



Culturally Responsive

Guidelines for Professional Development



Washington State Department of
Early Learning

Professional development that supports full participation of the early learning educator is grounded in the learning relationship, builds on the knowledge and experiences of the adult learner and embraces each individual's strengths rooted in their unique culture, heritage, language, beliefs and circumstances.

Cultural Responsiveness:

The ability to learn from and relate respectfully with people of your own culture as well as those from other cultures.



The culturally responsive guidelines provide a lens for professional development creation, delivery and evaluation for everyone involved in professional development of early childhood educators.

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Introduction

Every early learning professional in Washington has diverse strengths rooted in their unique culture, heritage, language, beliefs, and circumstances. Professional development that supports the full participation of every early learning professional builds on these strengths by fostering a sense of belonging and supporting positive professional relationships. The Culturally Responsive Guidelines reflect the importance of diversity in the early learning field. Included is the understanding and commitment to build on adult learning principles and the best practices that adults learn within the context of their culture.

Section 13.3 parts a and b of the Early Start Act, passed by the Legislature on July 6, 2015, charged the Department of Early Learning with recommending guidelines to guide early learning professional training.

ESA Section 13.3

(a) The department shall review available research and best practices literature on cultural competency in early learning settings. The department shall review the K-12 components for cultural competency developed by the professional educator standards board and identify components appropriate for early learning professional development.

(b) By July 31, 2016, the department shall provide recommendations to the appropriate committees of the legislature and the early learning advisory council on research-based cultural competency standards for early learning professional training.

Workgroup Members

To address the above Legislative charges the Department of Early Learning (DEL) convened a Professional Development Cultural Considerations Workgroup (Workgroup). Due to the nature of the task, the invitation to join the Workgroup was sent to community organizations and experts with an emphasis on those knowledgeable in the Department of Early Learning's professional development work and Washington's early learning Racial Equity Theory of Change. Although the composition of the Workgroup changed over the three months of meetings due to individual availability, the organizations and committees invited to participate in the feedback included:

Child Care Aware	Early Achievers Review Subcommittee	School's Out Washington
Children's Alliance	Indian Policy Early Learning	Thrive Washington
Community Minded Enterprises	Nisqually Tribe	Voices of Tomorrow
City of Seattle	Northwest Indian College	Washington State University
DEL's internal divisions	OneAmerica	Wenatchee Valley College
ESD 105 (Migrant Education)	Puget Sound ESD	Western Washington University
ESD 112	SEIU 925	Whatcom Community College
Early Learning Advisory Council	Seattle Colleges	Yakima Valley Community College

Findings and Recommendations

After a review of current research and existing resources, such as the Head Start Multicultural Principles, the Workgroup considered the structure of professional development at the DEL. Although many DEL professional development guiding documents discuss culture, there is little agreement on the focus areas in these documents. Based on these considerations, the Workgroup recommended the creation of a guiding document with common principles to guide the discussion and implementation of cultural responsiveness.

They further recommended that these guidelines not be an additional stand-alone document, but rather the concepts should be woven into existing documents and work. To support that goal, the Culturally Responsive Guidelines for Professional Development were developed to provide a framework to strengthen the cultural responsiveness in the training, competencies, and standards for early learning professional development.

The Guidelines will:

- Serve as a statewide resource for everyone involved in professional development of early childhood educators by providing expectations for professional development creation, delivery, and evaluation.
- Outline essential information to enhance the cultural responsiveness of professional development in Washington State.
- Provide a lens for the continuous quality improvement of the professional development system and professional competencies.

Culturally Responsive Guidelines for Professional Development

“Culture is central to identity. Culture defines who we are, how we think, how we communicate, what we value and what is important to us... Every area of human development, which defines the child’s best interest, has a cultural component. Your culture helps define HOW you attach, HOW you express emotion, HOW you learn and HOW you stay healthy.”¹

Every early learning professional in Washington has diverse strengths rooted in their unique culture, heritage, language, beliefs, and circumstances. Professional development that supports the full participation of every early learning professional builds on these strengths by fostering a sense of belonging and supporting positive professional relationships. The Culturally Responsive Guidelines reflect the importance of diversity in the early learning field and highlight the importance of helping early learning professionals better serve and relate to all children with unique cultures, heritages, languages, beliefs, and circumstances. Included is the understanding and commitment to build on adult learning principles and the best practice of adults learning within the context of their culture.

