Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

*Shaping Our Future: Innovation, Leadership and Advocacy in Early Learning and Child Care Conference*

*Ottawa 2016*

Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development

Every opportunity for every child from the start
Agenda

• What does diversity, equity & inclusion mean to you?

• Acculturation attitudes

• How Does Learning Happen?

• How do we create inclusive-positive settings

• Recipes for critical-reflective practice
Professional Learning Goals

• To understand the impact the features in our society has on immigrants

• To develop practices based on research on immigrants

• To rethink our understanding of family centred practices

• Heightened sense of awareness - unpacking biases; focusing on are unintentional biases as a result of our privileges

• Development of culturally responsive practice
Large Group Activity

What does diversity, equity and inclusion mean to you?
Acculturation Attitudes

• Assimilation – Newcomers adjust and adapt, if necessary by abandoning their native traditions, beliefs, and behaviors, in order to fit into the new society.

• Segregation – Newcomers are separated or marginalized from society and denied equal access to its institutions and entitlements.

• Integration - Newcomers are expected to understand and respect basic Canadian values, and Canadians are expected to understand and respect the cultural differences newcomers bring to Canada.

(Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2001)
Small Group Activity

- Review the image individually
- Write down your assumptions about the people in the image
- Share your assumptions with other group members
- What did you learn?
Gaps in our knowledge, are filled up with assumptions
Assumptions based on limited knowledge and experience

Families everywhere are the same, they must be the same as I am...their priorities must be the same...

Overgeneralization: claiming universal truths.
Challenges Immigrants Experience

• New immigrant parents of young children experience a loss in parenting self-efficacy (PSE), and experience a sense of helplessness.

• Immigrants conceal their cultural identity in an attempt to gain social status.

• Immigrants are presented with considerable linguistic and cultural barriers when immersed in North American society.

• Immigrants and their children never ever truly feel a sense of belonging to the culture of the majority.

(Ali, 2008; Souto-Manning, 2007)
WHY do immigrants experience constraints???

- Power imbalances as a result of historical, political, social and cultural features in our society.

- Existing practitioner practices uses a deficit model, highlighting children and their parents’ inability to speak English, their difficulties in communicating with mainstream others, and the need to “fix” these problematic “others”.

- Exercising agency is difficult for parents when the normative images and processes they use in raising their child are different from those used by the dominant society around them.

(Ali, 2008)
## Factors Influencing the components of immigrant parenting

### Orientation & Style
- Age/maturity of parent
- Developmental stage of child
- Size of family
- Gender of child
- Child’s/parent’s personality
- Culture and religion

### Canadian Context
- Length of time in Canada
- Level of contact with other Canadians
- Presuppositions held to interpret culture around them

### Modifications
- Length of time in Canada
- Level and speed of adaptation
- Amount of support received
- Economic/employment status
- Strength of traditional values

### Contributions
- Amount of support received
- Level and speed of adaptation
- Receptivity and tolerance of new community
- Opportunities for multicultural exchange

(CREHS & CERIS, 2001)
How Does Learning Happen?

• Educators are competent and capable

• Curious and rich in experience

• Knowledgeable, caring, reflective, and resourceful professionals

• They bring diverse social, cultural and linguistic perspectives

• They collaborate with others to create engaging environments and experiences to foster children’s learning and development

(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014)
How Does Learning Happen?

Children are understood from a strength based approach:

- Competent, capable of complex thinking, curious and rich in potential
- Every child should feel that he or she belongs
- Is a valuable contributor to his or her surrounding
- Deserves the opportunity to succeed

(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014)
How Does Learning Happen?

Families are composed of individuals who are competent and capable, curious and rich in experience

(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014)
Case Studies
**Pedagogy** – The method and practice of teaching.

**Culturally Relevant Pedagogy** - pedagogy that empowers individuals intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes.

(Ladson-Billings, 1994)
Equity & Inclusion

The supports and resources we offer to families

Family Uniqueness - Concept requires that practitioners learn how to work with families as individuals, how to communicate with families effectively, and how to develop cultural self-awareness to understand the ways our own beliefs influence our work.

(Harry, 1992)
An “Informed Not Knowing”

- Moves away from relying on our assumptions and overgeneralizations.

- Aware of personal biases, values and assumptions about human behavior.

- The family is the “expert” and the practitioner is in a position of seeking knowledge and trying to understand what life is like for the family.

- Acquire knowledge from the family with whom they are working, and remain open to new information.

(Furlong & Wight, 2011)
Partnerships with families and communities strengthen the ability of early childhood settings to meet the needs of young children.

• Our job isn’t to “fix” families, but rather to COLLABORATE and PARTNER with them.

• Resist telling parents what to do! Instead ask yourself, ‘How can I help parents become more confident about decisions they are making? How can I help them become more competent in their ability to carry out their decisions?’

• Work together with the family, to create mutually acceptable responses to the family’s requests.

Respect for diversity, equity, and inclusion are prerequisites for honouring children’s rights, optimal development, and learning.

- Spend the time to build relationships
- Actively listen to families
- Understand the appreciate, the complexity, of how families deal with problems
- Hear what are parents’ aspirations and hopes are for their children

Recipe for Success

• Not simply ‘celebrating’ holidays
• Not simply including images and props in the classroom without being intentional and incorporating into program
• Include photos of the children and their families when permitted
• Include activities that have meaning to the children
• It is about bias free material, that normalizes children’s experiences
• Inclusive practice vs. “othering”
• Promoting children’s and families cultural identity
RECIPE FOR SUCCESS
Critically Reflective practice

• Self reflection as well as appreciative inquiry

• Journaling to track your observations, behaviours (assumptions you make, shifts in your own attitudes and values)

• Policies and practices within your program, organization
## Framework for Anti-Bias Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry points</th>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Thinking</th>
<th>Responding</th>
<th>Sharing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are children, teachers, and families thinking about?</td>
<td>What feelings come up for you?</td>
<td>What might be meaningful to explore with the children?</td>
<td>How do you implement a curriculum that supports learning?</td>
<td>How do you share anti-bias learning by communicating process and outcomes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider what you</td>
<td>Consider how you</td>
<td>Consider planning</td>
<td>Consider how you could</td>
<td>Consider the ways you can share with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See in children’s play</td>
<td>Feel initially</td>
<td>Individually</td>
<td>Respond in the moment</td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See in the news</td>
<td>React initially</td>
<td>With your team</td>
<td>Respond long-term</td>
<td>Teachers (each other)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hear families talking about</td>
<td>Respond based on your personal experiences</td>
<td>With colleagues</td>
<td>Revisit or expand on the issue with children</td>
<td>Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think about yourself</td>
<td>Feel about discussing a topic with children or families</td>
<td>By doing more research about a topic</td>
<td>Make topics accessible to children</td>
<td>Colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to do to listen carefully to children and families</td>
<td></td>
<td>By analyzing and reviewing documentation</td>
<td></td>
<td>The early childhood education field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Might document to determine possible entry points</td>
<td></td>
<td>Whether an issue feels appropriate to discuss with the program’s children and families</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Problem: Time Constraints!!!

Solution: Begin small.
References


Centre for Research and Education in Human Services (CREHS) Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement (CERIS), 2001.


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