

Honoring Your Families' Cultures



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Introductions and Ice Breaker



- Introduce yourself to a partner
- Share your motivation for attending this workshop
- What are your interests in becoming a culturally responsive program?



Review Outcome, Objectives, Agenda, and Materials



Session Outcome



Participants will develop a culturally responsive Early Learning & Development Program



Session Objectives



- Participants will examine their own cultural experiences and beliefs
- Participants will examine why it's important to provide a culturally responsive Early Learning and Development Program (ELDP)
- Participants will explore how to be linguistically responsive to their families
- Participants will explore and select strategies to support children's cultures and home languages

What is “Culture”?



Culture



- **“Refers to how particular groups of people live. It is the way we eat, sleep, talk, play, care for the sick, relate to one another, think about work, arrange our kitchens, and remember our dead. It includes the languages we speak, the religion or spirituality we practice (or do not), and the clothing, housing, food, and rituals/holidays with which we feel most comfortable.” -Louise Derman-Sparks & Julie Olsen Edwards**

Reflective Activity



- **Think about your family culture. Write down and/or draw some of the most important elements of your family's culture.**
- **What feelings surface in regards to your family culture? Pride? Shame? Identity? Confusion? Belonging? Other feelings?**

Reflecting on Our Own Identity



Ask yourself:

- In your heart of hearts, do you believe some of the messages that declare members of your own social identity groups (racial identity, gender, economic class, ability, etc.) to be inferior (or superior) in some ways?
- If so, what are these messages? Where did you learn them?
- How has internalizing these messages affected your life so far?
- How might your belief of these messages affect your work with children and families?
- What would it take to eliminate these messages from your thinking and behavior? If you did, what would be the result?

Adapted From *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves*,
Derman-Sparks, L. & Olsen Edwards, J. p. 27

The Importance of Knowing Yourself



- **Understanding your own cultural and societal identities and being aware of your feelings and beliefs will make it easier to think about how you respond to children and families**
- **Being in tune with your many social identities and identifying any triggers may make it easier to respond to children and families**
- **Uncovering your own uncomfortable feelings due to a lifetime of learning certain attitudes, stereotypes and biases will help you be more responsive to your families**

Why Is Understanding Cultural Identity Important?



Assumptions lead to generalizing or stereotyping

Can you name some stereotypes you've heard about an individual, a certain group, or yourself?

How have these thoughts/beliefs influenced your work with children and families?

