



A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTING A CURRICULUM

PRESENTER NOTES—OPTIONAL

HSPPS Supports Cultural Responsiveness

Education and Child Development Program Services Subpart C – 1302.30

A program must deliver developmentally, **culturally**, and linguistically appropriate learning experiences in language, literacy, mathematics, social and emotional functioning, approaches to learning, science, physical skills, and creative arts.

Family and Community Engagement Program Services Subpart E – 1302.50 (b)(2)

Develop relationships with parents and structure services to encourage trust and respectful, ongoing two-way communication between staff and parents to create welcoming program environments that incorporate the **unique cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds of families in the program and community;**

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OPTIONAL SLIDE 1:

The Head Start Program Performance Standards support a culturally responsive approach to implementing curricula. For example,

- A culturally responsive approach to implementing curricula provides learning experiences that build on the knowledge and skills children have developed in their families and cultures. This is a strengths-based approach that promotes school readiness in each of the ELOF domains.
- HSPPS also require that program environments incorporate “the unique cultural, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds of families in the program and community.” With a culturally responsive approach to implementing a curriculum, you learn from families about their culture, values, expectations, and practices. Then use what you learn to build relationships with families and children, plan and implement learning experiences, and provide a learning environment. This approach is an essential aspect of your ongoing practice.

For more information on how the Head Start Performance Standards address cultural and linguistic responsiveness, see *Head Start Program Performance Standards Excerpts*.

REFERENCE

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Head Start Program Performance Standards Excerpts; 45 CFR Chapter XIII*. Washington, DC: Office of Head Start. Retrieved from: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/hspps-excerpts-subparts-1301-1305.pdf>



OPTIONAL SLIDE 2:

NOTE FOR PRESENTER:

Distribute sticky notes to participants. Group participants by table or ask 4-6 participants to work as a group. Ask participants to sort, in groups, their sticky notes into categories or themes. Ask participants to discuss the groupings, and any similarities and differences in their notes, within their small group.

Finally, ask each group to share their categories, themes, and observations with the larger group.

DISCUSSION:

“What is culture?” This may seem like a simple question, but it is not. There are many definitions of culture.

What comes to mind when you hear the word “culture?” Record one thought, word, or phrase that you associate with the word “culture” on each sticky note.

Culture can be described as a set of traditions, beliefs, and values shared by a group of people. Culture often includes specific artifacts, food, customs, music, and traditions. Culture can be examined at different levels—individual, family, group, and universal. People tend to notice the universal and group levels of culture first. For example, when we think of all humans, we know that we express emotions and use language to communicate. At the group level, cultural groups may share traditions, beliefs, and values—such as beliefs about what young children should and should not do. However, we know that each family makes decisions about the values and beliefs they hold and how they behave. An individual family’s expectations for their children may not be the same as the larger cultural group’s expectations. And at the individual level, each of us has choices about the extent to which we participate and pass on the traditions, values, and beliefs of our groups and families.

Some parts of our culture are easy to see and hear—like our clothes, food and language.

Others are less visible and less straightforward to describe—such as the way we build relationships and make friends. People differ from each other *within* cultures, too. Even within the same family, people may have different values or beliefs.

Another way to think about culture is that it includes

- items or artifacts,
- customs, and
- values.

For example, cultural members may share items such as clothing, food, and games. Customs or routines such as celebrations, communication styles, and family roles are also related to culture. Finally, goals and values that pertain to education and health and childrearing practices also reflect their different cultures (York 2016, p. 78). One definition is that culture is “a powerful force that shapes our lives. . . It is a set of values, beliefs and behaviors shared by a group of people” (York 2016, p. 79).

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Exploring How Your Curriculum Supports Cultural Responsiveness

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OPTIONAL SLIDE 3:

NOTE FOR PRESENTER:

This Learning Activity is a deep dive into one aspect of a curriculum and consider how to implement it—with a focus on a culturally responsive approach. The activity uses the resource *Exploring Your Curriculum: A Quick Guide for Teachers and Child Care Providers*. See pages 3–4 of the resource to learn how to use it for professional development. Participants should also have access to their curriculum’s materials and resources for this activity.

Prior to leading the activity, choose one or two sections of *Exploring Your Curriculum* to share with participants. The relevant sections include:

- Your Curriculum’s Approach to Teaching and Learning (page 7)
- Your Curriculum’s Ways of Organizing the Learning Environment (page 10)
- Your Curriculum’s Ways of Using Routines and Schedules (page 11)
- Your Curriculum’s Ways of Planning and Implementing Learning Experiences (page 12)
- Your Curriculum’s Ways of Engaging Families (page 13).

SCRIPT:

You will be doing a “deep dive” into one aspect of your curriculum. You can see by the section titles that cultural responsiveness is a thread running through all aspects of your education program, from teacher-child interactions to class schedules! Did you know that? It’s quite amazing!

You will examine how effectively your curriculum integrates cultural responsiveness and discover what you may need to adjust or enhance to build on the knowledge that the children have developed within their families and cultures.

NOTE FOR PRESENTER:

Provide participants with the relevant page of *Exploring Your Curriculum*. Ask them to read the page and take notes on their responses to the prompts. Have participants focus specifically on how their curriculum supports cultural responsiveness in that area, and how they may adjust or enhance their curriculum to build on the knowledge and skills that the children in their group have developed within their families and cultures.

Ask participants to discuss their responses with a partner.

Ask participants to share their ideas with the larger group and record participants' contributions on chart paper.

DISCUSSION:

Lead the participants in a discussion.

- What specific supports does the curriculum offer for cultural responsiveness in this area?
- Does the curriculum have any weaknesses or gaps in this area?
- How do you plan to adjust or enhance the curriculum's guidance to build on the knowledge and skills that children in your group have developed within their families and cultures?

If you are completing an additional section of the guide, begin the process again.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Exploring Your Curriculum (selected page)

Inviting Families to Share their Cultures in the Early Learning Setting

...15-Minute...
In-Service Suites



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OPTIONAL SLIDE 4:

A culturally responsive approach to implementing a curriculum is built on strong relationships with families. Families are invited to share their knowledge, skills, interests, and experiences—including those related to their cultures—with children in the early learning setting. From the first meeting with program staff, families are encouraged to share information, ideas, and observations about their children and their own life experiences. When you use what families share, families see that their contributions are valued and important. One way to invite families to share aspects of their culture is through a Family Artifact Bag.

Pass out the handouts. Ask participants to read the handouts.

DISCUSSION:

Lead a discussion on one or more of the following prompts:

- What objects would you place inside a Family Artifact Bag to represent your family and culture?
- What objects do you think families would send in to represent their families and cultures? Do you think families from the same culture would send in different items?
- How would you use the objects that families would share?
- What questions or concerns do you have for this activity? How could you improve this activity?
- How else can you invite families to share their cultures?

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Handout: Tips for Families: Sharing Culture
- Handout: Activity for Families: Family Artifact Bag