

## PROMOTING CULTURAL & LINGUISTIC COMPETENCY

### Self-Assessment Checklist for Personnel Providing Services and Supports In Early Intervention and Early Childhood Settings

Directions: Please select A, B, or C for each item listed below.

A = Things I do frequently, or statement applies to me to a great degree

B = Things I do occasionally, or statement applies to me to a moderate degree

C = Things I do rarely or never, or statement applies to me to minimal degree or not at all

#### PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT, MATERIALS & RESOURCES

1. I display pictures, posters and other materials that reflect the cultures and ethnic backgrounds of children and families served in my early childhood program or setting.
2. I select props for the dramatic play/housekeeping area that are culturally diverse (e.g. dolls, clothing, cooking utensils, household articles, furniture).
3. I ensure that the book/literacy area has pictures and storybooks that reflect the different cultures of children and families served in my early childhood program or setting.
4. I ensure that table-top toys and other play accessories (that depict people) are representative of the various cultural and ethnic groups both within my community and the society in general.
5. I read a variety of books exposing children in my early childhood program or setting to various life experiences of cultures and ethnic groups other than their own.
6. When such books are not available, I provide opportunities for children and their families to create their own books and include them among the resources and materials in my early childhood program or setting.
7. I adapt the above referenced approaches when providing services, supports and other interventions in the home setting.
8. I encourage and provide opportunities for children and their families to share experiences through storytelling, puppets, marionettes, or other props to support the "oral tradition" common among many cultures.

## **PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT, MATERIALS & RESOURCES (CONT'D)**

- 9. I plan trips and community outings to places where children and their families can learn about their own cultural or ethnic history as well as the history of others.
- 10. I select videos, films or other media resources reflective of diverse cultures to share with children and families served in my early childhood program or setting.
- 11. I play a variety of music and introduce musical instruments from many cultures.
- 12. I ensure that meals provided include foods that are unique to the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of children and families served in my early childhood program or setting.
- 13. I provide opportunities for children to cook or sample a variety of foods typically served by different cultural and ethnic groups other than their own.
- 14. If my early childhood program or setting consists entirely of children and families from the same cultural or ethnic group, I feel it is important to plan an environment and implement activities that reflect the cultural diversity within the society at large.
- 15. I am cognizant of and ensure that curricula I use include traditional holidays celebrated by the majority culture, as well as those holidays that are unique to the culturally diverse children and families served in my early childhood program or setting.

## COMMUNICATION STYLES

- 16. For children who speak languages or dialects other than English, I attempt to learn and use key words in their language so that I am better able to communicate with them.
- 17. I attempt to determine any familial colloquialisms used by children and families that will assist and/or enhance the delivery of services and supports.
- 18. I use visual aids, gestures, and physical prompts in my interactions with children who have limited English proficiency.
- 19. When interacting with parents and other family members who have limited English proficiency I always keep in mind that:
  - (a) limitation in English proficiency is in no way a reflection of their level of intellectual functioning.
  - (b) their limited ability to speak the language of the dominant culture has no bearing on their ability to communicate effectively in their language of origin.
  - (c) they may neither be literate in their language of origin nor English.
- 20. I ensure that all notices and communiqués to parents are written in their language of origin.
- 21. I understand that it may be necessary to use alternatives to written communications for some families, as word of mouth may be a preferred method of receiving information.
- 22. I understand the principles and practices of linguistic competency and:
  - (a) apply them within my early childhood program or setting.
  - (b) advocate for them within my program or agency.

## COMMUNICATION STYLES (CONT'D)

- 23. I use bilingual or multilingual staff and/or trained/certified foreign language interpreters for meetings, conferences, or other events for parents and family members who may require this level of assistance.
- 24. I encourage and invite parents and family members to volunteer and assist with activities regardless of their ability to speak English.
- 25. I use alternative formats and varied approaches to communicate with children and/or their family members who experience disability.
- 26. I arrange accommodations for parents and family members who may require communication assistance to ensure their full participation in all aspects of the early childhood program (e.g. hearing impaired, physical disability, visually impaired, not literate or low literacy etc.).
- 27. I accept and recognize that there are often differences between language used in early childhood/early intervention settings, or at "school", and in the home setting.

## VALUES & ATTITUDES

- 28. I avoid imposing values that may conflict or be inconsistent with those of cultures or ethnic groups other than my own.
- 29. I discourage children from using racial and ethnic slurs by helping them understand that certain words can hurt others.
- 30. I screen books, movies, and other media resources for negative cultural, ethnic, racial, or religious stereotypes before sharing them with children and their families served in my early childhood program or setting.
- 31. I provide activities to help children learn about and accept the differences and similarities in all people as an ongoing component of program curricula.
- 32. I intervene in an appropriate manner when I observe other staff or parents within my program or agency engaging in behaviors that show cultural insensitivity, bias or prejudice.
- 33. I recognize and accept that individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds may desire varying degrees of acculturation into the dominant culture.
- 34. I understand and accept that family is defined differently by different cultures (e.g. extended family members, fictive kin, godparents).
- 35. I accept and respect that male-female roles in families may vary significantly among different cultures (e.g. who makes major decisions for the family, play and social interactions expected of male and female children).
- 36. I understand that age and life cycle factors must be considered in interactions with families (e.g. high value placed on the decisions or childrearing practices of elders or the role of the eldest female in the family).
- 37. Even though my professional or moral viewpoints may differ, I accept the family/parents as the ultimate decision makers for services and supports for their children.

## VALUES & ATTITUDES (CONT'D)

- 38. I accept that religion, spirituality, and other beliefs may influence how families respond to illness, disease, and death.
- 39. I recognize and understand that beliefs and concepts of mental health or emotional well-being, particularly for infants and young children, vary significantly from culture to culture.
- 40. I recognize and accept that familial folklore, religious, or spiritual beliefs may influence a family's reaction and approach to a child born with a disability or later diagnosed with a disability or special health care needs.
- 41. I understand that beliefs about mental illness and emotional disability are culturally-based. I accept that responses to these conditions and related treatment/interventions are heavily influenced by culture.
- 42. I understand that the health care practices of families served in my early childhood program or setting may be rooted in cultural traditions.
- 43. I recognize that the meaning or value of early childhood education or early intervention may vary greatly among cultures.
- 44. I understand that traditional approaches to disciplining children are influenced by culture.
- 45. I understand that families from different cultures will have different expectations of their children for acquiring toileting, dressing, feeding, and other self-help skills.
- 46. I accept and respect that customs and beliefs about food, its value, preparation, and use are different from culture to culture.
- 47. Before visiting or providing services in the home setting, I seek information on acceptable behaviors, courtesies, customs, and expectations that are unique to families of specific cultural groups served in my early childhood program or setting.

## VALUES & ATTITUDES (CONT'D)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 48. I advocate for the review of my program's or agency's mission statement, goals, policies, and procedures to ensure that they incorporate principles and practices that promote cultural diversity, cultural competence and linguistic competence.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 49. I seek information from family members or other key community informants that will assist me to respond effectively to the needs and preferences of culturally and linguistically diverse children and families served in my early childhood program or setting..

### **How to use this checklist**

This checklist is intended to heighten the awareness and sensitivity of personnel to the importance of cultural diversity, cultural competence and linguistic competence in early childhood settings. It provides concrete examples of the kinds of practices that foster such an environment. There is no answer key with correct responses. However, if you frequently responded "C", you may not necessarily demonstrate practices that promote a culturally diverse and culturally competent learning environment for children and families within your classroom, program or agency,