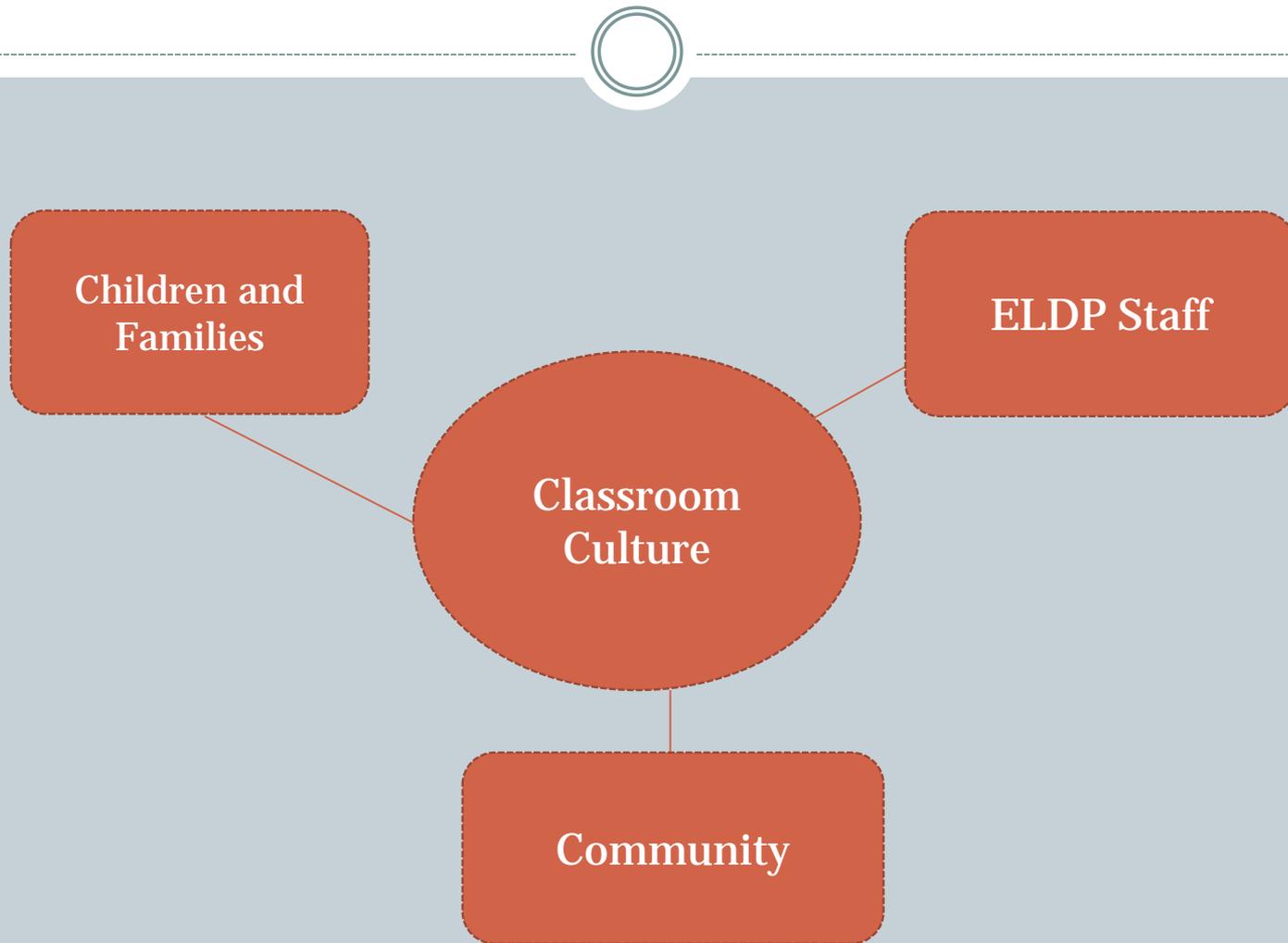


Multiple Cultures



- **Individual/family**
- **Dominant (not necessarily the largest population)**
- **Understanding where you and your classroom community fit into the dominant culture will help you to understand how to better respond to children and families**

Influences on Your Classroom Culture



Why Honor And Reflect Each Child's Culture?



- Beginning in early childhood, children develop their cultural identity and other social identities
- Children in the dominant culture more likely feel supported whereas children from differing cultural backgrounds are more likely to have negative experiences
- Early childhood educators have the unique opportunity to support children in valuing their cultural identity while forming a new social identity within the classroom and larger society

Early Childhood Educators and Culture



- Want to honor each child and family's culture but often look at surface aspects (i.e., costumes, holidays, food, etc.)
- Culture is more than what we see on the surface (i.e., values, family relations, ideas about education, religion, showing emotion, adult-child relationships, roles of children etc.)
- Cultural group is related to one's ethnicity which a person may or may not identify with and may or may not reflect aspects in their daily lives.

Early Childhood Experiences...What Research Tells Us



Unless adults support and guide children at home and in other settings, children may internalize what they'll interpret is “right” and “wrong” about how they live, possibly leading to prejudice (their way is the “right” way) or feelings of not-belonging (their way is the “wrong” way)

Early Childhood Educator's Opportunity



- You are often the first people in the larger society to regularly see and interact with children
- Honoring and reflecting the lives of children in natural and positive ways can help ease the transition for children and families (what are the messages being received by families as they enter the classroom?)
- By learning about the various cultures in your program, you can support children and families (i.e., pronouncing names correctly)
- Reflecting the various cultures in classroom materials...on walls, in books, on labels and toys, etc.

