
Participant's Guide

Creating Cultural Connections In Child Care

Sessions 1 and 2, 6 hours total

Session A

Overview

Creating Cultural Connections in Child Care, Session A

Core Competencies

This session addresses the following Core Competencies:

V 1b. Respects the family's role as primary educator.

V 1d. Acknowledges the varying structures and cultures of children's families.

V 2b. Is aware that his/her interactions with children

V 2c. Supports child's relationship with his or her family.

V 2f. Respects and supports cultural and linguistic differences and diverse family structures.

Parent Aware Area

Teaching and Relationships

Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- *Define culture as it relates to self and others.*
- *Describe how cultural factors can influence interactions with children and families;*
- *Complete a self-assessment on cultural and linguistic competencies and identify ways to use the information to improve program quality.*

Session Overview:

Time	Section	Overview
15 minutes	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome and Introductions• Review class objectives• Brainstorming – Rules for class conduct
70 minutes	Demographic changes and Definitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation – Background demographics• Activity – Feeling different• Activity – Defining and reflecting on culture• Activity: defining terms
10 minutes	Break	
20 minutes	Working with Culture and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PITC activity—When I was a Child
25 minutes	Bias and Self-reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation – What does bias behavior look like?• Activity – Self Reflection
30 minutes	Children and bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion – What are caregivers currently doing to promote diversity?• Presentation – Celebrating holidays
10 minutes	Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion – Session summary• Activity – Reflection• Discussion – Assignment
3 hours total		

Session A

Defining Terms

Define the following terms using your own words.

Bias

Culture

Discrimination

Family

Prejudice

Recommended Resources

Center of the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)

<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>

CLASS Assessment Tool

<http://www.teachstone.org/about-the-class/>

Keep the Cool in School – a series of articles by Dr. Bruce Perry on promoting non-violent behavior in children. The articles can be found at www.scholastic.com. Go to the Teachers tab and search “keep the cool in school.”

Self-Assessment Checklist for Personnel Providing Services and Supports in Early Intervention and Early Childhood Settings

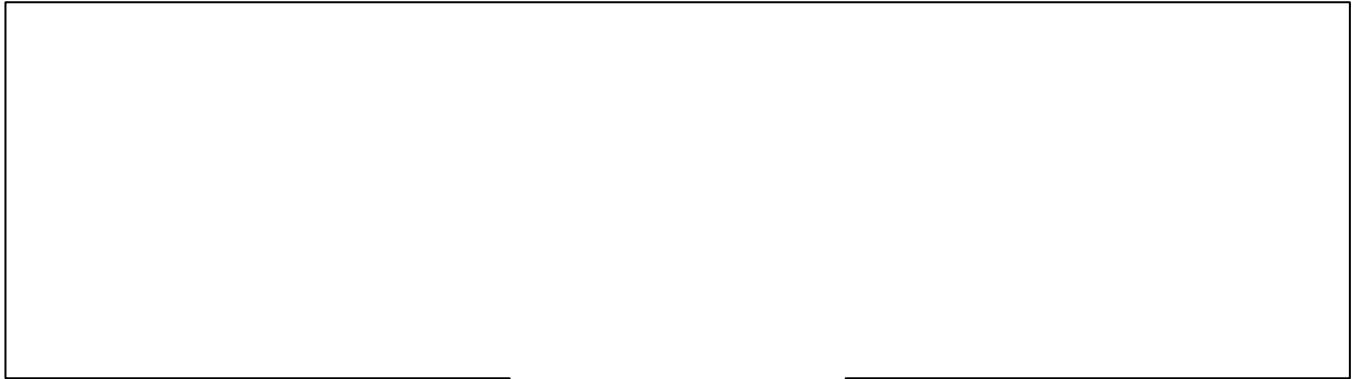
http://gucchd.georgetown.edu/products/NCCC_EIECChecklist.pdf

