Using Community Assessment to Advance Cultural Competence and Racially Equitable Outcomes for Young Children and Their Families

National Webinar
June 10, 2016
Our Priorities

- Advance strong health, safety, and quality standards and licensing regulations
- Support the development and enhancement of state quality initiatives
- Enhance quality assurance systems through the use of technology, data analysis, and research
About the Center

- Supports state and community leaders in improving the health, safety, and quality of early childhood settings for children from birth through school age
- Works across early childhood sectors, including child care and Head Start
- Encourages policies and practices that are culturally and linguistically responsive

Resources at https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/quality-improvement
Welcome

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Presenters

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Agenda

- Requirements for community and state assessment
- Community assessment “how to”
- Using community assessment to promote equity
- Case study: transportation
- Case study: workforce
Complex Systems

FIGURE 1-1 The complex landscape that affects children ages 0-8.

Part C

Neither has seen a doctor in 2 years.

What Early Childhood Systems Can Offer

SOME family support when child care is not available

Unreliable transportation...

OVER 50% of income MUST go to CHILDCARE

LOST Child Care Certificate

REDUCED HOURS

Source: BUILD Initiative.
Culturally Competent Systems

The integration and transformation of knowledge, information, and data about children, families and groups of people into compatible and specific standards, skills, service approaches, techniques, and programs that match child and family’s culture and increase the quality and appropriateness of care and outcomes.

—King Davis, 1997
An Equity Perspective in Early Childhood Care and Education . . .

Focuses on the strengths and needs of children and families and the causes of disparities. It attempts to ameliorate disparities through targeted strategies, programs, and policies.
Children

- of color,
- in poverty,
- who are dual-language learners,
- who are second-dialect speakers,
- with diverse abilities, and
- children of immigrants and immigrant children

are less likely than their white peers to succeed in school, be in good health, and have safe places to play and grow. (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2012).
Definitions

- **A racial equity approach** identifies and addresses racial and ethnic disparities (Keleher, 2009).

- **Assessing racial impact in community assessments** allows programs to systematically examine how proposed actions or decisions may affect different racial and ethnic groups (Keleher, 2009).

- **Culturally and linguistically responsive early care, learning, and teaching** support optimal cognitive and social-emotional development by honoring family heritage and language and by promoting antibias (Alaskan Native Knowledge Network, 1998; Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2000; Genishi & Goodwin, 2008; Green, 2009; Irvine, 2003; Native Hawaiian Education Council, 2002; Ray et al., 2007; Sheets, 2005).
Consensus in the Field of Early Care and Education

Early care and education programs are among the first settings where child well-being is in the hands of strangers for an extended part of each day.

Consensus documents agree that teachers and providers should

- understand culture and its role,
- understand the community they serve,
- have high expectations for all children, and
- use children’s home languages.
Federal Foundations for Community and State Assessment

- Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)
- Head Start, Early Head Start, and child care partnerships
- Home visiting
- Title V Maternal and Child Health
- State Advisory Councils
- Part C and B Early Intervention
- Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems
Community Assessments (CAs) Can Help

Assessments can help advance quality through racially equitable and culturally and linguistically responsive program, policy practices in all aspects of early care and education programs and services.

Source: BUILD Initiative.
States, Tribes, and Policymakers

- Understand, respect, and be responsive to the diversity of cultures in their State, Territory, or Tribe
- Explore the challenges faced by different communities
- Focus resources in areas with the greatest needs
- Have high expectations for all providers, families, and children.
Ensuring Equity

- Relationships
- Data
- Institutions
- Universal but targeted
- Structure
- Action
An Opportunity for States

- To connect with local services such as Head Start and other early childhood providers; health clinics and medical homes; housing agencies, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children; food pantries; and local census data.

- To make decisions based on multiple sources of data on health disparities, poverty, children of color, and changing demographics.
For Tribal Programs . . .

- Tribal programs generally operate using a systems approach.
- This means that several teams and committees already exist:
  - Policy Council
  - Health Service Advisory Committee (HSAC)
  - Education Committee
Tribal CA Teams

- Include those from existing teams.
- Form a unique team to complete the CA tasks.

Parents are an important source and key advisors:
- Decisionmakers
- Channels of information and opinions
- Collectors of information and opinions from peers
Benefits of Community Assessment

- Key to understanding a community's unique characteristics
- Allows programs and staff to design daily activities and experiences that best suit children's neighborhoods and communities
- Allows policies, programs, practices, and resources to be allocated in ways that ensure equity and optimal child outcomes

Source: Office of Head Start.
A Well-Done CA Helps Programs . . .

1. Make informed decisions about service-area plans and service delivery
2. Develop strategic plans
3. Respond to new federal regulations or initiatives
4. Mobilize community resources and partnerships
5. Reach out to additional funders
6. Identify new or underserved populations in the service area and assess their needs and available community resources
Partners

- Partnering programs
  - Multipurpose community action programs
  - Other early childhood providers

- Social service agencies
  - Food banks
  - Community health clinics
  - Catholic Charities
  - Legal Aid

- City and county government
  - Transportation
  - Housing
  - Public schools

- Expert consultants
What Kinds of Decisions Do You Make in Your Program Daily?

