

Competency Area:	<b>Culture, Diversity, and Equity</b>
Introduction:	<p>This competency area is intended to underscore the concept that there is no knowledge base, set of skills, teaching practice, or curriculum for early development and learning that can simply be applied for all children. Early development and learning must be viewed within a cultural context and is transmitted through social contexts as in families and communities using language (CDE 2009a) and everyday experiences. Cultural perspectives of children, families, staff and colleagues vary widely on issues including children's individual learning differences, and differing strengths and abilities (CDE 2009b), gender identity and gender-specific roles, family composition and member roles, generational experiences and perspectives, communication styles, regulation and discipline, coordination and physical development, and acquisition and synthesis of information. Early educators who learn to think from a multi-cultural perspective are better able to provide opportunities that reflect children's culture and family experience (Banks 2006 &amp; 2008). Children's learning environments are enriched when diverse characteristics, values, cultures, and individual temperaments and differences of children, families, and peers are respected and valued in concrete ways.</p>
Key Concepts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Culture shapes values, beliefs, worldview, experiences, and behavior.</li> <li>▪ Values and beliefs influence child-rearing practices, teaching practices, and family-school interactions of children of all abilities.</li> <li>▪ Equitable practices provide meaningful learning experiences and support a sense of identity, belonging, and positive self-esteem.</li> <li>▪ Supports the engagement of families in everyday learning experiences.</li> </ul>
Dispositions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is aware of how one's values, beliefs, and world view influence one's perceptions of the values, beliefs, and world views of others</li> <li>▪ Attends to and respects cultural and family beliefs, values, traditions, and practices, and diverse perspectives and values related to all differences</li> <li>▪ Strives for effective, respectful, and culturally responsive communication and practices with children, families, staff and colleagues</li> <li>▪ Works to create equitable circumstances for children, families, and others in the early care and education profession</li> </ul>
Performance Areas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Respect for All Differences and Similarities</li> <li>B. Culturally Responsive Approaches</li> <li>C. Culture and Language Development and Learning</li> <li>D. Culturally Inclusive Learning Environments</li> </ul>

**A. Respect for All Differences and Similarities**

Topics	Level I	Level II <i>Level I, plus:</i>	Level III <i>Level II, plus:</i>	Level IV <i>Level III, plus:</i>
Family cultures	Attends to the culturally diverse attributes of children and families.	Works proactively to support children and families transition to early childhood setting. Communicates with family members to ensure that both their children and they have the tools and information to be full participants. Embraces children's cultures and sees them as assets.	Develops and facilitates the implementation of policies and practices that promote the inclusion of all children and families in the program and facilitates accommodations to address the unique cultural and generational perspectives and contributions of all families.	Advocates in the broader community for the inclusion of the full range of diversity found in children and families in early childhood programs.
Receptive to all families	Interacts with families in a way that encourages their involvement. Reports family concerns to supervisor. Acknowledges the importance of welcoming all families during visits and at drop off and pick up times.	Communicates with family members regularly to understand each family's current and ongoing situation or concerns. Is sensitive and responsive to all relevant issues or special circumstances. Promotes family engagement in the program. Gathers information about families' child-rearing practices and goals for children and shares that information with staff and colleagues to support and encourage family engagement and to inform program and curriculum planning. Understands the importance of providing a learning environment that is welcoming for all families.	Uses family information to guide the development of program policies and practices. Works with a family when in need of special assistance and partners with culturally and linguistically appropriate support services to ensure the family receives the services. Provides opportunities for family members to be engaged and learn about ways to support their child at home. Invites family members to plan and carry out activities that reflect their home and culture. Develops curriculum and classroom practices that create a welcoming atmosphere for all families.	Develops programs and communicates to the broader community the importance of inclusion and involvement of all families in early childhood settings. Creates service partnerships for families, ensuring that culturally and linguistically appropriate comprehensive support services are available. Guides early educators in strategies to gather information from families and apply it to practice. Advocates ways to communicate and design environments that help all families feel welcome and comfortable in the community.
Involves family members in planning	Participates in the planning of learning activities that are inclusive and respectful of all families.	Plans curriculum and activities collaboratively with all families.	Encourages the participation of all families and colleagues in curriculum planning throughout a program. Collaborates with families and colleagues to determine policies that support the inclusion of families and colleagues in planning program services.	Provides and explains rationale for policies, practices, and procedures that are representative and inclusive of all families in the early childhood setting.

**B. Culturally Responsive Approaches**

Topics	Level I	Level II <i>Level I, plus:</i>	Level III <i>Level II, plus:</i>	Level IV <i>Level III, plus:</i>
Staff preparation for communication practices	Participates in staff orientation sessions to develop skills and knowledge to appropriately respect families through communication. Demonstrates understanding of the cultural implications of roles and expectations for early educator and family relationships.	Applies skills and knowledge gained from orientation sessions in order to communicate respectfully with all families. Adheres to families' culturally based communication practices. Implements concepts of intercultural communication, including nonverbal communication.	Provides orientation for early childhood educators by facilitating professional development that reinforces staff and colleagues' organizational principles regarding respecting families through communication. Promotes policies and practices that invite open communication with all families. Promotes and solicits input from all families.	Creates professional development opportunities for programs in how to prepare staff and colleagues to communicate with all families in early childhood settings. Stays current on research and teaches early educators about cultural differences in communication and practices including ways to engage families in open, respectful communication.
Family-educator relationships	Uses multiple strategies for building relationships with families such as soliciting family goals for the child, sharing observations and documentation with families, or being available to meet when requested.	Attends family-educator meetings and shares content, asking open-ended questions and reflecting about the child's learning with families.	Develops program policies and practices that foster the development of effective family-teacher relationships.	Instructs and guides early educators on how to facilitate warm and informative family-teacher relationships that form the basis for the open exchange of home and cultural information.

