

Introduction to Child Care Course (Learning Plan 10)

Respecting Diversity (3 hours)

Overview: In this Learning Plan you will explore how to create an environment that is respectful of the diverse variety of children, families and staff in child care settings.

Target Competency: Demonstrate respect for diversity among children and families.

Learning Objectives:

- a. Review Wisconsin's Administrative rules and regulations regarding nondiscrimination in family and group child care settings
- b. Identify strategies that respect cultural differences among children and families
- c. Guide children's behavior to foster respect for diversity
- d. Practice strategies for communicating and working with diverse families
- e. Explore cultural differences affecting child care
- f. Identify strategies to accommodate the diversity of children in your care

Required Resources:

Internet links:

- Wisconsin Administrative Licensing Rules and Regulations for Family Child Care-
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/4069.pdf>
- Wisconsin Administrative Licensing Rules and Regulations for Group Child Care-
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/4024.pdf>
- Culturally Sensitive Child Care video
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bw_9z_m6EFQ&feature=related

Introduction

Respecting diversity begins with acknowledgement of differences and recognizing the value that diversity brings into the child care and family settings. Respecting differences means removing personal judgments and instead opening up to learning a new approach or way of doing something. Some differences are outward such as noticing the color of someone's skin, the clothing someone wears, or an accent heard when someone speaks, but diversity also includes things that are not seen or heard as well.

Valuing difference is displayed when there are intentional efforts to engage and explore with children and families to learn who each is and where they come from. These efforts occur both spontaneously, in our conversations and actions and also in the thoughtful planning of materials and interactions within the learning environment. This is not about showcasing

difference – it is about seeing diversity as an opportunity to learn and grow. A willingness to have conversations, where time and space is created to talk about differences, allows for the expansion of knowledge and understanding.

The promotion of diversity within child care environments provides opportunities:

- to recognize that every person is special and valuable
- to teach children and families about their own culture
- to introduce children and families to other cultures
- to encourage children and families to respect other cultures
- to teach children how to talk to and play with people who are different from them
- to help families and children be part of a group
- to help children and families live happily and cooperatively in a diverse world

To better understand the expectations on nondiscrimination in family and group child care, **review the Wisconsin Administrative rules and regulations.**

Assignment:

Follow this link to view the clip, *Culturally Sensitive Child Care*,

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bw_9z_m6EFQ&feature=related

Identify at least 5 types of diversity you might find in a child care program, keeping in mind that diversity includes more than just what you can see.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Strategies to respect cultural difference

Begin by learning about the children and families that are currently enrolled in your program. This must be done each time a new child enrolls, a new group of children transition to a classroom. Learning about children and families is ongoing. A child intake form can provide important information that will allow a child care provider to better understand the needs, expectations, experiences, and backgrounds of the families within the program.

Below are some questions that could be considered to use on an intake form to learn about the culture or diversity of the families within the program:

- What kinds of things do you enjoy doing as a family?
- Are there family traditions/cultures that you would be willing to share in our classroom?
- What are your expectations of child care?
- Tell us about your past experiences with child care.
- What is your preferred method of communication between your family and _____(name of program)? Phone, Email, Note in cubby
- Tell us about your family. Who lives in your household? Does your child have more than one household that s/he spends time at?
- Tell us about the different occupations members of your family have. Are you interested in sharing these in our classroom?
- Are there holidays or special days your family celebrates? How do you celebrate?
- Please share any other information you are comfortable sharing that will help us to better care for your child.

Invite families to share information about their own experiences, whether related to culture, occupations, or other interests by coming into the program or donating items that reflect who they are (clothing items, posters, food containers, music, games).

Display family photos throughout the learning environment. Encourage families to bring in photos or take a picture of a child and their important person at drop off or pick up time.

Provide opportunities for children to talk about and honor their own culture.

Engage children while reading books. Encourage children to talk about their own experiences with the particular topic in the book. For example, when reading The Napping House, you could ask children questions like; where do you sleep at home or at school? Some children might have a family bed (like the one in the story becomes) or other children might have separate bedrooms or share a room with a sibling. Pets might also share beds or sleep on the floor. In child care, everyone has their own cots or mats. You can engage in conversation about how there are lots of different ways to sleep.

There may also be spontaneous opportunities to discuss diversity. Be prepared and willing to talk to children about differences and similarities. Sometimes children ask difficult questions,

use inappropriate words, or say unfair things. Helping children to respond in an appropriate and respectful way guides children to foster respect for diversity, seeing differences in a positive light.

Introduce positive language and model how to respond respectfully.

Help children think about how the words and actions used by another can hurt people's feelings.

Incorporate materials into the learning environment (blocks, dramatic play, music, fabric, meals/cooking activities) that represent all children. Consider; race, gender, age, abilities, culture.