With an understanding that professional development is a process that takes time and that cultural responsiveness is an ongoing part of continuous quality improvement, this document provides a framework to strengthen the cultural responsiveness in the competencies and standards for early learning professional development.

The Guidelines:

- Serve as a statewide resource for everyone involved in the professional development of early childhood educators.
- Provide expectations for professional development creation, delivery, and evaluation.
- Outline essential information to enhance the cultural responsiveness of professional development in Washington State.
- Provide a lens for continuous quality improvement of the professional development system and professional competencies.

Culturally Responsive Guidelines for Professional Development

- 1. Cultural Humility:** Be open to new information and knowledge. Follow cultural protocol which is available in the public domain when seeking knowledge about histories, traditions, values, family systems and artistic expressions. Acknowledge wisdom keepers and knowledge holders as valuable resources to honor and recognize traditional teachings.
- 2. Self-Awareness:** Reflect on one’s own privilege, personal values, perceptions and beliefs. Invest time exploring one’s own implicit biases, recognizing opportunities for growth and how personal and professional values may challenge or support adult learning and change.
- 3. Diverse Workforce:** Support and advocate for a diverse workforce of adult educators, who reflect the local community, to build diversity within the profession.
- 4. Access:** Strive to reduce barriers by increasing the availability of quality professional development. Support the strengths and needs of culturally and linguistically diverse early learning professionals.
- 5. Empowerment:** Create learning environments that inspire early learning professionals to find and use their voice. Support early learning professionals to engage in shared leadership and responsibility that leads to positive outcomes for children, individually and collectively. Advocate for early learning by participating in the sharing and receiving of information to advance professional development and workforce needs.

6. **Ethics and Values:** Deliver professional development in accordance with the values, ethics, and standards of the profession and national early care and education standards. Understand institutional racism and how power balance impacts the communities served
7. **Community Building:** Recognize community members as leaders and content experts, and therefore, pull from the wealth of knowledge and experience within the community. Support early learning professionals to engage in shared leadership and responsibility that leads to positive outcomes for the field.

Definitions to support the use of the Guidelines

Culturally responsiveness: The ability to learn from and relate respectfully with people of your own culture as well as those from other cultures.

Racial equity: When social, economic, and political opportunities cannot be predicted based upon a person's race.

Cultural protocol: The customs, lore and codes of behavior of a particular cultural group and a way of conducting business.

Wisdom keepers and knowledge holders: A respected person of any age within the community who has the trust, knowledge, and understanding of their culture and the permission to speak about it.

Implicit biases: The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.

Shared leadership: Recognize the roles and partnerships necessary to embrace community and share responsibility for positive outcomes for the field.

Implementation

Use the Culturally Responsive Guidelines in the review and revision of existing documents and trainings as needed. Each document revision should include the Culturally Responsive Guidelines, including the introduction, principles, and new common language. Revisions will begin with the following key documents:

- Trainer Competencies
- Core Competencies
- Early Learning Guidelines
- Relationship Based Professional Development Competencies

DEL, trainers, and higher education institutions may use the Culturally Responsive Guidelines as a common reference point when determining culturally responsive policy and practice.

Process and Timeline

In their first meeting the Workgroup closely reviewed the legislative charges, to determine the steps to move forward effectively with the charge. From this meeting the Workgroup set the following goals:

- Develop a document that details important elements of cultural responsiveness in professional development that will guide future professional development work and be used to review and revise existing documents.
- Agree on common language to be used in conversations around professional development work and across all the documents.

Over the course of three months, the Workgroup met in person and via webinar to meet these goals.