- Money
- Budgets
- Transportation
- Hours
- Demographics
- Languages
- Data
- Children
- Families

- Staff hiring
- Staff training
- Eligibility services
- Teachers
- Curriculum
- Supplies
- Food
- Screenings

Source: Office of Head Start.
Do Programs Use . . .

- Community assessment processes?
- Process evaluations?
- Surveys of parents and communities?
- Focus groups with partners?
Data

- Are data collected?
- Do the data help you determine who benefits? Who is not benefiting?
- Are the data used to advance equity goals and objectives?
- Are they used to reduce disparities?
- Are they used to reduce disproportionality?
Case Study

What can we learn about transportation in a community assessment?
Case Study: Transportation

- Located in a major Midwestern city with racial and ethnic diversity, new immigrants, and refugees
- The area has experienced a significant influx of Somali refugee families
- Children from working-class families are enrolled
- Families served speak English, Spanish, Jamaican Creole, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Somali, Swahili, and Mayan
- Neighborhood context includes working-poor families, high unemployment, neighborhood violence, gangs, evictions, and homelessness
Case Study: Transportation

- Program serves over 2,000 children in Head Start, Early Head Start, and preschool classrooms
- Program is open 8 hours a day
- Staff (including classroom staff and home visitors) speak English, Spanish, Jamaican Creole, and Vietnamese
- Program serves children from birth until school entry
- Children’s attendance varies daily
Five Steps to Community Assessment

Step 1: Plan and organize
- Determine the content of the assessment, identify the service area, develop a timeline

Step 2: Design data collection
- Methods of data collection, guidelines for getting started, cultural considerations, large databases
- Determine what kinds of data to collect (qualitative and quantitative), identify sources of data, develop questions

Step 3: Gather data

Step 4: Review and analyze

Step 5: Data-driven decision-making

Guidelines for recommendations and priorities, trend data, each step is discussed in depth and examples are given.

What is data analysis? What is the purpose? How do you plan for data analysis? What analytic procedures should you use?

Adapted from Office of Head Start (2007).
Techniques for Community Self-Assessment Vary from Program to Program

- Separate focus groups for parents, service providers, key stakeholders in the community, and others
- Community forums
- Interviews
- Surveys
- Action research
Questions to Consider

1. What is the potential impact of a lack of steady available transportation?
2. What kind of help might benefit families?
3. What are the short- and long-term consequences?
4. What other local agencies might be helpful?
Ask about Transportation Providers

1. Are public transportation services available?

2. Are private, nonprofit transportation services available?

3. Are school district transportation services available?

4. What percentage of families with young children (in the program or in the community at large) have cars and driver’s licenses?

5. Are there nearby grocery stores, health clinics, parks, etc.?

Source: Office of Head Start.
Other Questions to Consider for the Transportation Case Study

1. Collaboration between providers
2. The location of families in the community
3. The location of other child care services
4. The condition of roads and streets
The city council recently made cuts to the public transportation system, removing buses; riders now have fewer options and longer wait times.

Families do not understand how public transportation works.

There is an increase in families with single mothers and these families have moved farther away from the center.
Program Decides To . . .

- Sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the local school to provide bus service to children.
- Work with the city to help with translation services and information.
- Form an MOU for referrals to another local center that provides services to single mothers.
- Reduce the number of children to extend hours for families looking for work or going to school.
Case Study

What we can learn about the workforce and children’s and families’ needs through a community assessment?
Five Steps to Community Assessment

Step 1: Plan and organize
Determine the content of the assessment, identify the service area, develop a timeline

Step 2: Design data collection
Methods of data collection, guidelines for getting started, cultural considerations, large databases

Step 3: Gather data
Guidelines for recommendations and priorities, trend data, each step is discussed in depth and examples are given

Step 4: Review and analyze
What is data analysis? What is the purpose? How do you plan for data analysis? What analytic procedures should you use?

Step 5: Data-driven decision-making

Adapted from Office of Head Start (2007).
Community Assessment Can…

- Identify new or underserved populations
- Include the perspectives and voices of parents and families
- Recognize demographic changes and provide opportunities to address newly identified needs
- Help determine skills and competencies needed in the existing workforce, as well as gaps in professional preparation that need to be addressed to better serve families and children
- Help programs consider how to use resources to build and support their workforces, advance cultural competence, serve equity, and reduce disparities
Culturally Competent Workforce

A culturally competent workforce is able to provide children with care and education that is

- equitable,
- high quality,
- culturally and linguistically responsive, and
- emotionally supportive.
Defining “Culturally Responsive Instruction and Learning”

Administrators, teachers, and care staff do the following:

- Recognize culture
- Use children’s home language
- Use appropriate strategies
- Respect family culture, language, racial identity, and heritage
- Use their knowledge of child development, instruction, and children’s cultural worlds
- Build classroom communities that encourage acceptance of cultural differences, cultural humility, and antibias

Sources: Alaskan Native Knowledge Network, 1998; Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2000; Genish & Goodwin, 2008; Green, 2009; Irvine, 2003; Native Hawaiian Education Council, 2002; Ray et al., 2007; Sheets, 2005.
Defining “Culturally Responsive Family Support”

Administrators and family support, teaching, and care staff do the following:

- Recognize culture
- Use appropriate strategies
- Communicate effectively in families’ languages
- Respect family resilience and strengths
- Use their knowledge of child development, the families they serve, and the cultural worlds of children and families
- Build programs that encourage community among all families in the program, including acceptance of cultural, racial, and language heritages and differences

Sources: Iruka, 2013; Mapp, 2003; Ray et al., 2015; Turner-Vorbeck & Marsh, 2008.
Community Assessment Should Inform Programs about Workforce Issues and Equity

- Staff
  - Knowledge and skills
  - Connection to the community
- Program placement
- Resources
- Professional development
- Data
Questions to Consider

1. What is needed for staff preparation?
2. What is the impact of having or not having staff who speak the languages of children and families served?
3. What are the implications of directing resources toward recruiting and hiring staff who can effectively work with children and families served?
4. Do center directors, teachers, and family support staff need training on working with refugee families, specifically those from Somalia and other countries with civil strife?
5. What are the implications for recruitment, access, and attendance of children and families in the community?
6. What other local agencies and resources might be helpful?
Techniques for Understanding Parent and Family Needs through Community Self-Assessment

Capture the preferences of parents and families, service providers, key stakeholders in the community, and others, as well as their perspectives on needs, challenges, and strengths. This can be done through focus groups, forums, interviews, surveys, and action research.
Techniques for Understanding Parent and Family Needs through Community Self-Assessment

- Understand and value the culture, language, and community of families served
- Communicate with children and families in their home languages
- Understand racial bias and intentionally support positive intergroup relationships
- Support children’s positive cultural, racial, and linguistic identities
- Know the community and have positive relationships with community residents
- Have high expectations for all children served
Many families want teachers who can communicate with them and their children in their home language.

Somali parents and community leaders expressed concern that program staff do not understand their culture, religion, or language; others did not know about the program.

A group of Black parents from two program sites expressed concern about the expulsion of Black children from the program and disrespect from some staff.

Stakeholders and families identified the need for mental health services and referrals for families.

Many families identify gangs as a problem. Among other effects, gangs hinder their ability to walk their children to particular program sites where they must cross gang boundaries.
Program Decides To . . .

- Develop a professional development (PD) plan and contract with PD providers to target and improve cultural competence of all staff.

- Develop a PD plan and contract with PD providers to target and improve staff competence in working with racially diverse families. Director and family support staff commit to working directly with Black families on specific concerns of racial insensitivity.

- Assign resources and hire a Somali social worker to work with families in the Somali community.

- Create a working group of staff and Somali community leaders and family members to help with translation services, information sharing, and cultural understanding.

- With community resources (e.g., social workers and gang units), develop strategies to ensure that parents and children are safe (e.g., transportation in areas where gangs are active).
Ask about Resources

1. What resources are available in other social service, mental health, faith-based, and community agencies to support cultural and racial sensitivity competence in all staff?

2. Are there available mental health supports with experience working with refugee families, including Somalis, and other families served by the program?

3. What supports or protections can law enforcement provide to ensure that children and families can move safely to and from programs?
4. What expertise exists in local colleges and universities regarding culture, early childhood, or families? How can this expertise be leveraged to help program staff deliver cultural competence and antibias practices in classrooms and other program components?

5. Can the program find and recruit native-language speakers?

6. What culturally responsive outreach needs to be employed with the Somali community?
The CA Helped This Program. . .

1. Identify new and underserved populations in the service area and assess their needs and available community resources.

2. Consider cultural, linguistic, and racial competence issues in their workforce in relation to changing demographics and family concerns.

3. Identify specific risks to children and families (e.g., gang violence) and partner to address them.

4. Identify community resources.
Community Assessment Is Important To... 

- Identifying new and underserved populations
- Understanding available community resources
- Considering needs of populations
- Recognizing demographic changes
Community Assessment Is Important To. . .

◆ Finding children, assessing their needs, and identifying available resources
◆ Knowing about the children and families in each service area
◆ Understanding needs and resources within the service area
◆ Honoring local and regional nuances
◆ Incorporating family culture
Questions? Comments? Reflections?

Source: BUILD Initiative.
Federal Resources

Head Start Program Performance Standards (45 CFR 1305) § 1305.3 Determining community strengths and needs.
http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/hspps/1305/1305.3%20Determining%20community%20strengths%20and%20needs..htm

References


References


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