Strengthening Families – A Protective Factors Framework

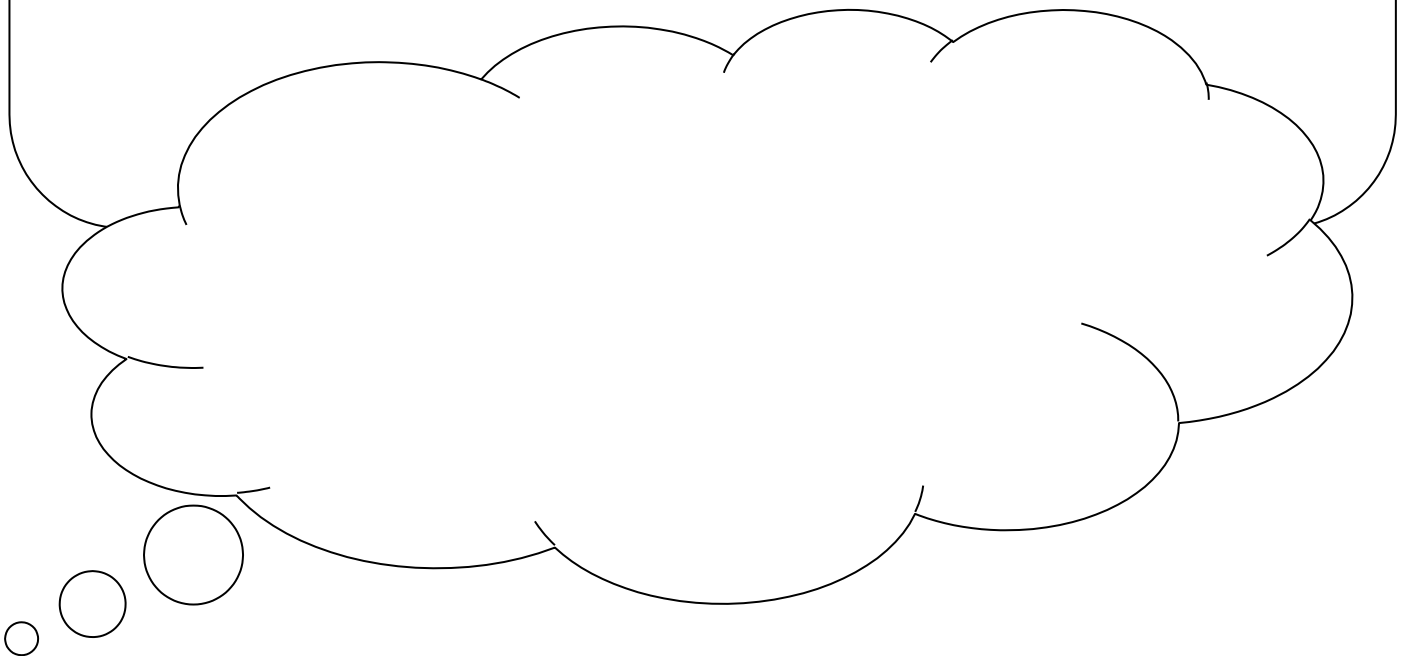
<http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families>

Reflection

Take a few minutes to reflect on what you have learned in this session of this class. Use the spaces below to capture your ideas and plans for action.



Based on what I learned, some things I plan to do ...



Session A – Assignments

1. Use Acknowledge-Ask-Adapt to learn more about at least one of the families of the children you work with.

What is Acknowledge-Ask-Adapt¹? We briefly talked about this three step process when you want to discuss something with a parent. This process comes from the Program for Infant-Toddler Care, but it is something that is helpful no matter what age children you work with (and even communication in general).

ACKNOWLEDGE: Reflect and Listen

Communicate awareness of the issue

Convey sincere interest and responsiveness

Involve family in seeking a joint solution

ASK: Learn About the Parent's Point of View

Gather data, clarify

Pay attention to verbal and non verbal responses

Restate what you think the parent is saying

ADAPT: Work with Family Toward a Solution

Listen for areas of common agreement

Negotiate around important issues

Seek win-win solutions

Adapted from: Mangione, P.L. (Ed.). (1995). *Infant/toddler caregiving: A guide to culturally sensitive care* (pp. 42-44). Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education. This document may be reproduced for educational purposes.

