

The Cultural and Linguistic Competence Self-Assessment Checklist for Early Head Start and Head Start Programs is intended to increase awareness and sensitivity of administrators, program managers, and staff to the importance of cultural diversity and cultural and linguistic competence in Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Each of the sections provides real examples of the kinds of values and practices that foster culturally and linguistically competent Early Head Start and Head Start environments.

There is no answer key with correct responses, however, if you frequently respond “C,” you may want to take steps to increase your awareness, knowledge and skills in providing culturally and linguistically competent services for the current and future young children and families served by your program. We have provided links to additional resources below.

Cultural and Linguistic Competence Self-Assessment Checklist for Early Head Start and Head Start Program

DIRECTIONS

Please select A, B, or C for each of the items presented in this checklist.

A = Things I do frequently

B = Things I do occasionally

C = Things I do rarely or never

MY VALUES AND ATTITUDES

In our Head Start or Early Head Start program:

- ____1. I avoid imposing values that may conflict or be inconsistent with those of cultures or ethnic groups other than my own.

- ____2. I discourage children from using racial and ethnic slurs by helping them to understand that certain words can hurt others.

- ____3. I intervene in an appropriate manner when I observe any staff, consultant or parent engaging in behaviors that show cultural insensitivity, bias or prejudice.

- ____4. I recognize and accept that individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds may desire varying degrees of acculturation into the dominant culture.

MY VALUES AND ATTITUDES

In our Head Start or Early Head Start program:

- ____ 5. I understand and accept that family is defined differently by different cultures (e.g., extended family members, fictive kin, and godparents).
- ____ 6. I accept and respect that among different cultural groups male-female roles in families may vary significantly (e.g., who makes major decisions for the family, play and social interactions expected of male and female children).
- ____ 7. 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).
- ____ 8. 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.
- ____ 9. I accept that religion, spirituality, and other beliefs may influence how families respond to illness, disease, and death.
- ____ 10. I understand that the health care practices of families served may be rooted in cultural traditions.
- ____ 11. 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.
- ____ 12. 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 need.
- ____ 13. I understand that beliefs about mental illness and emotional disability are culturally-based.
- ____ 14. I accept that culture has a great influence on how parents, families and communities respond to these conditions and related treatment/interventions.
- ____ 15. I recognize that the meaning or value of early learning, early childhood education, early intervention, and/or school readiness may vary greatly among cultures.

MY VALUES AND ATTITUDES

In our Head Start or Early Head Start program:

- ____16. I understand that traditional approaches to disciplining children are influenced by culture.
- ____17. I understand that families from different cultural backgrounds will have different expectations of their children for acquiring toileting, dressing, feeding, and other self-help skills.
- ____18. I accept and respect that customs and beliefs about food, its value, preparation, and use are different from culture to culture.
- ____19. 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.
- ____20. I review my programs or agency's mission statement, goals, policies, and procedures to ensure that they include principles and practices that promote cultural diversity, cultural competence and linguistic competence.
- ____21. 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 Head Start and Head Start program.

COMMUNICATION STYLES

In our Head Start or Early Head Start program:

- _____1. I attempt to learn and use key words in the languages and dialects of the children and families served so that they are better able to communicate.
- _____2. I attempt to determine any familial terms used by children and families that will assist and/or enhance the delivery of services and supports.
- _____3. In my interactions with children, parents, and other family and community members with limited English proficiency or who are English language learners, I use visual aids, gestures, and physical prompts.
- _____4. When interacting with parents, other family and community members with limited English proficiency or who are English language learners, I always keep in mind that:
- _____ *
- _____ *
- _____ *
- _____5. I ensure that all bulletins, and notices to parents are written in their native or primary language.
- _____6. I understand that for some parents and family members it may be necessary to provide information in non-written formats, because word of mouth may be a preferred method of receiving information.
- _____7. I understand the definition and related practices of linguistic competency and I:
- _____ *
- _____ *

COMMUNICATION STYLES

In our Head Start or Early Head Start program:

- _____ 8. 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.
- _____ 9. I encourage and invite parents and family members to volunteer and assist with activities regardless of their ability to speak English.
- _____ 10. I use a variety of approaches and formats to communicate with children, parents and other family members with disabilities.
- _____ 11. For parents and family members who may require communication assistance (e.g. hard of hearing, visual disability, physical disability, low or no literacy), I arrange accommodations to ensure their full participation in all aspects of my Early Head Start or Head Start program.
- _____ 12. I use plain language in interactions with parent, family and community members.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS, MATERIALS, AND RESOURCES

In our Head Start or Early Head Start program:

- _____1. I hang pictures, posters and other materials that reflect the cultures and ethnic backgrounds of children and families we serve.
- _____2. I include materials for the dramatic play/housekeeping area that represent different cultures (including dolls, clothing, cooking utensils, household articles, furniture, and other items).
- _____3. I include pictures and storybooks in the book/literacy area that show the different cultures of children and families served.
- _____4. I make sure that toys and other play items that represent the various cultural and ethnic groups in my community and the society in general.
- _____5. I read a variety of books to children to expose them to various life experiences of people from ethnic and cultural groups other than their own.
- _____6. I provide opportunities for children and their families to create their own books and include them among the resources and materials in the classroom.
- _____7. I provide opportunities for children and their families to share experiences through storytelling, puppets, or other props to support the "story telling tradition" common among many cultures.
- _____8. 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.
- _____9. I select videos, films, or other media resources that reflect diverse cultures to share with children and families served in our program.
- _____10. I play a variety of music and introduce musical instruments from many cultures to the children in my classroom.
- _____11. I ensure that meals provided reflect the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of children and families served.
- _____12. I provide opportunities for children to prepare and/or sample foods typically served by different cultural and ethnic groups.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS, MATERIALS, AND RESOURCES

In our Head Start or Early Head Start program:

- _____13. If the children and families in our program are of the same cultural or ethnic group, I feel it is important to support an environment that reflects the cultural diversity within the society at large.

- _____14. I implement activities that reflect the cultural diversity within the society at large.

- _____15. I ensure that curricula include holidays that are unique to the culturally diverse children and families served in my program.