Pathways to Cultural Competence

Programs

4 Underlying Principles

1. **Teacher Reflection**
   A) Reflect on how the setting of program policies and practices are influenced by the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of program administrators.
   B) Reflect on how program staff's individual values and practices regarding children's learning are influenced by their cultural and linguistic background.

2. **Intentional Decision-Making and Practice**
   A) Identify shared childrearing goals with families; align your program decision-making and policies with these shared goals.
   B) Plan ahead to address potential language or cultural barriers. Provide translational and interpretation resources for program staff.

3. **Strength-Based Perspective**
   A) Acknowledge that programs can learn from families.
   B) Recognize that diversity enriches and provides depth to the overall program.
   C) Understand that different does not mean dysfunctional.
   D) Respect and support the preservation of children and families' home languages, cultural backgrounds, and childrearing beliefs, goals, and practices.
   E) Incorporate aspects of children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds in program's curriculum. Highlight strengths that exist across cultures.

4. **Open, Ongoing, Two-Way Communication** between programs and families.
   A) Ensure that families have opportunities to give input to programs regarding their policies and practices. Families should not solely be recipients of information.
   B) Plan ahead to address language barriers. Provide translational and interpretation resources for program staff.

Met	Not Met	Concept 1: "Children are nested in families."
___	___	Review and discuss Concept 1 of *Teacher Checklist* with teachers in the program.
___	___	Know the primary caregivers for the children in your program and do not assume they are mothers and fathers.
___	___	Encourage two-way communication with families by (a) coordinating informal gatherings at the program, (b) utilizing drop-off and pick-up times as opportunities to communicate, (c) agreeing upon effective modes of communication (e.g., notes, phone, email), (d) developing a family or parent council, or (e) hosting family-themed events (e.g., Carnival Night, Pancake Breakfast).
___	___	Ensure that families have opportunities to give input to programs (i.e., they should not solely be recipients of information). Plan ahead to address language barriers.
___	___	Coordinate with classroom teachers to provide families with information and resources about topics the children are investigating in the program.
___	___	Welcome all interested family members to meetings, program events, and activities regarding the child.
___	___	Give teachers the time and resources necessary to conduct home visits, if families are comfortable. This will allow teachers to learn from families about children's home environments, interests, early language experiences, preferred learning styles and integrate this information into classroom learning activities.
___	___	Greet all families at drop-off and pick-up throughout the year using non-verbal and verbal communication.
___	___	Create space and opportunities for families to visit, spend time, and exchange information about their children.

Met	Not Met	Concept 2: "Identify shared goals among families and staff."
――	――	Review and discuss Concept 2 of *Teacher Checklist* with teachers in the program.
――	――	Communicate to staff and families that the goal of the program is to develop a partnership in which each party can learn from the other.
――	――	Require teachers to identify families' short and long term goals for their children and to align them with classroom objectives and developmentally appropriate practice. Encourage teachers to incorporate families' goals into classroom learning activities where appropriate.
――	――	Discuss with family members differences in childrearing beliefs and identify strategies for negotiating different approaches. Involve classroom teachers in these discussions.
――	――	Include families in making decisions related to their children's well being and education, both at the program and classroom level. Encourage teachers to include families in decisions related to their children's educational experience in the classroom.
――	――	Explore and support meaningful ways in which family members can contribute to the learning in the program.

Met	Not Met	Concept 3: "Authentically incorporate cultural traditions and history in the program."
⎯⎯	⎯⎯	Review and discuss Concept 3 of *Teacher Checklist* with teachers in the program.
⎯⎯	⎯⎯	Highlight the presence of all families and children in the program. Example strategies include hanging pictures on the walls of children and families or highlighting their presence in program-wide activities.
⎯⎯	⎯⎯	Invite family members to share information about their cultural backgrounds in the program (e.g., history, traditions, and home language).
⎯⎯	⎯⎯	Equip the program and classrooms with educational materials (e.g., books, posters, utensils, kitchen & apparel items) that reflect value for diverse languages, ethnicities, and cultures.
⎯⎯	⎯⎯	Encourage families to share artifacts, music, stories, or other culturally-relevant information with the program and with their children's teachers. Ensure that teachers are inviting and working with families to incorporate these resources in the classroom.
⎯⎯	⎯⎯	Represent relevant historical events and traditions of children, families, and their communities in the program.
⎯⎯	⎯⎯	Incorporate into your program's curriculum nursery rhymes, songs, extended vocabulary, and early literacy skills that originate from and are commonly practiced in the cultures represented in your program and community.