Fostering respect for diversity

Incorporating materials and photographs in your program that honor diversity brings the opportunity to help children foster respect for diversity. It provides a safe way to talk about difference with trusted adults and other children. Below are some tips for discussing diversity.

Using the words "all" or "everyone" when talking about people, practices, or preferences can contribute to stereotyping. Try replacing "all" or "everyone" with "some." Compare the following statements:

Everyone eats dinner sitting down at the dining room table.	Some people eat dinner sitting down at the dining room table.
All grandmas bake cookies and give hugs.	Some grandmas bake cookies, some play the piano and some ride bikes. Grandmas can do lots of different things.
All children get presents at Christmas.	Some families celebrate Christmas and exchange presents.

The first column of statements is more reflective of a personal belief or practice. The second statement still honors the personal belief while acknowledging other practices. Try using the word "some" when you encounter different practices in books or materials.

For example, you might be playing with play people in the block area with an older female figurine wearing glasses and using a cane. You might say, "Some people wear glasses to help them see or use a cane to help them walk." You might also ask children if they know anyone who needs glasses or a cane. Using the word "some" is one way to acknowledge that difference is okay. Different is never better or worse, it's just different.

There are many cultural differences that could affect child care. Consider the many types of diversity when working with all children and families:

Race
Gender
Culture
Abilities

Occupations
Lifestyles
Ages
Income levels

Sexual Orientation
Religion
Language
Family Structure

Assignment:

Write a brief paragraph on what you can do to help children learn to be respectful of diversity.

Assignment

Diversity Book list

Research and create a list of 10 books that represent respect for diversity (anti-bias). Include how you will use the book to teach within the learning environment and how it will promote respect for diversity.

1.

Title and Author of Book:
How will it be used?
How does it promote respect for diversity?

2.

Name of Book:
How will it be used?
How does it promote respect for diversity?

3.

Name of Book:
How will it be used?
How does it promote respect for diversity?

4.

Name of Book:
How will it be used?
How does it promote respect for diversity?

5.

Name of Book:
How will it be used?
How does it promote respect for diversity?

6.

Name of Book:
How will it be used?
How does it promote respect for diversity?

7.

Name of Book:
How will it be used?
How does it promote respect for diversity?

8.

Name of Book:
How will it be used?
How does it promote respect for diversity?

9.

Name of Book:
How will it be used?
How does it promote respect for diversity?

10.

Name of Book:
How will it be used?
How does it promote respect for diversity?

Assignment

Scenarios – how would you respond?

Instructions: For the three scenarios listed, describe how you would handle the situation.

1. Aiden is a three-year-old child whose parents come from another country. You have an activity planned that involves a sensory experience using dirt and water. Aiden's mother has indicated that she would prefer that Aiden not participate in activity where he may get his clothes dirty. Aiden is really interested in getting involved in these messy types of activities. What might you say to Aiden's mother to obtain her permission for Aiden to participate?

2. ABC Child Care Center has a separate nap room for infants and toddlers that has a darkened window between the child care room and the nap room to allow the caregiver to see napping children. Latasha is a 6-month-old child who is new to care and the teacher has noticed that Latasha become fussy and agitated when placed to sleep in the nap room. Describe what steps you might take to figure out what is going on with Latasha and to determine what you might do to allow her to sleep during her child care time.

3. Your child care program celebrates each child's birthday with a special treat; a hat and having all the children sing Happy Birthday to the child. Lia is from China and her family does not celebrate birthdays at all. How can you respect Lia's family's non-celebrating choice while allowing the other children to celebrate their birthdays without causing more confusion for Lia?

Resources

Teaching children to be respectful of diversity requires continued learning, a willingness to accept others and recognizing a variety of perspectives. As you continue in your child care career, you will want to have resources to turn to. Below is a list of some of the resources to consider. Take some time to look at these sites as well as locating others on your own.

www.naeyc.org – The National Association for the Education of Young Children has articles, DVDs, books, posters, brochures, and resources to share with families both on their website and also for sale in their online store.

www.putumayo.com - World music designed for children. Many CDs feature popular children's music set to a different beat.

<http://www.ellajenkins.com/> - A performer with 50 years of multi-cultural musical experience.

www.teachingforchange.org - This site offers help choosing children's books that promote respect and encourage discussions.

www.oyate.org – An organization dedicated to Native American culture in the lives of young children.

<http://nbcidi.org/> - An organization dedicated to improving the lives of African American children and their families through education and advocacy.

<http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/> - The Cooperative Children's Book Center at the University of Wisconsin, Madison offers bibliographies on a wide range of topics. Their website also offers a wide range of resources, including organizations and individuals committed to enhancing early childhood experiences through literature.

www.adl.org – The Anti-Defamation League offers a checklist for choosing anti-biased children's books

Assignment

Identify 3 resources on diversity that might be helpful to you as a child care provider.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.