



How Family Structures Shape Educational Outcomes

Course Syllabus

Course Description

Family structure plays a crucial role in shaping students' academic performance, engagement, and overall educational attainment. This course explores the impact of diverse family dynamics including single-parent households, blended families, extended families, and non-traditional caregiving arrangements and their impact on student learning and well-being. Educators, school counselors, and administrators will gain insights into how different family structures influence student motivation, parental involvement, and educational expectations. Through research-based discussions, case studies, and practical strategies, participants will learn how to create inclusive and supportive educational environments that meet the needs of all students, regardless of family background.

This self-paced, 8-module course is designed for K-12 educators, school leaders, and student support professionals looking to deepen their understanding of family dynamics and its direct impact on academic success.

This course enhances classroom teaching effectiveness and supports improved student outcomes by introducing new knowledge in understanding and supporting students from diverse family structures and backgrounds.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course you should be able to:

1. Identify and describe different family structures (e.g., nuclear, single-parent, blended, extended, foster, LGBTQ+ families) and their prevalence in educational settings.
2. Analyze the unique challenges and strengths of students from single-parent households and develop strategies to foster their academic success.
3. Examine the effects of blended family transitions on student behavior, peer relationships, and academic engagement.
4. Evaluate how extended families contribute to student learning, emotional support, and cultural expectations.
5. Assess the impact of different parenting styles and expectations on student motivation and long-term academic achievement.
6. Discuss the unique experiences of students from LGBTQ+ households, adoptive families, and foster care, and identify ways to create an inclusive school environment.



7. Apply practical strategies to engage and support students from diverse family backgrounds within the classroom and school community.
8. Develop a comprehensive action plan for fostering a more inclusive and supportive educational environment that acknowledges and accommodates diverse family structures.

Modules

- Module 1: Introduction to Family Structures, Quiz 1
- Module 2: Single-Parent Households and Academic Outcomes, Quiz 2
- Module 3: Blended Families and Student Adjustment, Quiz 3
- Module 4: Extended Families and Multigenerational Influence, Quiz 4
- Module 5: Parental Expectations and Student Success, Quiz 5
- Module 6: Challenges Faced by Non-Traditional Families, Quiz 6
- Module 7: Educator Strategies for Supporting Diverse Families, Quiz 7
- Module 8: Final Project – Action Plan for Inclusive Education, Quiz 8

Grading

Each quiz must be passed at an 80% or higher (three attempts allowed).

Format

This is a self-paced, asynchronous (no required live meetings) course. Throughout the PD course, you will find it helpful to take notes along the way to assist with the quizzes. Within each module, you will find reflection assessments that are not graded but will help in your journey through the course. There is an interactive forum in the course to help you connect with peers and instructors, share ideas, and collaborate on best practices throughout your learning journey.