





Supporting Intersections between Families and the Classroom

Pat Chamberlain and Julie Kallenbach



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Take-away Messages

- All families have assets
- Family Support Specialist can be a “Cultural Broker” and help co-construct the “Third Space”
- Add some family engagement activities to your toolbox
- Continuity in family engagement prevents fade-out effect



Cultural Competence is an Asset

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

➤ Meeting Children Where They Are

- Know the skills , talents , experiences they bring to the classroom
 - Home language/s, English language, dialects
 - Cultural knowledge and experiences
 - Family assets
 - Interests, fears, styles
- Listen, observe, ask

Self Assessment of Cultural & Linguistic Competency

Cultural competence
<https://nccc.georgetown.edu/documents/ChecklistEIEC.pdf>

PROMOTING CULTURAL & LINGUISTIC COMPETENCY

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

Directions: Please select A, B, or C for each item listed below.
A = Things I do frequently, or statement applies to me to a great degree
B = Things I do occasionally, or statement applies to me to a moderate degree
C = Things I do rarely or never, or statement applies to me to minimal degree or not at all

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT, MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- ___ 1. I display pictures, posters and other materials that reflect the cultures and ethnic backgrounds of children and families served in my early childhood program or setting.
- ___ 2. I select props for the dramatic play/housekeeping area that are culturally diverse (e.g. dolls, clothing, cooking utensils, household articles, furniture).
- ___ 3. I ensure that the book/literacy area has pictures and storybooks that reflect the different cultures of children and families served in my early childhood program or setting.
- ___ 4. I ensure that table-top toys and other play accessories (that depict people) are representative of the various cultural and ethnic groups both within my community and the society in general.
- ___ 5. I read a variety of books exposing children in my early childhood program or setting to various life experiences of cultures and ethnic groups other than their own.

1. Physical environment, materials, resources





Culturally Responsive Books:

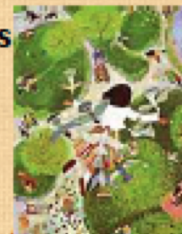
- Reflect valued traditions
- Help children become citizens of the world; removes egocentricity
- Promote intercultural understanding, appreciation and respect
- Illustrate experiences that trigger talking and promote storytelling
- Use of authors & illustrators from children's cultural communities is empowering-- Helps students see themselves as writers and illustrators as they work on their own stories, poems, and books.

Culturally-Responsive Dual Language Texts Reflect the Lives of Bilingual, Bicultural Children



They Reflect:

- The value of bilingualism and biliteracy
- Children's cultural and linguistic identities
- The joy and richness of bicultural lives and experiences
- The importance of children's family members; their names/titles
- Common family activities
- The experience of migration/immigration





Your source for high-quality
multicultural and urban
children's literature



<http://www.kidslikeus.org/>

2. Communication Styles

I use home language/s to build relationship.

I ensure notices to parents are comprehensible.

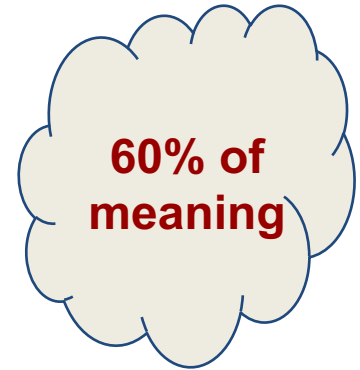
I accept that there may be differences between language of the home and early childhood setting.

I affirm value of bilingualism/bidialectism.



Non-Verbal

- Facial expressions
- Para-linguistics
- Body stance
- Eye contact
- Physiological changes



*“What you do speaks so loud
I cannot hear what you say.”*

- Emerson



3. Values and Attitudes

I avoid imposing values that may conflict with those of cultures other than my own.

I accept and respect that male-female roles may vary significantly among cultures.

I understand that beliefs about mental health practices of families may be rooted in cultural traditions.

I understand that families from different cultures may have different expectations for acquiring toileting, dressing, feeding and other self help skills.





All Families Have Assets

Funds of knowledge are the essential cultural practices and bodies of knowledge and information that are used to survive, get ahead or to thrive.

Luis Moll

Lively Minds:

Distinctions between academic versus intellectual goals for young children

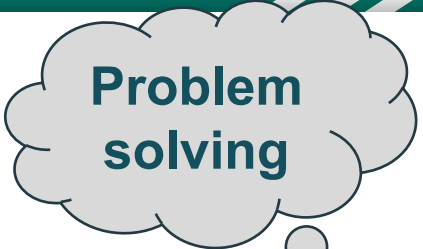
Lilian G. Katz, PhD
University of Illinois



... it is widely assumed that because some young children, especially those of low-income families, have not been exposed to the knowledge and skills associated with 'school readiness,' ... that they lack the basic intellectual dispositions such as to make sense of experience, to analyze, hypothesize, predict, as do their peers of more affluent backgrounds. Indeed, the intellectual challenges many children face in coping with precarious environments are likely to be substantial and often complex.