Session B Overview

Creating Cultural Connections in Child Care, Session B

Core Competencies

This session addresses the following Core Competencies:

V 1C. Responds appropriately to parent questions, and/or refers them to supervisor or service agency in the community.

V 1d. Acknowledges the varying structures and cultures of children's families. V2c. Supports the child's relationship with his or her family.

V 2g. Recognizes stress factors affecting families.

V4c. Supports parents in meeting the challenges of their family goals and lifestyles.

Parent Aware Area

Teaching and Relationships

Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Identify and discuss ways to promote family centered care.

¹ From the Program for Infant-Toddler Care. See <http://www.pitc.org/cs/pitclib/query/q/2915?name=acknowledge&x-template=pitclib.search.form>

- Explore underlying cultural beliefs of individualism and collectivism and how they may present in early care and education settings.
- Practice perspective-taking with diverse points of view between families and providers.

Session B Overview:

Time	Section	Overview
20 minutes	Introduction/story & scenario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and Introductions • Story—multiple approaches
20 minutes	Presentation/discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family centered approach in child care
20 minutes	Contrasting perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrasting Perspectives on Child Rearing practices article
60 minutes	Acknowledge/Ask/Adapt: Communicating with Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review acknowledge ask adapt and back home application experiences • Large group brainstorm: routines/activities where parent and caregiver may differ • Reflection on beliefs • Scenarios: discuss and practice Acknowledge/Ask/Adapt
10 minutes	Break (inserted into part of above section)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
40 minutes	Recognizing and Responding to Family Risk Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation – Recognizing risks • Presentation – Factors influencing family involvement •
10 minutes	Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss – Session summary • Discussion – Reflection
3 hours total		

The Protective Factors Framework

Five Protective Factors are the foundation of the Strengthening Families Approach: parental resilience, social connections, concrete support in times of need, knowledge of parenting and child development, and social and emotional competence of children. Research studies support the common-sense notion that when these Protective Factors are well established in a family, the likelihood of child abuse and neglect diminishes. Research shows that these protective factors are also “promotive” factors that build family strengths and a family environment that promotes optimal child and youth development.

Parental Resilience

No one can eliminate stress from parenting, but a parent’s capacity for resilience can affect how a parent deals with stress. Resilience is the ability to manage and bounce back from all types of challenges that emerge in every family’s life. It means finding ways to solve problems, building and sustaining trusting relationships including relationships with your own child, and knowing how to seek help when necessary.

Social Connections

Friends, family members, neighbors and community members provide emotional support, help solve problems, offer parenting advice and give concrete assistance to parents. Networks of support are essential to parents and also offer opportunities for people to “give back”, an important part of self-esteem as well as a benefit for the community. Isolated families may need extra help in reaching out to build positive relationships.

Concrete Support in Times of Need

Meeting basic economic needs like food, shelter, clothing and health care is essential for families to thrive. Likewise, when families encounter a crisis such as domestic violence, mental illness or substance abuse, adequate services and supports need to be in place to provide stability, treatment and help for family members to get through the crisis.

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Accurate information about child development and appropriate expectations for children’s behavior at every age help parents see their children and youth in a positive light and promote their healthy development. Information can come from many sources, including family members as well as parent education classes and surfing the internet. Studies show information is most effective when it comes at the precise time parents need it to understand their own children. Parents who experienced harsh discipline or other negative childhood experiences may need extra help to change the parenting patterns they learned as children.

Social and Emotional Competence of Children

A child or youth’s ability to interact positively with others, self-regulate their behavior and effectively communicate their feelings has a positive impact on their relationships with their family, other adults, and peers. Challenging behaviors or delayed development create extra stress for families, so early identification and assistance for both parents and children can head off negative results and keep development on track.

Look over the Strengthening Families website at:

<http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families>

Did you find any resources that you would use and/or share with families? If able, complete the Strengthening Families Online Self-Assessment. This is available

at: <http://www.cssp.org/publications/neighborhood-investment/strengthening-families/top-five/family-child-care-providers-self-assessment.pdf>

NOTE: Although the assessment is for family child care providers, it can be completed by anyone working in an early care and education setting.