Met	Not Met	Concept 4: "Acknowledge child development as a culturally-driven, ongoing process that should be supported across contexts in a child's life (e.g., school and home)."
――	――	Review and discuss Concept 4 of *Teacher Checklist* with teachers in the program.
――	――	Invite families to define their ethnicity or culture; do not assume based upon appearances.
――	――	Equip classrooms with appropriate instructional resources such as books and toys that expose children to role models from their own and other cultural backgrounds.
――	――	Recruit role models from diverse cultural backgrounds to visit or volunteer in the program. Role-models may come from the community or may be family members of children in the program.
――	――	Establish relationships in the community that are mutually beneficial (e.g., programs help community efforts; community leaders participate and serve as role models to children in programs).

Met	Not Met	Concept 5: "Individuals and institutions' practices are embedded in culture."
——	——	Review and discuss Concept 5 of *Teacher Checklist* with teachers in the program.
——	——	Encourage staff, families, and children to learn about each other's racial, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds by having a variety of year-round, program-wide activities. Activities could be coordinated with children's teachers and could include developing a program-wide international cookbook or hosting musical and dance performances that represent the diverse backgrounds of families in the program.
——	——	Provide teachers the time and resources necessary to interact with children and families outside of the program setting and in the communities where they live.
——	——	Ask families for input and feedback on program policies and use this information to modify policies as appropriate.

Met	Not Met	Concept 6: "Ensure decisions and policies embrace home languages and dialects."
___	___	Review and discuss Concept 6 of *Teacher Checklist* with teachers in the program.
___	___	Establish a language policy that embraces children's home language and determines a set of goals for children (e.g., bilingualism for all children, etc).
___	___	Ensure staff and families are familiar with the policies and resources your program has in place on respecting children's home languages. Be a resource of knowledge on these policies for staff and families.
___	___	Use children's home language for multiple learning purposes, not just in giving directions or managing behavior.
___	___	Provide translational and interpretation resources to program staff.
___	___	Find ways to communicate with children and families in their home language.
___	___	Encourage children to speak their home language to other children, staff, or parents from the same backgrounds.
___	___	Provide opportunities for children to learn in their home language (e.g., book reading, small groups, and personal stories).
___	___	Correctly pronounce and know how to spell each child's name.
___	___	Make available in the program books, tapes/CDs, songs, print, and other materials in children's home languages to staff, children, and families.

Met	Not Met	Concept 7: "Ensure policies and practices embrace and respect families'

		cultural values, attitudes, and beliefs toward learning."
——	——	Review and discuss Concept 7 of *Teacher Checklist* with teachers in the program.
——	——	Identify families' short and long term goals for their children in collaboration with teachers. Align families' goals with curricula and developmentally appropriate practice. Incorporate families' goals into program curricula where appropriate.
——	——	Make clear to staff and families the policies and resources your program has in place on respecting diversity and addressing bias. Be a resource of knowledge on these policies for staff and families.
——	——	Share strategies and ideas with staff on how the program can support children's identity, honor home language, and address issues of bias. Use your staff as a resource for ideas on how to address issues of race, language, and culture in the program.
——	——	Work together with staff to create program activities that integrate appreciation and respect for diversity (e.g., songs, stories, finger plays, rhymes).
——	——	Collaborate regularly with staff and families on developing a center environment that reflects an appreciation for diversity. Examples include (a) developing a collage of heroes from cultures represented in the program, (b) display flags of all countries represented in the program, or (c) creating learning settings used by different cultures.
——	——	Review all forms and documents with a group of diverse staff and family members to ensure they are free from bias. For example, the program may develop a committee of family, staff, and community members whose responsibility is to ensure that the program's environment, forms, policies, and practices are culturally-sensitive and reflect a value for diversity.
——	——	Include the diverse range of families your program serves in the discussion and decision-making of program policies and practices.

Met	Not Met	Concept 8: "Equalize balances of power; counter stereotyping and bias through intentional teaching."

——	——	Review and discuss Concept 8 of *Teacher Checklist* with teachers in the program.
——	——	Provide professional development opportunities to staff on countering stereotypes and bias through intentional teaching.
——	——	Invite role models across various language, cultural, and racial backgrounds to lead program activities with children. It is important for children not to associate one single language, race, or culture as the most powerful.
——	——	Guide staff in recognizing stereotypes, stereotypic images, and bias toward other language, racial, and cultural groups; correct- if applicable- any misperceptions staff may have toward other groups.
——	——	Encourage staff to help children recognize stereotypes, stereotypic images, and bias toward other language, racial, and cultural groups; support staff in helping children dispel- if applicable- any misperceptions they may hold toward other groups.
——	——	Intervene if a staff member or child displays a biased response to another staff member or child. Ask staff to intervene if children in their classrooms display a biased response to another child or staff member.
——	——	Encourage staff to support each other and themselves in face of bias. Assist staff in teaching children how they can support one another in face of bias.

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