

NAEYC PATHWAYS TO CULTURAL COMPETENCE PROJECT

The Survey Results

A few months ago, after reflecting on the *Cultural Competence Teacher Checklist*, you participated in an NAEYC anonymous on-line survey. The results of the survey were made available recently and after reviewing the results, I made the decision to try and match the focus of the newsletters with the concepts you chose to concentrate on this year. That meant that April's newsletter needed to be revised and is late, but you will get two in May! Out of the eight concepts, the top four you identified to work on in your programs were:

1. Concept 2: Identify shared goals among families and staff (20%)
2. Concept 3: Authentically incorporate cultural traditions and history in the program. (68%)
3. Concept 7: Ensure policies and practices embrace and respect families' cultural values, attitudes and beliefs toward learning. (20%)
4. Concept 8: Equalize balances of power, counter stereotyping and bias through intentional teaching (20%)



Working on any one of the four concepts above may mean you have to expand your personal and/or your programs horizons. The concepts also directly relate to NAEYC's Accreditation **Program Standard 1: Relationships**. *"The program promotes positive relationships among all children and adults to encourage each child's sense of individual worth and belonging as part of each community and to foster each child's ability to contribute as a responsible community member."*

★ Affirmations ★

*What changes can you make in your classroom or entire program to provide care and education that is culturally responsive to families?

1. I establish & maintain positive parent-teacher relations
2. I communicate honestly with parents.
3. I cooperate and compromise with parents.
4. I release my negative expectations of parents.
5. I let go of my belief in one right way of child-rearing.
6. I recognize & understand the complexity of children's lives.
7. I recognize the ways in which an early childhood program is a cultural setting.
8. I explore the role of culture in my own family and style of child-rearing.
9. I open myself to learning from other cultures.
10. I look for the strength in each family.
11. I help families maintain & pass on their culture to their children.
12. I let go of expecting all families to share my values and parenting style.
13. I bend & flex to meet the needs of each child in my care.

*Developing Roots & Wings, York, 1992

Bringing Family Strengths into Early Childhood Settings*

The following tips can guide thinking about the teacher and family partnerships and bringing family's cultural strengths into the early childhood setting.

Staff and Parent Partnerships

Building Relationships—Teachers or Providers Can:

- Create a warm and welcoming environment
- Openly express interest in each family's culture
- Reflect a willingness to support & adapt to individual differences

Family-Teacher Conferences—Families Can:

- Provide the teacher or caregiver with information about specific beliefs, values, and child care practices at home
- Provide personal and cultural guidance for adapting classroom practices
- Participate in staff development to help teachers or caregivers better understand their cultural history, current practices, rituals, and their influence on daily life
- Suggest additional contacts, resources, or ways a teacher can continue to learn about their culture

School-Family Curriculum Activities

Decision Making—Families Can:

- Participate in program study or discussion groups on cultural differences.
- Review and have input into the curriculum
- Make suggestions for and participation in planning learning activities, field trips, presentations or programs that reflect their culture
- Inform the teacher or provider when there are concerns about materials that may be culturally inappropriate or contain factual errors

Resources for Learning Experiences—Families Can:

- Share artifacts, books, music, musical instruments, and other items that represent their culture and family
- Participate in storytelling, singing or other interactive learning experiences to share their culture and language
- Display or recommend drawings and writings by family members or cultural leaders to convey history and other cultural messages
- Use family photos or home videos to convey information about family structure, extended family, traditions, rituals and cultural events
- Contribute traditional materials and demonstrate their use in daily life in ways that fit into regular routines

*Adapted from Building Culturally and Linguistically Competent Services to Support Young Children, Their Families, and School Readiness, Hepburn for Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2004

By offering opportunities for sharing culture in meaningful and respectful ways, teachers and programs can engage all families and support young children being ready for school.