Summary of Workgroup Activities in 2016

March

- Individuals with backgrounds in early learning and culturally responsive education are invited to an initial webinar to review the Early Start Act Requirement. These individuals form the Culturally Responsive Workgroup. Workgroup members are encouraged to invite others to participate.
- Workgroup members review the K-12 Components for Cultural Competency developed by the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB), current research and best practices, and a history of culturally responsive education at the Department of Early Learning. Workgroup members also review a brief that compiled the existing documented culturally responsive education references in DEL Literature in one place.

April

- A meeting is held to draft a summary of the Workgroup's goals, review a summary of current DEL resources and definitions which guide professional development for early learning professionals, review DEL-created research brief, and gather input regarding additional resources that may be missing from the research brief.

May

- The Workgroup holds two meetings to create and refine a draft of the Culturally Responsive Guidelines. The initial draft document that the workgroup used as a framework was adapted from National Association of Social Workers' Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice: <https://www.socialworkers.org/practice/standards/naswculturalstandards.pdf>

June

- DEL shares the current draft of the guidelines from the Workgroup and gathers feedback from the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC), Indian Policy Early Learning (IPEL), and the Early Achievers Review Subcommittee (EARS).
- The Workgroup holds two final meetings to refine a draft of the Culturally Responsive Guidelines.

Mid July

- DEL creates a draft of this report with the Culturally Responsive Guidelines and suggested uses from the Workgroup.

July 31

- The final report is sent to the appropriate committees of the Legislature.

Existing Competencies and Definitions

It was the opinion of the Workgroup that there needed to be common vocabulary and that the term Cultural Competence was out of date. The term Cultural Responsiveness was adopted to guide this work. Cultural Responsiveness, for the purpose of this work, is defined as follows: 'Cultural Responsiveness' is the ability to learn from and relate respectfully to people of your own culture as well as those from other cultures.

The *K-12 Components for Cultural Competency*, developed by the Professional Educator Standards Board, contain the following definition for cultural competency:

- [Legislative definition of Cultural Competency \(SSSB 2261\) provided to the K-12 system \(2009\)](#)
 - Section (2), "**cultural competency**" includes knowledge of student cultural histories and contexts, as well as family norms and values in different cultures; knowledge and skills in accessing community resources and community and parent outreach; and skills in adapting instruction to students' experiences and identifying cultural contexts for individual students

However, there is no mandated definition identified within the Early Start Act itself. In addition, the existing professional development documents use a variety of words and definitions when referencing culture.

- [Relationship Based Professional Development \(RBPDP\) competencies definition of Cultural Sensitivity](#)
 - **Cultural sensitivity** is the recognition that there are differences between cultures. These differences are reflected in the ways that different people communicate and relate to one another.
- [Early Learning Guidelines definition of Culture](#)
 - **Culture** is the unique collection of beliefs, practices, traditions, values, world views and histories that characterize a group of people. Culture is expressed in patterns of language, behavior, customs, attitudes and practices. Members of a group absorb cultural knowledge by observing their elders and participating in activities of the group. Individuals and families may self-identify as part of a particular culture but may not follow all the practices and beliefs of that culture.
- [DEL Standards Alignment Definition of Cultural Humility](#)
 - **Cultural humility** is the “ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the [person]. *American Psychological Association AND/OR*

