

# Guidelines for Exploring A Family’s Cultural Perspectives

Originally published for use by home visitors, K. I. Wayman, E. W. Lynch, & M. J. Hanson (1991) provide guidelines for exploring the influence of cultural values and preferences within the context of a family systems approach to intervention with young children and their families. They are not intended to be used as a checklist or interview protocol, but with some adaptations can be specifically tuned to help mental health consultants better understand a particular family’s attitudes, beliefs, values, and practices in order to design appropriate services, supports, and interventions. In turn, mental health consultants can help early care and education providers (including home visitors) adapt their approach to their work and learning about a family’s values and practices to individualize a child’s early care experience, assure continuity of care between home and the ECE setting, as well as assessing family needs and making appropriate referrals.

Listed below are the categories of guidelines with a brief description of how they can be used. A link to the full list is included at the bottom of the page.

## **PART I—FAMILY STRUCTURE AND CHILDREARING PRACTICES**

- FAMILY STRUCTURE

These guidelines will assist you in determining how decisions are made and can be beneficial when determining who to involve in the child’s developmental screening, the development of child goals, and in assessing the family’s strengths and needs.

- Family composition
- Primary caregivers(s)

- CHILDREARING PRACTICES

These guidelines will assist you in determining child rearing practices, developmental expectations, and family interactions and can be beneficial when determining how to understand a child’s behavior, plan for continuity of care between home and the child care setting, and assess family expectations for their child’s development.

- Family feeding practices
- Family sleeping patterns
- Family’s response to disobedience and aggression
- Family’s response to a crying infant

## **PART II—FAMILY PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES**

- FAMILY’S PERCEPTION OF HEALTH AND HEALING

These guidelines will assist you in determining beliefs and practices related to health and health care decisions and can be beneficial when determining important cultural and community resources and partnerships to meet the health needs of children and families.

- What is the family’s approach to medical needs?
- Who is the primary medical provider or conveyer of medical information?

- FAMILY’S PERCEPTIONS OF HELP-SEEKING AND INTERVENTION  
These guidelines will assist you in determining where families turn for health care services and supports and can be beneficial when determining important health related community resources, how and when to make appropriate referrals for services, and address concerns related to access, bias, discrimination, and stigma.
- FAMILY’S PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD’S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL (S/E) HEALTH CONCERN  
These guidelines will assist you in determining beliefs about the cause and influences on social emotional or behavioral concerns and can be beneficial when discussing a child’s social emotional development, the explanation for the child’s behavior and any concerns, and planning for intervention.

### **PART III—LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION STYLES**

- LANGUAGE  
These guidelines will assist you in determining the linguistic strengths and needs for effective interaction among the early care and education provider, the family, and the mental health consultant and can be beneficial when determining approaches to assuring clear communication such as using interpreters and translators.
- INTERACTION STYLES  
These guidelines will assist you in exploring and identifying non-verbal and interpersonal aspects of communication and relating to one another and can be beneficial when determining how to achieve effective communication, engage families, and build respectful working relationships with families and diverse cultural communities.

(K. I. Wayman, E. W. Lynch, & M. J. Hanson (1991). Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 10 (4), 56-75.)

A full list of these guidelines appears in the Annie E. Casey Foundation publication *Building culturally & linguistically competent services to support young children, their families, and school readiness* (pp. 47-49) available at <http://www.aecf.org/upload/PublicationFiles/HS3622H325.pdf>