

Providing Comfort in Times of Trouble

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How can parents comfort their children in times of trouble, when they themselves feel uncertain? How can they provide security, when they feel insecure?

Since the presidential election, fear and uncertainty have presided in the immigrant communities in which I work. This fear is impacting attendance at schools. Children of immigrant parents are asking, "Will we have to move?." School personnel are making great efforts to reassure students and families that school is a safe place, but many children continue to feel insecure. This insecurity impacts their attention and participation in school activities and most importantly, their learning.

In times of trouble, children feel their parents' uncertainty, fear and insecurity. When parents talk among adults, their children are listening and trying to make sense of what they hear. Fear and insecurity fill the gaps of their understanding.

Children Need Comfort

No matter what, children need comfort from their parents. Children need to be held and told that things will be all right. They need reassurance that they are always loved and will always be cared for. This reassurance needs to be more constant when things are uncertain. Parents are their children's guide through uncertainty.

I know that keeping those promises are seriously in jeopardy for some families at this time. The larger community has the opportunity to support immigrant parents in keeping these promises to their children.

How Can We Help?

Support for immigrant families can be provided at the following levels:

- We can personally reach out to immigrant families that we know and offer our support.
- We can inform ourselves about information and services being provided to undocumented and documented immigrants in our communities.
- Those of us who have specific skills can put these to use to support families such as, bilingual skills, legal competence, and networking skills to name a few.
- We can get involved in the many political activities taking place in our communities.

Our children and the children in our communities need a lot of support right now. May we find our way to give them and their families the comfort they need.

With love and affection,

Rosemarie

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