Racial Equity - The condition that would be achieved if one’s racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. *W. K Kellogg Foundation.*
- [Early Achievers Cultural Competency Training](#)
 - **Cultural competence** is the ability to effectively respond to children from different cultures while valuing and preserving the dignity of cultural differences and similarities between individuals, families and communities. It is an understanding of the hidden rules within different economic and cultural structures in order to have productive relationships with children and families.
- [School’s Out Washington \(WA State Core Competencies for Child and Youth Development Professionals, 2011\)](#)
 - **Culture** is defined as the intersection of one’s national origin, religion, language, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, age, gender identity, race, ethnicity, and physical/developmental ability.
 - **Cultural Competency and Responsiveness** is to understand diversity within and across cultures and provide an inclusive, welcoming, and respectful environment where all children, youth, and families can take pride in their cultural identities, beliefs, and practices. Culture is defined as the intersection of one’s national origin, religion, language, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, age, gender identity, race, ethnicity
- [University of Washington Coaching Framework](#)
 - **Culture** is the unique collection of beliefs, practices, traditions, valued competencies, world views, and histories that characterize a group of people.
 - **Cultural competence** requires holding and practicing a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that enable effective interactions with youth within a cross-cultural framework (Cross, Bazron, Dennis & Isaacs, 1992).
- [NAEYC Definition of Culture](#)
 - **Culture** includes ethnicity, race identity, economic class, family structure, language, and religious and political beliefs, which profoundly influence each child’s development and relationship to the world.
- [Core Competencies for Child and Youth Development Professionals Definitions](#)
 - **Culture:** Culture encompasses the evolving identities, beliefs, and practices derived from the intersection of one’s national origin, religion, language, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, age, gender identity, race/ethnicity, and physical/developmental ability.

K-12 Comparison

In accordance with the Early Start Act, the K-12 components for cultural competency which were developed by PESB were reviewed during the development of the Culturally Responsive Guidelines. In addition to the change in definition noted above, the Workgroup modified the Guidelines due to new research and best practices as well as the differences between the Early Childhood Professional workforce and the K-12 workforce. However, the two documents' major themes had some alignment.

K-12 Components for Cultural Competency	DEL Culturally Responsive Guidelines
<p><i>Professional Educator Standards Board</i></p>	<p><i>Department of Early Learning, Professional Development Division</i></p>
<p>Component 1.0: Professional Ethics within a Global and Multicultural Society</p> <p><i>Ethical and moral concepts and practices that undergird Equity, Civil Rights and Cultural Competence for education professionals and systems.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Rights • Social Justice 	<p>Ethics and Values: Deliver professional development in accordance with the values, ethics, and standards of the profession and national early care and education standards. Understand institutional racism and how power balance impacts the communities served.</p>
<p>Component 2.0 Civil Rights and Nondiscrimination Law</p> <p><i>An understanding of State and Federal Civil Rights and Non-discrimination laws.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Rights Law • Safe Schools 	<p>Access: Strive to reduce barriers by increasing availability of quality professional development. Support the strengths and needs of culturally and linguistically diverse early learning professionals.</p>
<p>Component 3.0 Reflective Practice, Self-Awareness & Anti-Bias</p> <p><i>Awareness of one's own cultural background and how it influences perception, values and practices. Understanding of structural benefits and privileges and how they mold educational practices and organizations. Ability to find and use tools, processes and programs that promote professional & organizational self-examination and assessment in order to mitigate behaviors and practices (e.g.: racism, sexism, homophobia, unearned-privilege, euro-centrism, etc) that undermine inclusion, equity and Cultural Competence in education.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Societal advantages • Cosmology, Spirituality, Creed, and Religion • Understanding Culture and Identity 	<p>Self-Awareness: Reflect on one's own privilege, personal values, perceptions and beliefs. Invest time exploring one's own implicit biases, recognizing opportunities for growth and how personal and professional values may challenge or support adult learning and change.</p> <p>Be open to new information and knowledge. Follow cultural protocol which is available in the public domain when seeking knowledge about histories, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions. Acknowledge wisdom keepers and knowledge holders as valuable resources to honor and recognize traditional teachings.</p>

K-12 Components for Cultural Competency	DEL Culturally Responsive Guidelines
<p>Component 4.0 Repertoires of Practice for Teaching Effectiveness for Culturally Diverse Populations</p> <p><i>An understanding of the broad range of experiences and groups that students bring to the classroom and how those experiences impact learning. The ability of individuals and systems to work effectively with students and the communities they are from.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally Responsive School/Classroom • Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: Equity Pedagogy • Language • Partnerships with Families and Communities 	<p>Community building: Recognize community members as leaders and content experts and therefore pull from the wealth of knowledge and experience within the community. Support early learning professionals to engage in shared leadership and responsibility that leads to positive outcomes for the field.</p>
N/A	<p>Diverse Workforce: Support and advocate for a diverse workforce of adult educators, who reflect the local community, to build diversity within the profession.</p>
N/A	<p>Empowerment: Create learning environments that inspire early learning professionals to find and use their voice. Support early learning professionals to engage in shared leadership and responsibility that leads to positive outcomes for children, individually and collectively. Advocate for early learning by participating in the sharing and receiving of information to advance professional development and workforce needs.</p>