The home is the wellspring of personhood. It is where our **identity** takes root and blossoms, where as children, we imagine, play, and question, and as adolescents, we retreat and try. When we try to understand ourselves, we often begin by considering the kind of home in which we were raised.”

— Matthew Desmond, [Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City](#)



**Problem
solving**



Humor

Examine our stereotypes of families from poverty...



Resilience



Resourcefulness



**Love of
family**



**Negotiating
the
neighborhood**

“I learned that behavior that looks lazy or withdrawn to someone perched far above the poverty line can actually be a pacing technique. People ... cannot afford to give all their energy to today’s emergency only to have none left over for tomorrow’s.”

— Matthew Desmond, [Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City](#)

— Matthew Desmond, [Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City](#)

The distance between grinding poverty and even stable poverty could be so vast that those at the bottom had little hope of climbing out even if they pinched every penny. So they chose not to. Instead, they tried to survive in color, to season the suffering with pleasure. They would get a little high or have a drink or do a bit of gambling or acquire a television. They might buy lobster on food stamps.”

— Matthew Desmond, [Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City](#)

Funds of Knowledge

- Home Language
- Family Values and Traditions
- Educational Activities
- Family Occupation
- Scientific Knowledge
- Family Travel or Immigration
- Other

Adapted from [National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning - ECLKC](#)



Proven Family Engagement Activities

High Touch Strategies

Become familiar with community issues and families' home cultures.

Use community resources.

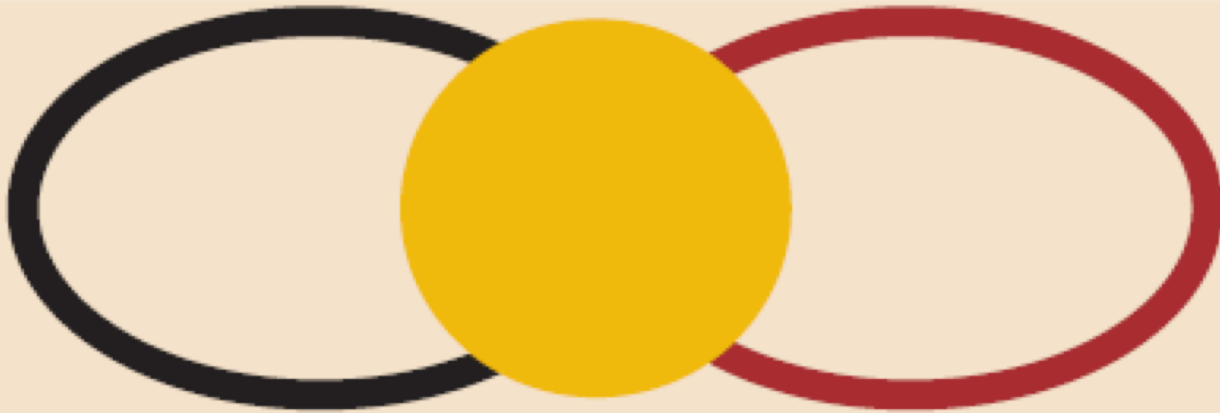
Invite families to come into classrooms.

Work as partners with families to improve learning.

Respond quickly to families' concerns about their children.



The third cultural space



*The yellow centre represents spaces of not knowing —
third cultural space of innovation and creation.
Model by J Davis (2008).*

Tellin' Stories



<https://www.teachingforchange.org/parent-organizing>

Community Walks

A community walk is a parent-led tour that highlights the resources and challenges of the school neighborhood. Many communities face challenges, from unemployment to gentrification to immigration to poverty. We need to learn more from people with intimate knowledge of both the issues and the wonderful but sometimes hidden resources of the community.

Community Walk

1. Team of community partners plan the walk.
2. First week back? End of the school year?
3. Before: discussion about what to look for: streets, signs, special places, stores, people that can be incorporated into instruction.
4. Walking tour is led by community member.
5. Take photos of landmarks, frequented places.
6. Debrief session about lessons learned and how to include the staff's new fund of knowledge





