What is Diversity in Early Childhood?

Children notice differences in appearance and behaviors from a young age. Their experiences in early education and care, with families and in the community creates opportunities to develop their self-identity. It is also an opportunity to encourage respectful and responsive relationships with others.

Cultural diversity in early childhood classrooms provide a range of opportunities for children and families to celebrate differences. It is one aspect of diversity, which also embraces differences in gender, disabilities, age, social, and economic backgrounds. It is about learning who the children are,

Cultural diversity promotes different cultures, racial and ethnic groups within our community.

Educators show their respect for diversity by celebrating those differences. As leaders in the classroom, we invite families to participate in their child's learning and add to the classroom community. Encouraging families to participate in cultural activities and programs strengthens children's self-identity and promotes an inclusive practice. Children can feel accepted and a crucial part of the classroom identity.

Diversity in Early Childhood Education

What are Quick Tips?: Concise guidance for Early Childhood Educators

Quick Tips provide early childhood educators, at all levels of practice, concise guidance on specific and relevant topics. Each Quick Tip is intentionally designed to inspire growth and learning, elicit reflection, and support best practices for all children and their families. Quick Tip content embraces inclusiveness across all topics and embeds inclusive practice throughout.



Early childhood educators have a role in promoting diversity in the classroom by:

- Honoring the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families.
- Recognizing that diversity contributes to the richness of our society.
- Respecting the diversity of families and communities, and the aspirations they hold for children, to foster children's motivation to learn and reinforce their sense of themselves as competent learners.
- Providing opportunities to learn about similarities and differences, and about interdependence and how we can learn to live together.

Early Educator Support Office



Reflective Questions

Does the artwork on the walls accurately reflect the children's lives or are the walls covered with store-bought, stereotypical images?

Are the families used as a resource for understanding and incorporating the child's culture into the classroom?

Do you create culturally responsive activities and what does that look like in your classroom?

How do your cultural values/cultural background impact how you reflect diversity in your classroom?

How might you use children's books, puppets, or other tools and props to engage children in discussions on fairness and kindness?

Resources:

- Barbara Kaiser and Judy Sklar
 Rasminsky (Teaching Young Children,
 Vol. 13, No. 2, Dec. 2019/Jan. 2020),
 Valuing Diversity: Developing a Deeper
 Understanding of All Young Children's
 Behavior.
 https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/dec2019/valuing-diversity-developing-understanding-behavior
- Petit Early Learning Journey
 Celebrating Cultural Diversity in Child
 Care. August 13, 2019.
 https://www.petitjourney.com.au/cultural-diversity-in-childcare/

NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development Guiding Principles

- Development and learning occurs across the full continuum. (GP #1)
- Each child is unique. (GP #2)
- Many factors influence a child's development. (GP #5)
- Each child develops within a culture. (GP #6)
- All children can learn and make progress. (GP #9)





NC Professional Teaching Standards

- Standard 2, Element A: Teachers provide an environment in which each child has a positive, nurturing relationship with caring adults.
- Standard 2, Element B: Teachers embrace diversity in the community and the world.
- **Standard 2, Element C**: Teachers treat children as individuals.
- Standard 2, Element D: Teachers adapt their teaching for the benefit of children with special needs.
- Standard 2, Element E: Teachers work collaboratively with the families and significant adults in the lives of their young children.
- Standard 3, Element C: Teachers recognize the interconnectedness of content areas/disciplines.