Sources

- Based on Department of Health and Human Services. (2008). Revisiting and Updating the Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs Serving Children Ages Birth to Five. Retrieved from http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/resources/ECLKC_Bookstore/PDFs/Revisiting%20Multicultural%20Principles%20for%20Head%20Start_English.pdf
- NASW Standards for Cultural competence in Social Work Practice: <https://www.socialworkers.org/practice/standards/naswculturalstandards.pdf>
- Racial Equity Toolkit to Assess Policies, Initiatives, Programs, and Budget Issues http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/RSJI/RacialEquityToolkit_FINAL_August2012.pdf
- 2015 Annual report from the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC) 2015: [EOGOAC2015 AnnualReport.pdf](http://www.k12.wa.us/WorkGroups/EOGOAC.aspx)
- EOGOAC Website: <http://www.k12.wa.us/WorkGroups/EOGOAC.aspx>
- NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs Position Statement: <https://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/ProfPrepStandards09.pdf>
- Erikson Institute Preparing Early Childhood Teachers to Successfully Educate All Children: The Contribution of Four-year Undergraduate Teacher Preparation Programs, Project on Race, Class and Culture in Early Childhood <https://www.erikson.edu/wp-content/uploads/Teacherred.pdf>
- Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Early Childhood Teacher Preparation: The impact of Contextual Characteristics on Coursework and Practica, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Dissertation by Chih-Ing Lim <https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/indexablecontent/uuid:2c87780c-78cc-4806-b7e1-1bbece9109c>
- Culture in the Classroom By Alison Levy http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=141
- Interculturalism: Addressing Diversity in Early Childhood by Leslie Ponciano and Ani Shabazian http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/upload/pdf/Interculturalism___Addressing_Diversity_in_Early_Childhood___Leslie_Ponciano_and_Ani_Shabazian.pdf
- The Changing Face of the United States: The Influence of Culture on Early Childhood Development http://main.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/Culture_book.pdf?docID=6921
- The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children Recommended Practices in Early Intervention <http://dec.membershipsoftware.org/files/Recommended%20Practices/DEC%202014%20Recommended%20Practices.pdf>
- DEC Code of Ethics <http://dec.membershipsoftware.org/files/Position%20Statement%20and%20Papers/Member%20Code%20of%20Ethics.pdf>
- DEC Position Statement: Responsiveness to ALL Children, Families, and Professionals: Integrating Cultural and Linguistic Diversity into Policy and Practice
- Full <http://dec.membershipsoftware.org/files/Position%20Statement%20and%20Papers/Health%20Position%20Statement.pdf>
- Executive summary dec.membershipsoftware.org/files/Position%20Statement%20and%20Papers/Executive%20Summary%20Culture.pdf
- Head Start Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness website <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic>
- National Education Association (NEA) Diversity Toolkit: Cultural Competence for Educators <http://www.nea.org/tools/30402.htm>
- Cultural Protocols for Indigenous Reporting in the Media
- http://pzja.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/TSSAC-27-August-2008-Meeting-46_5.1A-abc-cultural-protocol.pdf
- Understanding Implicit Bias, Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity
- <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/research/understanding-implicit-bias/>

Child's Connection to Culture: Cultural Protocols, Secretariat of Aboriginal and Islander Child Care

<http://www.supportingcarers.snaicc.org.au/connecting-to-culture/cultural-protocols/>

Muriel Bamblett (2006), VACCA 2010a, Building Respectful Partnerships: The Commitment to Aboriginal Cultural Competence in Child and Family Services, Melbourne: VACCA, p. 13