Cultural Continuity



- Children will thrive when they are in a setting with adults who integrate a family's culture into the classroom setting, showing sensitivity and respect for the children and families
- If this doesn't happen, children may feel unsafe, shame, uncomfortable, etc.



Resources



- Developmentally Appropriate Practice
Carol Copple and Sue Bredekamp, editors
- Reflecting Children's Lives,
Deb Curtis and Margie Carter
- Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves,
Louise Derman-Sparks and Julie Olsen Edwards

Break



Moving From Why to HOW



- How can we be purposeful about creating a linguistically responsive ELDP?



Brainstorm Activity



- In your groups, come up with a list of ways an ELDP can be linguistically responsive to children and families?



Linguistically Responsive Strategies



- Children's cubby names in home languages
- Labels in home languages
- Books in home languages
- Signs in home languages
- Children's/family members' names pronounced correctly
- Child/family greeted in home language
- Child/family "good-byed" in home language
- Music played in home language
- Family/community members share language (read books, puppet shows, etc. in home language)
- Child encouraged to write in home language
- Common daily phrases (Where would you like to play? What would you like to eat? Do you need some help? Do you need to use the bathroom?) learned in child's home language
- Counting, colors, etc. learned by staff in home language
- Class can learn songs, poems, counting, colors in English and other home languages of children in the program

Compare/Share/Add to List



- **What else did your group come up with that could be added to our list?**

Classroom Tour With Fresh Eyes



- Take 5 minutes to think about your classrooms silently.
- Observe/document how teachers, children, and families lives are reflected.
- What are the invisible/underlying ways that culture is valued?

How to Respect and Honor Families' Cultures



- **Learn about the families in your program**
- **Understand practices of cultures other than your own and problem solve how to best address those differences**
- **Reflect on your own cultural and societal identities**
- **Allow yourself time to learn and grow (this will not always be easy . . . learn from mistakes and keep on trying)**
- **Individualize your curriculum to reflect the families**

Continued



- **Prioritize ongoing communication with families to create a respectful climate that incorporates compromise and thoughtful discussion**
- **Respect each family's home language**
- **Seek support from your supervisor**
- **Attend training in anti-bias education**

Quality Rating and Improvement System



- In the domain of Learning and Development many of the standards have a focus on inclusion and culture.
- Some examples:
 - “Shelves or containers with toys, books, etc., labeled with words in the languages of all the children in the program”
 - “Represents the culture of the community”
 - “Includes some written materials in the children’s home language”

QRIS Continued



- “Activities designed to promote understanding of cultures represented in the program”
- “Activities designed to promote understanding of cultures beyond those represented in the program”
- “Interactions with persons who are culturally or linguistically diverse”
- “Some activities in children’s home languages such as singing or storytelling”

What We Want For Our Classrooms



- The children to feel pride in their cultures.
- Children and families to feel comfortable and valued when in the classroom.
- Representation of the teachers', families', and community's cultures in the classroom.
- How do we do this?



Activity: Strategies Which Honor Families' Cultures



- **Fill out the Self-Evaluation**
- **Discuss in your groups any other strategies not listed on the form**
- **Groups share/add additional ideas**

Now What? Tools For Planning



- **Start small!**
- **Identify a goal (may or may not be based on self-evaluation)**
 - Be Specific and Realistic
 - Give Yourself a Timeline
 - How will you celebrate when the goal has been met?

Planning Out Your Goal



- Can highlight on your self-evaluation any other goals you plan to implement
- Share with others at your table



Evaluation/Certificates/Conclusion



*There are many ways that cultural differences
are taught to young children.*

***Everything** we do
tells children about how we see the world
and what we think of others.*



Thank you for your participation! 😊