

Working With Families From Diverse Backgrounds



Challenges & Opportunities



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Challenges & Opportunities



As the global economy becomes more competitive and interdependent, we will more than ever need the **talents** of all our people. Our challenge will be to create social institutions that **value and benefit from racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity**, while at the same time guaranteeing opportunities for all.



National Commission on Testing and Public Policy (1990)

Goal: Enhance Cultural Understanding Essential to the Success of Even Start



1. Discuss culture, ethnicity, and poverty and how they are related to early literacy;
2. Describe challenges to and essential skills for promoting cultural understanding;
3. Activity: Practice communication skills required in situations ripe for cross cultural misunderstanding.

Even Start Families



- Increasingly diverse culturally
- Drawn substantially from among the poorest of our society

Even Start Families— Increasingly Diverse



- Increasingly Non-White (2000-01):

Hispanic	46%
White	30%
African American	19%
American Indian	3%
Asian	2%
- Increasing numbers of English language learners (ELL)

U.S. Department of Ed., 2005

Even Start Families— Also Very Poor



- Significantly poorer than Head Start families
- Most parents lack a high school diploma or GED (84%)

U.S. Department of Ed., 2005

Achievement Gaps



- Significant gap at K entry
- Hispanics and African Americans score well below mean in reading and math at K entry (ECLS-K)
- Data from NAEP show that this gap continues in 3rd grade & later

Culturally Competent Early Intervention Can Make a Difference



Early culturally sensitive intervention can reduce that gap.

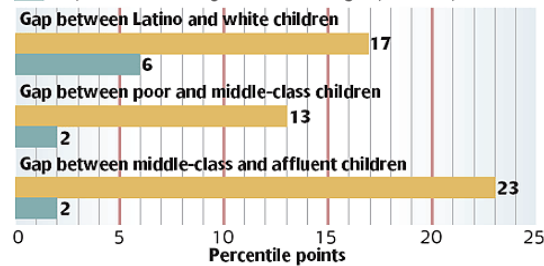
- *Quality Pre-school*
- *Family Support*



Achievement gaps in California

Achievement gaps exist between different groups of students tested in pre-reading skills at the beginning of kindergarten. But the gaps are much smaller among children who have attended preschool.

- Gap at start of kindergarten when neither group attends preschool
- Gap at start of kindergarten when both groups attend preschool



Source: Policy Analysis for California Education September 2014 Sacramento Bee/Mitchell Brooks

Ethnicity



- Group identity-psychological
- Based on shared origin, history, language, place
- Tied by common past and future



Culture



A dynamic and shared system of beliefs, morals, values, attitudes, practices, roles, artifacts, symbols, and language

A group's collective aspirations and wisdom about life

It infuses and is reflected in routines of daily living



Culture, Emotions, and Achievement



- Cultural demands
- Values
- World views

SHAPE

- Children's academic aspirations and social behaviors

CULTURE . . .




Culture interacts with:

- » Religion
- » Gender
- » Age cohorts
- » Geography
- » Education
- » SES



Why are Considerations of Culture Important for Even Start?



- Cultural and ethnic groups may have somewhat unique parenting practices that are intended to promote the skill that the family deems essential for self-sufficiency in that environment.
- Differences in **goals, discipline and control practices, and views of parental involvement** may create tension & misunderstandings between families and Even Start.
- When cultural differences are understood, respected, and included, positive relationships and outcomes can be achieved.

Cross-Cultural Competency Includes . . .



1. **Self-Awareness:** Knowledge of own heritage, values, beliefs, biases, and customs
2. **Effective Interpersonal Skills**
3. **Knowledge & Understanding** of the cultures and lives of those you serve

Qualities of Effective Cross-Cultural Communicators



- Respectful of other cultures
- Flexible in attitudes & behavior
- Empathic—sincere and persistent in attempts to understand the world from others' points of view
- Open to new learning
- Able to see humor in life
- Able to tolerate ambiguity



Lynch & Hanson, 2004

Initial Steps Toward Cultural Competence



- Get to know your students (background, special skills, early learning environment)
- Understand the language/culture child brings into classroom
- Avoid cultural stereotyping
- Integrate child's home values, beliefs, histories, and experiences

Domains of Cultural Knowledge Relevant to Even Start



- Family values, roles, goals, expectations
- Implications of early bilingualism for literacy: Impact and stages of English language learning
- Assessment: Culturally appropriate strategies
- Parenting styles: Cultural differences in discipline, support and control

Socialization Patterns among African American Children



- Responsible for self, independent, time alone
- Self care: Drinking, eating, dressing, assuaging pain
- Care for younger children
- In conflict in pre-k where they are expected to be dependent and wait for directions from adults; “bossy” with younger children

English Language Learners— a Cross-Cultural Challenge




- Bilingualism in Preschool
- Role of Home Language in Long-term Literacy
- English Language Acquisition



EVIDENCE



- Bilingualism confers cognitive/linguistic benefits
- Native language fluency predicts academic future
- Depends on model of language development: **Additive or subtractive**
- **Current concerns:** Fragile ELLs, language shift, English dominance



Video Representation of Diverse Family Literacy

*Interactions to Illustrate
Different Styles*


Insights from Working with (Im)migrant Families



- Traditional roles do not apply
- Talking across cultures
- Defining success: Life dreams
- “Funds of knowledge”



Research of G. Lopez (2001, 2002) Padilla Family



- Value of hard work
- Commitment to family
- Daughter: “I’m just expected to, you know, work hard and stuff . . . I guess if I work hard in school and stuff, I won’t have to work as hard as my mom and dad”.

Strategies to Enhance Cultural Competence



1. Consider staffing: Cultural and linguistic consistency
2. Training on cross-cultural competency
3. Exposure to/immersion in community culture and language
4. Monitor support for home, culture, & language
5. Learn from family about child and home

Strategy: Share Data on Child



- Take advantage of multiple forms of communication: personal, written, telephone, surrogates, visits, posters, churches, e-mail
- Provide opportunities for family to share information about the child within family
- Use structured forms to obtain information about child competencies and concerns (e.g., parent version of the ABLE)

We must better understand and truly respect our differences so we can unite in the common purpose of promoting all children's learning potential.



Cross-Cultural Communication Skill



Cross-Cultural Communication Dilemmas:

Case 1. Discipline and control styles in
African American families

Case 2. Parent–teacher relations in Hispanic
families

Reactions and Recommendations