About the assessment: The Strengthening Families self-assessment is one of the foundational tools for the Strengthening Families Initiative. It was developed based on a year-long study of exemplary program practice across the country. Close to 100 programs participated, 21 exemplary programs received two-day site visits. The self-assessment takes the learning from these programs and translates it into a simple tool to look at program practice.

The self-assessment helps programs look at what they are doing to build protective factors in seven key practice areas. The self-assessment is designed to help programs both identify their strengths and provide concrete and actionable areas where they can strengthen their practice.

The self-assessment is easy to use and help programs identify practical changes that will enhance their ability to build protective factors.

Strengthening Families Action Plan (adapted from Washington State Early Achievers initiative).

Step 1: Identify Your Goals

- Review your Strengthening Families Self-Assessment
- Identify questions where you responded (if you completed the assessment using the Center for Study of Social Policy online database, you can readily access your information via their system)
- Identify which is a goal that is within reach and which ones may require more resources and support
- Prioritize your goals. You can begin with short term goals, or goals that will have the most profound impact

Step 2: Complete Action Plan Template

- Define the **Outcome/Goal** you hope to achieve. An example could be, "I want all parents and family members to feel welcome and involved". **It is important to note that you define the outcome based on your self-assessment results and long term goals for your program. There*

might be many Strengthening Families strategies and item numbers that support your ultimate outcome.

- Identify the Strengthening Families Program Strategy and Item Number. (See below for examples)
- Define the Action Step(s) you will take or implement in order to meet your outcome/goal. Some Action Step(s) will require more planning and may need their own Action Plan to complete. Consider the following criteria when creating the steps:

- Are they specific? Is there a clear description of what should be done?
- Are they observable? Will you be able to see that they are happening?
- Are they achievable? Will you know when the step has been completed?
 - Identify the resources you will need to meet your outcome/goal
 - Designate who is responsible. It could be you, a member of your staff, a parent or all of the above.
 - Define your time frame – when do you hope to accomplish your outcome/goal?
 - Define how you will know that you have been successful.

BELOW IS AN EXAMPLE FROM THE *Washington State Early Achievers initiative*

Desired Outcome: <i>I want all parents and family members to feel welcome and involved</i>			
Strengthening Families Strategy(s) and Item Number(s):			
1. Strategy 1 – Facilitate friendships and mutual support #1 - A comfortable space is available for families to meet informally #3 - The program connects families with similar interests, children’s ages and circumstances #4 - The program provides opportunities for families to socialize and fosters a sense of community #7. Program staff reach out to isolated families			
2. Strategy 2 – Strengthen Parenting #4 - Opportunities are created for parents to explore #7 - Parents are invited to visit and observe their children participating in programming, where appropriate, and talk with staff about observations and questions			
3. Strategy 7 - Value and Support Parents #1 - The program encourages parents to be active in making decisions about their children’s education #12 - The program welcomes fathers and other male family members			
Action/Steps	Who	By When	How Will I Measure Success
I will create a space for parents in the lobby or a designated room of their home for conversation	Director/owner and parent volunteer	October 1, 2013	Space is created in main entrance

<p>Steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Move reception desk to create more room 2. Ask families for donated coach or chairs in Parent Newsletter 3. Ask for parent volunteer to assist with moving furniture 			
<p>A potluck for families once a year</p> <p>Steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meet with staff and/or families for feedback 2. Draft policy 3. Share draft policy at staff meeting and/or with parents 4. Finalize 	<p>Director or family child care provider</p>	<p>December and May yearly</p>	<p>Policy added to program handbook and events are added to program calendar</p>

Contrasting Perspectives on Caregiving Practices by Janet Gonzalez-Mena

You know the old saying, “There are two kinds of people in the world?” This piece isn’t about two kinds of people. It is about two different perspectives on what children need most. Into the first perspective fits most of the professional orientation of early childhood educators and early childhood special educators. That perspective is an individualistic one. It goes something like this: babies are born into the world completely dependent and unaware that they are separate human beings. The early lessons must be to get them to accept the fact that they are separate individuals and can become more and more independent as they grow. The ultimate goal is when an individual can stand on his or her own two feet and be his or her own person. That doesn’t mean that the individual is alone in the world. Of course, relationships are important too. But relationships are expected to happen naturally as the child becomes socialized. It’s the independence and individuality aspects of development that must be stressed because they don’t seem natural to those with an individualistic perspective.

