

# Promoting Cultural Diversity and Cultural Competency

## Self-Assessment Checklist for Agencies and Personnel Providing Supports to Children, Youth and Families

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

- A. Things I/We do frequently, or statement applies to me/program to a great degree
- B. Things I/We do occasionally, or statement applies to me/program to a moderate degree
- C. Things I/We do rarely or never, or statement applies to me/program at a minimal degree or not at all

### ***Space, Materials & Resources***

- We display pictures, posters and other materials that reflect the cultures and ethnic backgrounds of children, youth and families served by my program or agency.
  
- We ensure that magazines, brochures and other printed materials accessible to families and children are of interest to and reflect the different cultures of participants served by my program or agency.
  
- We intentionally seek out and use videos, films, CDs, DVDs, music or other media resources for information, education and interventions that reflect the cultures of children, youth and families served by my program or agency.
  
- We include food and refreshments in program activities that affirm the culture, ethnic and religious backgrounds of the participants and families who attend my programs.
  
- We ensure that toys and other play accessories used in reception or waiting areas and in assessments are representative of the cultures and backgrounds within the local community and society in general.

## ***Communication Styles***

- For participants who speak languages other than English, I attempt to learn and use key words in their language so that I am better able to communicate with them.
  
- I attempt to learn familial colloquialisms used by children, youth and families that may have an impact on engagement.
  
- I use visual aids, gestures and physical prompts in my interactions with children and youth who have limited English proficiency.
  
- I refrain from using professional jargon and language in my interactions with families.
  
- We have bi-lingual and multilingual staff or trained/certified interpreters available for children, youth and families who would prefer to communicate in a language other than English.
  
- When interacting with families with limited English proficiency, I keep in mind that
  - English proficiency is in no way a reflection on their level of intellectual functioning
  - Limited ability to speak the language of the dominant culture has no bearing on their ability to communicate effectively in their language of origin
  - They may or may not be literate in their language of origin
  
- When possible, my agency ensures that all notices and written communication to families are written in their language of origin
  
- We understand that it may be necessary to use alternatives to written communication for some families and that word of mouth may be a preferred method of receiving information

## ***Values and Attitudes***

- I use alternative formats and varied approaches to communicate and share information with children, youth and family members who experience disability.
  
- I avoid imposing values that may conflict or be inconsistent with those of cultures other than my own.
  
- We are intentional about discouraging the use of racial and ethnic slurs and helping participants and staff understand the harm certain words and actions can cause.
  
- I screen books, movies, music and other media resources for negative cultural, ethnic, racial or gender identity stereotypes before sharing them with children, youth and parents served by my program.
  
- My agency or program invests in training to inform staff on issues around bias, stereotyping, cultural sensitivity, micro-aggressions.
  
- We understand that family is defined differently by different cultures and we encourage participants to share their definitions of family.
  
- We recognize and accept that individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds may desire varying degrees of acculturation into the dominant or mainstream culture.
  
- We respect that male-female roles in families may vary significantly among cultures (e.g. who makes decisions for the family, play and social interactions expected of male and female children)
  
- We accept families as the ultimate decision-makers for services and supports for their children

- We recognize that beliefs and concepts of emotional well-being vary significantly from culture to culture.
  
- We understand that beliefs about mental illness and emotional well-being are culturally-based and that responses are influenced by culture.
  
- We understand that traditional approaches to discipline are influenced by culture.
  
- Prior to home visits or providing services in home, we seek information on acceptable behaviors, courtesies and expectations that are customary to the cultures and ethnic groups served by our program.
  
- I/we seek information from family members or other key community stakeholders that will assist in adapting services to respond to the needs and preferences of culturally and ethnically diverse children, youth and families served by my program or agency.
  
- I/we advocate for the review of our program's or agency's mission statement goals, policies and procedures to ensure that they incorporate principles and practices that promote cultural diversity and linguistic competence.

### ***How to Use this Checklist***

This checklist is intended to heighten the awareness and sensitivity of personnel to the importance of cultural diversity and cultural competence in human service settings. It provides concrete examples of the kinds of values and practices that foster such an environment, **There is no key with correct responses.** However, if you often answered "C" or did not have an answer, this may be a time to dedicate time and effort in boosting the knowledge, values and practices that promote culturally responsive practice and delivery systems for children, youth, families and communities, personally and programmatically.

Source: This checklist was developed by Tawara D. Goode, National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child & Human Development(2009) and adapted from Promoting Cultural Competence and Diversity in Early Intervention and Childhood Settings.