**C. Culture and Language for Learning and Development**

Topics	Level I	Level II <i>Level I, plus:</i>	Level III <i>Level II, plus:</i>	Level IV <i>Level III, plus:</i>
Learning approaches	Follows children's lead to support their learning. Understands children have diverse approaches to	Knowledgeable of and able to apply evidence-based developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate strategies for addressing diverse	Promotes and implements developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate strategies for addressing diverse approaches to learning.	Researches, teaches, and mentors early childhood educators to use strategies that appropriately and effectively meet the diverse learning approaches of young children.

	learning.	approaches to learning.		
Interpretation of development within cultural context	Assists with practices that reflect the cultural context(s) and experiences of the children.	Uses knowledge of children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds and experiences to facilitate interactions and learning.	Designs program strategies that incorporate knowledge of children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds and experiences into the curriculum.	Teaches and mentors early childhood educators to incorporate knowledge of children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds and experiences into curriculum.
Understanding cultural perspectives of self and others	Respects that all early educators and families are individuals who come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and have their own beliefs and values.	Reflects on own biases and cultural background and experiences on teaching; communicates with early educators and families to understand all cultural and linguistic backgrounds and experiences.	Designs an overall programmatic approach that allows early childhood educators to explore their own cultural perspectives and appreciate the cultural perspectives and strengths of colleagues, children, families, and the community they serve.	Advocates and provides opportunities to early childhood educators in self-awareness of cultural backgrounds, understanding the influence of culture on their practice, and appreciating the cultural perspectives and strengths of children, families, and communities
Children's identity development	Engages in children's communication about their families and themselves.	Conducts activities that promote positive identity development in young children. Uses understanding of individual children's life experiences and home culture to promote healthy identity formation.	Develops curriculum that promotes children's sense of identity by integrating home culture and language in learning activities and environments.	Informs early childhood educators on the importance of children's positive identity development; fosters understanding that home culture and language are central to identity development.
Community cultural input	Implements activities that focus on children's cultural and linguistic experiences in the community.	Focuses on children's cultural and linguistic experiences in the community and encourages children's families to share roles in the community.	Develops and embeds curriculum that focuses on children's cultural and linguistic experiences in the community and encourages children's families to share their community roles.	Advocates and supports early childhood programs on how to develop curriculum that focuses on children's cultural and linguistic experiences in the community. Leads the development of community activities for children and families that celebrate diversity.

Culturally, linguistically, and inclusive communication and practices	Engages in communication and practices with children, colleagues, and their families that are culturally and linguistically inclusive.	Models the implementation of inclusive practices to engage and intervene in communication with colleagues, young children, and their families.	Facilitates the implementation of policies that promote inclusive communication and practices throughout the program. Arranges professional development opportunities for staff and colleagues to learn about communication and practices; monitors the effectiveness of efforts to promote inclusive communication.	Provides resources to early childhood professionals in inclusive communication and practices and helps develop a process of self-reflection and shared reflection to inform and support their application.
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**D. Culturally Inclusive Learning Environments**

Topics	Level I	Level II <i>Level I, plus:</i>	Level III <i>Level II, plus:</i>	Level IV <i>Level III, plus:</i>
Visual representation of diversity	Places photos, pictures, and other materials in the learning environment that reflect the cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and individual diversity of children and families.	Identifies and uses pictures, photos, books, recordings, food, and other materials that reflect the diversity children and families. Interacts with families formally and informally to ensure that the overall learning environment reflects the cultural, generational, and linguistic diversity of the families and children.	Creates resource list of materials that offer developmentally and culturally appropriate recommendations for the visual representation of diversity in early childhood settings. Promotes the use of materials that reflect the cultures of children and families and assesses the visual representation of diversity in the program. Collaborates with early educators and families to design ways to reflect the families' cultures and languages in the governance of the program.	Provides professional development to childhood professionals about developmentally and culturally appropriate strategies for visually representing young children and families in early education environments. Facilitates conversations among early educators on how to create programs that reflect the cultures and languages of the families and children served. Promotes understanding about the importance of cultural connections in early childhood settings for young children and their families.

<p>Language diversity</p>	<p>Is responsive to children and families who use their home language to communicate, including those who use sign language. Able to identify when interpreters and/or translators are needed, as appropriate.</p>	<p>Creates a learning environment that supports children and families' communication in their home language(s) as well as in English. Articulates the importance of language diversity. Uses interpreters and translators effectively.</p>	<p>Develops and facilitates the implementation of program policies and practices that honor and promote communication in the home language of children and families. Promotes the effective use of interpreters or translators. Ensures that all parents are provided with complete and accurate information on options that affect their children. Is aware there are a variety of tools and services available to assist in communication with families who speak languages other than English</p>	<p>Communicates with the larger community and informs early childhood educators about the importance of the home language in the learning and development of young dual-language learners. Designs, recommends, and implements professional development for interpreters and translators in early childhood settings. Recruits translators and ensures that translations are accurate. Sets policies to ensure hiring practices include attention to diverse characteristics, culture, and language.</p>
<p>Assessment of environments</p>	<p>Contributes to the assessment process to determine how environments can be enhanced with an understanding of cultures, languages, and differing strengths and abilities of the children and families.</p>	<p>Articulates to parents and colleagues the importance of assessing environments on an ongoing basis to ensure that the cultures and languages of families are reflected.</p>	<p>Supports colleagues in the use of assessment data to continually enhance the environment to reflect the diverse characteristics, abilities, cultures, and languages of families.</p>	<p>Seeks appropriate resources and engages families to ensure appropriate application of the knowledge gathered through the assessment of the environment. Seeks staff composition reflective of families and community.</p>