Into the other perspective fits 70% of the world population (Triandis). That perspective is a collectivistic or communitarian one. It goes something like this: babies are born into the world with strong tendencies to be independent individuals and they must be coaxed into understanding that they aren’t alone, but in fact, are part of a group of other people. The early lessons must be to get them to accept the fact that they are permanently tied to those around them and that group needs take priority over individual ones. With the proper care, the older they grow, the more attached they become. The goal is life-long ties. Of course, individual attributes, talents and skills are important, but because they serve the group; they aren’t for the glory of the person. Individuality and independence are seen to come naturally; that’s why group membership must be stressed.

Parents raise their children according to which perspective is strongest and it influences their child rearing practices down to specific ideas like how much to *hold babies*; when and where to *put them down to sleep*; when and how to *toilet train*; how long to *spoon feed*. Some families’ orientation is based on a clear perspective and has strong set of priorities to go with it. Others are less clear about their priorities. All families combine elements of individualism and collectivism, but the emphases are different.

The point is not to analyze people in order to classify them, but rather to talk to them so you can understand the meaning behind what you may consider questionable behavior, like toilet training before a year old or spoon feeding three year olds.

No matter how uncomfortable one feels about the perspective that isn’t theirs, one way isn’t right and the other wrong. Both work for rearing healthy children. They may have different outcomes as far as the strength of the commitment to family and balance of group needs to individual needs; but which ever perspective you take, it’s hard to ignore the wisdom of this quote:

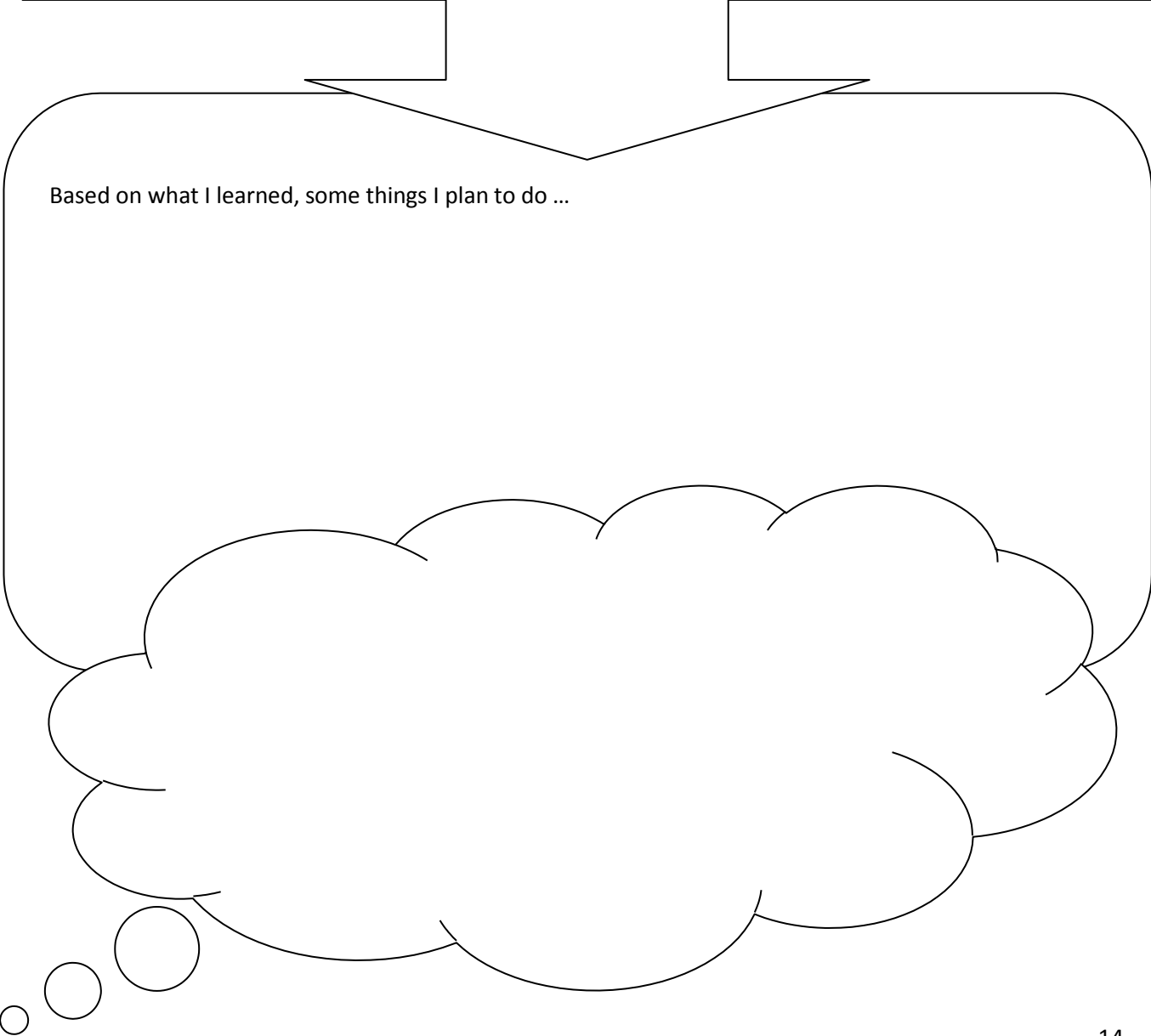
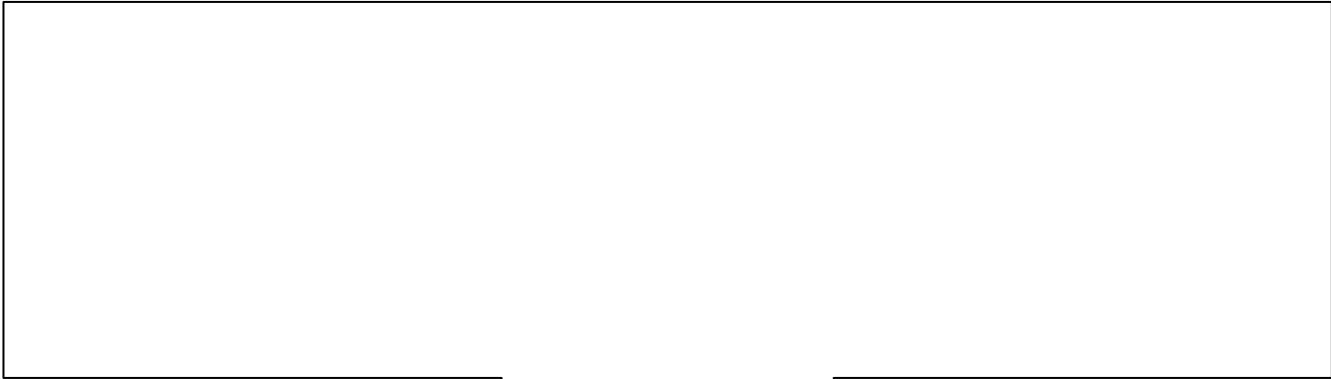
“Individual commitment to a group effort – that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.” –Vince Lombardi

Factors Influencing Family Involvement in Child Care Programs

- Diverse cultural values and practices
- Language Barriers
- Perceived imbalance of power
- Personal history with school or child care programs
- Assumptions
- Time/Logistics

Reflection

Take a few minutes to reflect on what you have learned in this session of this class. Use the spaces below to capture your ideas and plans for action.



Based on what I learned, some things I plan to do ...

Additional Resources of Interest

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/Ifserver/Legacy/DHS-2917-ENG>

Test Yourself for Hidden Bias. (n.d.) Teaching Tolerance

<http://www.tolerance.org/activity/test-yourself-hidden-bias>