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# Culturally Appropriate Behavior Guidance For Young Children

## INSTRUCTIONS

This handout was designed for use with the webinar “Culturally Appropriate Positive Guidance for Young Children in Our Care,” presented by Dr. Zeynep Isik-Ercan. The questions and activities in this handout could be used in a work session (e.g., professional learning community, professional development session), for individual coaching, or for self-reflection.

## Goals

- ◆ Develop a deeper understanding and definition of “culture.”
- ◆ Understand how our cultures dictate our expectations for children’s behavior.
- ◆ Plan to connect with families to understand their strengths, perspectives, and goals for their child’s behavior

## Activity

- ◆ Before watching the webinar, use the prompting questions to reflect on your current understanding of culture.
- ◆ Watch the webinar.
- ◆ Use the reflection questions to guide your work with families to support children’s behavior.
- ◆ Implement your plan and adjust as needed to support children’s behavior.

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**Everyone has a culture. Our culture dictates how we expect children to act toward us and toward other children.**

**Dr. Zeynep Isik-Ercan**

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## PROMPTING QUESTIONS

Complete before watching the webinar.

- ◆ Based on your experience and knowledge, how do you define culture?
- ◆ How does our culture influence our behavior expectations for young children?

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Complete after watching the webinar.

- ◆ What caught your attention from the webinar? What made that fact, excerpt, or example meaningful to you?
- ◆ Take a moment to define some aspects of your own culture. You can include your racial or ethnic identity, economic level, languages you speak, family structure and any family practices that are part of your cultural identity.
  - What behaviors are seen as “positive” or “negative” for young children in your culture?
  - In what ways do you think your culture’s behavioral expectations for young children are similar to or different from the families of the children in your care?
  - How do those similarities and differences in expectations affect the way you interact with children to guide their behavior? How do they affect the way you communicate with families about their child’s behavior?
- ◆ For younger children, behavior is often their primary means to communicate a need. And our understanding of a child’s behaviors and their needs are tied to our own background, experiences, and culture.
  - Think back to a behavior a child showed that you found to be challenging.
    - What could the child have been trying to communicate at the time?
    - How might a someone with different culture perceive that behavior?
    - How could you support that child’s behavior in the classroom while valuing their cultural identity and their family’s values?
- ◆ Plan to connect with families whose cultures differ from yours to understand their strengths, perspectives, and goals for their child’s behavior.
  - How and when will you engage with the families to learn about their cultures, values, and daily practices?
  - How will you collaborate with families to support children’s behavior in the classroom?
    - How could you adjust your practices to honor a family’s perspectives and values?
  - What resources or support do you need to connect? How will you access them?
  - Implement your plan and adjust as needed.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Learn more about supporting children's behavior:

- ◆ **Source:** North Carolina State University Office of International Services
- ◆ **Questionnaire:** Personal Cultural Identity
- ◆ **Link:** <https://grad.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Personal-Cultural-Identity.pdf>
- ◆ **Description:** This questionnaire prompts readers to expand their definition of culture. Use it to reflect on different aspects of your own culture and how your cultural identity influences your relationships and interactions with others.
  
- ◆ **Source:** NAEYC
- ◆ **Article:** Valuing Diversity: Developing a Deeper Understanding of All Young Children's Behavior
- ◆ **Link:** <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/dec2019/valuing-diversity-developing-understanding-behavior>
- ◆ **Description:** This article offers additional reflection questions and suggestions for ways to view young children's classroom behavior through a lens of understanding and appreciating their families' cultures. Use this article to continue conversations with colleagues about the connection between culture and our behavioral expectations.
  
- ◆ **Source:** Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- ◆ **Webpage:** Preventing Suspensions and Expulsions in Early Childhood Settings
- ◆ **Link:** <https://preventexpulsion.org/overview/>
- ◆ **Description:** Suspensions, expulsions, and other exclusionary practices are an increasingly troubling reality for many young children and their families. Explore this resource to learn more about these harmful practices and learn strategies to prevent them at the program-, classroom-, and individual-level.