

Culturally Sensitive Care — A Way to Build Relationships with Families

One aspect of your role as a preschool teacher is to learn about each family's beliefs about child-rearing practices. The following steps may be helpful as you think about building relationships with each family.

- Engage in communication with family members at the beginning and end of each day about the child's care, activities, interests, and moods.
- Communicate to family members that they are always welcome to visit or call to check on their child.
- When working with families from a culture different from your own, it can be helpful to seek out a cultural liaison or cultural mediator to help you and your colleagues understand the family's beliefs about child rearing.

“Acknowledge, Ask, Adapt”

Step 1: Acknowledge

The first step in culturally sensitive care is a step of recognition in which you use your growing awareness of the existence of different cultural assumptions about child development. A willingness to be open with yourself is essential to the success of this step.

Step 2: Ask

The second step is an information-gathering step. The goal is to gather information you need about family members' cultural beliefs and values, as well as your own cultural beliefs and values, so that together with family members, you can solve misunderstandings, conflicts, or problems that may arise because of differences in beliefs during the third step. *Note: Do not rush the second step.*

Step 3: Adapt

In this last problem-solving step, you use the information gathered in step two to resolve conflicts caused by cultural differences and find the most effective way to support each child's growth.

Derman-Sparks, L. (1995). Developing culturally responsive care-giving practices: acknowledge, ask, and adapt. *Infant/Toddler Caregiving: A guide to culturally sensitive care* in P.L. Mangione, (Ed.), *Infant toddler caregiving: A guide to culturally sensitive care*. Available from the California Department of Education and West Ed (<http://www.wested.org/resources/program-for-infant-toddler-care-module-iv-culture-family-and-providers/>)