AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR PARENTS GOING INTO TRANSRACIAL ADOPTION: A GRANT PROPOSAL

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Introduction

• Transracial adoptions have formed families in the United States since the late 1940s (Simon & Altstein, 2002)
• In 2009, 4 in 10 adoptions in the United States were transracial (Vandivere, Malm, & Radel, 2009)
• The majority of transracially adopted children are children of color adopted into non-Hispanic White families (Padilla, Vargas, & Chavez, 2010)
• When children are adopted into families that are culturally and racially different from their own ethnocultural origin, the adoptees’ cultural identity development can be compromised (McGinnis, Smith, Ryan, & Howard, 2009)
• Parental support for cultural socialization practices is positively correlated with feelings of belonging and levels of self-esteem among transracially adopted adults who were raised by White parents (Mohanty, Keoske, & Sales, 2007)
• The goal of this project was to obtain a grant to develop an educational program for prospective parents going into transracial adoption. The goals of the proposed program were to: (1) increase transracially adopted children's well-being by providing them with a home environment that fosters a healthy cultural identity development, (2) provide education on cultural identity for prospective adoptive parents, and (3) increase cultural competence among adoptive parents.
Social Work Relevance

• Social workers are concerned with the well-being of children and constitute a significant portion of employees in the child welfare sector, therefore they should be aware of the challenges that accompany transracial adoption.

• As the number of adoptions in the United States increases (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2011), social workers in the child welfare sector interact with growing numbers of transracial adoptive families.

• Providing educational classes for transracial adoptive parents is a crucial step towards supporting transracial adoptees in their identity development, yet in 2003, only 53% of adoption agencies that facilitate transracial adoptions in the United States provided cultural competence training for adoptive parents (Vonk & Angaran, 2003).
Cross-Cultural Relevance

• The NASW (2008) Code of Ethics stipulates that “social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression” (para. 34). This understanding of the dynamics of diversity and oppression is particularly important for social workers who interact with families formed by transracial adoption.

• Through the promotion of cultural competence among adoptive parents, this project makes a valuable contribution to social work practice in a multicultural context. The project may be used to inform future social work practice and policy by providing insight into the needs of transracial adoptive families.
Methods

• **Target Population**: Parents who are in the adoption process and have been or are likely to be matched with a child of a different racial background

• **Strategies used to identify and select a funding source**: Google and Yahoo search engines, as well as resources provided by California State University, Long Beach. Moreover, government and private foundation websites were examined, such as the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption (www.davethomasfoundation.org), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Children's Bureau (www.acf.hhs.gov), and www.grants.gov

• **Selected Funding Source**: Hearst Foundations

• **Sources used for the needs assessment**: Thorough review of the existing literature, as well as personal communication with agency personnel. Multiple studies suggest that there is a need for educational programs for transracial adoptive parents (Mohanty, et al., 2007; Vonk, 2001)
Methods

Projected budget range and categories

• The estimated funding for this project will be $35,875.00.
• $30,800.00 of salaries and wages for curriculum developers and program facilitators
• $5,075.00 for other program operating costs
• Operating costs include: resource materials, office supplies, travel expenses and mileage, presentation equipment, food, and miscellaneous expenses
Grant Proposal

- **Program Summary and Description**: The purpose of this proposal is to establish educational classes for prospective transracial adoptive parents in Orange County, California. Classes will focus on providing prospective adoptive parents with information aimed at increasing their levels of cultural competence in order to equip them with the knowledge they need to adequately support their adopted children’s identity development.

- **Population Served**: Parents who are in the adoption process and have been or are likely to be matched with a child of a different racial background.

- **Sustainability**: If the evaluation results indicate the success of the one-year pilot program, the program will be continued and possibly expanded to accommodate more frequent implementations. Future implementations will be financially sustained through further fundraising efforts, such as donations, grants, and fundraising events.
Grant Proposal

• Program Objectives:

  *Objective 1:* To increase prospective adoptive parents’ cultural awareness by 50% as evidenced by pre- and post-tests measuring the participants’ attitudes towards race and culture.

  *Objective 2:* To increase the prospective adoptive parents’ cultural competence by 30% as evidenced by pre- and post-tests measuring the participants’ knowledge regarding multicultural family planning and survival skills.

• Program Evaluation: Evaluation in the form of anonymous pre- and post-surveys to be completed by the participants and analyzed by an external evaluator. Questions will examine the participants’ attitude and knowledge around cultural competence.
Lessons Learned/Implications for Social Work

• As social workers continue to interact with families of various backgrounds and constellations, it is important for social workers to be mindful of the challenges faced by transracial adoptive families.

• In supporting the implementation of educational classes for transracial adoptive parents, social workers contribute to the process of creating favorable, culturally sensitive family environments for adopted individuals of various backgrounds.

• However, with the exception of a pilot study conducted by Vonk and Angaran (2001), there is no evidence of similar educational programs in the literature.

• Through the promotion of cultural competence among adoptive parents, this project makes a valuable contribution to social work practice in a multicultural context.

• Gaps in Research: While a significant amount of research exists on the topic of transracial adoption, most studies focus on children of color being adopted into Caucasian families, ignoring other transracial adoption constellations.
References


