

Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Standards for Cultural and Linguistic Competence* in Early Care and Education Settings

* The terms "cultural and linguistic" refer to the diversity that stems from cultural, ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic background and differences in language, dialect, gender, ability, and sexual orientation. The term "competence" refers to the goals of respect and appropriateness that result in equitable and inclusive responses to diverse groups among children and families.

Standards and Indicators for Cultural and Linguistic Competence

The administrators and staff of the early care and education setting:

Standard 1 – Acknowledge that children are nested in families and communities with unique strengths.

Indicator 1a: Program encourages two-way communication with families by (a) coordinating informal gatherings at the program, (b) utilizing drop off and pick up times as opportunities to communicate, (c) agreeing on effective modes of communication (e.g., notes, phone, e-mail), (d) developing a family or parent council, or (e) hosting family themed events.

Indicator 1b: Program policies reflect value for children's home languages and culture.

Standard 2 – Recognize and mitigate the tension between the early childhood profession's perceptions of the child as the focus of the work versus the family as the focus of the work.

Indicator 2a: Teachers participate in professional development about family engagement.

Standard 3 – Build on and identify the strengths and shared goals between the profession and families and recognize commonalities to meet these goals.

Indicator 3a: Teacher identifies families' short and long term goals for their children and aligns goals to classroom objectives.

Standard 4 – Understand and authentically incorporate the traditions and history of the program participants and their impacts on child-rearing practices.

Indicator 4a: Teachers highlight the presence of all families and children in the program.

Indicator 4b: Teachers invite families in the program to share information about their cultural backgrounds. Families are encouraged to share artifacts, music, stories, or other culturally-relevant information with teachers and class.

Standard 5 – Actively support each child's development within the family as complex and culturally/linguistically-driven.

Indicator 5a: Program invites families to define their ethnicity or culture.

Indicator 5b: Classrooms are equipped with appropriate instructional resources such as books and manipulatives that expose children to role models from their own and other cultural backgrounds.

Standard 6 – Recognize and demonstrate awareness that individuals’ and institutions’ practices are embedded in culture.

Indicator 6a: Teachers are provided the time and resources necessary to interact with children and families outside of the program setting and in the communities where they live.

Indicator 6b: Families provide input and feedback on program policies. Policies are modified as appropriate.

Standard 7 – Ensure that decisions and policies reflect respect for participants’ culture, language/dialect, socioeconomic status, gender, ability, sexual orientation, values, attitudes, beliefs, and approaches to learning.

Indicator 7a: Program establishes a language policy that embraces children’s home language and determines a set of goals for children (e.g., bilingualism for all children).

Indicator 7b: Staff use children’s home language for multiple learning purposes.

Standard 8 – Ensure that policies and practices build upon the home languages and dialects of the children, families, and staff and support the preservation of home languages (and dialects).

Indicator 8a: Program collaborates regularly with staff and parents to develop an environment that reflects an appreciation for diversity.

Standard 9 – Equalize balances of power; counter stereotyping and bias through intentional practices.

Indicator 9a: Staff attend professional development opportunities on countering stereotypes and anti-bias through intentional teaching.

Indicator 9b: All forms and documents are reviewed to ensure they are free from bias.

Standard 10 – Develop staffing that reflects the community and families served.

Indicator 10a: Teacher recruitment policy includes commitment to a staff that reflects the children and community served.

Standard 11 – Ensure that program curriculum includes activities that promote an awareness of, respect for, and appreciation of individual cultural and linguistic differences.

Indicator 11a: Classroom lesson plans include meaningful/relevant activities regarding cultural and linguistic differences.

NAEYC. (2010). Pathways to Cultural Competence Project Program Guide and Teacher Checklist.

NAEYC. (2010). Are We Supporting Diversity? A tool for Reflection and Dialogue” Work/Family Directions, Inc. and California Tomorrow, Copyright 1999, revised 2006 by Hedy N. Chang.

NAEYC. (2009). Quality Benchmark for Cultural Competence Project.