financial education, assistance filing tax returns and applying for their Earned Income Tax Credit, and job referrals. These services improve their chances of securing jobs that can support their families while at the same time strengthening their determination to succeed beyond the immediate community.

LEARNING FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS

"Our families jump many hurdles everyday," says Garcia. "They are constantly navigating numerous complicated systems, from schools to social services. CentroNía supports families in clearing those hurdles."

CentroNía's Family Literacy program helps parents develop the language skills they need to navigate these systems through ESL classes and tutoring. In the program's Family Book Club, parents learn literacy techniques in combination with child development and positive guidance. Supported by staff, parents are then able to share their new skills with other parents by leading Clubs in their neighborhoods. Some parents go on to earn their Child Development Associate Accreditation (CDA), which they can use to work in or operate a family day care at home.

As parents improve language skills, CentroNía staff encourage them to take advantage of other services that support long-term success, including employment and mental health counseling, computer skills classes and workshops on homeownership.

"Since the Family Literacy program started in 2000, we've served more than 700 families," says Garcia. "We see the results daily in parents who are working better jobs, children who are going on to college and families with greater resources to draw on. In the beginning, we relied on recruitment to bring people in. Today, word-of-mouth among families has us running to keep up with the demand."

FAMILIES COUNT FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

Through a joint venture of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the FAMILIES COUNT Family Strengthening Awards recognize NCLR Affiliates with outstanding programs that work to give children what they need most—strong, capable and economically successful families. Responding to the varied needs of the families they serve, these organizations improve the economic prospects of working men and women and create the services and networks of support that all families need to realize their aspirations for themselves and their children.



OUR WORK IN THE AREA OF FAMILY LITERACY IS ABSOLUTELY AT THE HEART OF ALL OF CENTRONÍA'S EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN THE FAMILY'S ROLE AS ADVOCATES FOR THEIR CHILDREN.

—Beatriz Otero, Executive Director, CentroNía