A Day at the Playground

By North Lawndale YMCA Room 117

Storytizing

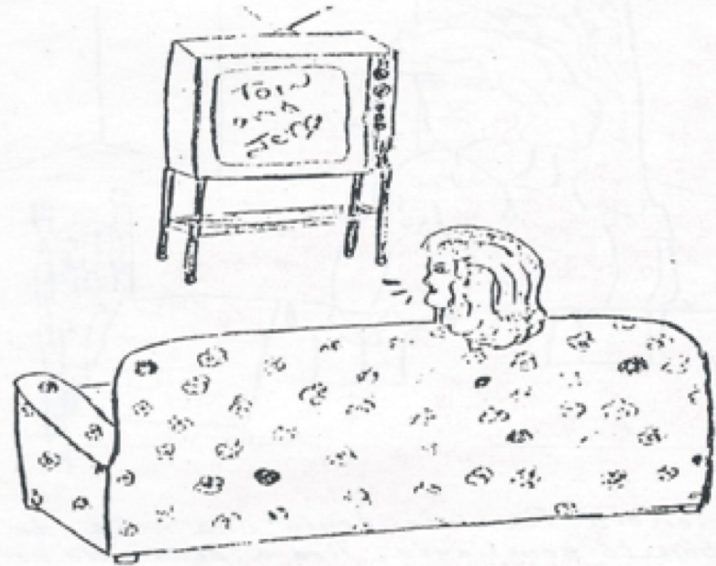
Storytizing is the process of engaging, analyzing and creating story elements for the purpose of developing children's critical thinking skills.

YMCA of Metro Chicago
Learning Series

Early Authors Program (Bernhard)

Miami-Dade County

- Authored 3,286 bilingual books
- Home-school joint productive activities
- Children as protagonists
- Used for reading, story retelling
- <http://www.ryerson.ca/bernhard/research/early-authors-gallery/>



-Mami, yo no quiero... - fue la respuesta de Rosa permaneciendo sentada frente a la televisión.

Ashley Gagnon

Erikson Institute

Action Research Project

2017

Question

How can I create meaningful connections between home and school for students in my classroom who come from diverse linguistic and ethnic backgrounds?

Home Visit 2, Ian

- Mother, Gail: speaks, reads, and writes in Korean, English, Chinese
- Ian born in Chicago, Gail and her husband from South Korea
- 3 years old, has a younger brother (age 2) and newborn sister
- Goal of bilingualism, father speaks to children in English, mother speaks Korean
- Interests: Imaginative play, Legos, reading, superheroes
- Activities: piano, swimming, basketball, soccer, gymnastics
- Family time on weekends: science museum, nature museum, church
- Christian: pray as a family every morning, poster on the wall with 10 things to include in prayers
- Lunar New Year, special rice cake, bow to elders> elders give money
- Literacy: read together often in English and Korean, sometimes in Spanish, listen to English and Korean music
- Goals: Speak fluently, read and write in Korean, learn many languages in the future, learn to play violin, practice Christianity

In the classroom with Ian

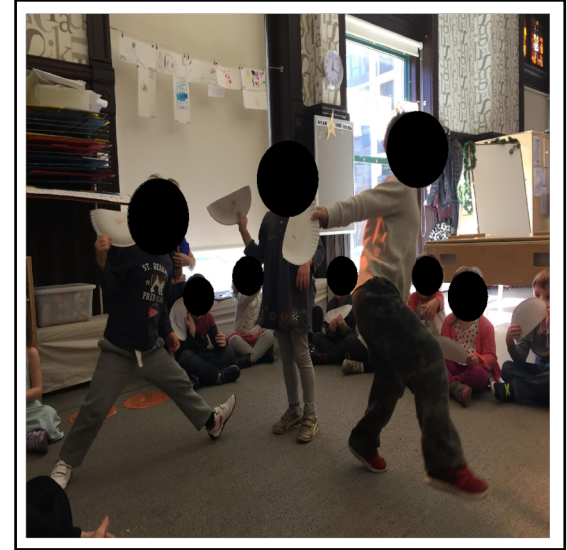
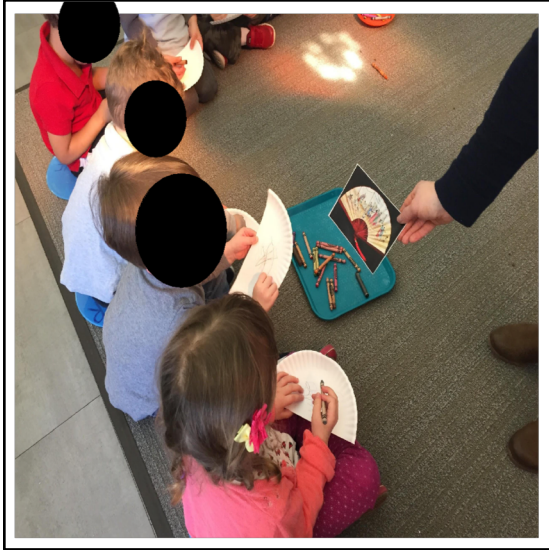
- **Ian began sharing some Korean words with me, when he used to be very shy about it**

**From my journal: January 18, 2017, When Ian's mom came to school she exclaimed, "Ian wants to teach you to count to 10 in Korean!" I asked him later to show me, and he said, "It will take me too long to teach you... but... I will teach you". Later he started to teach me by counting his fingers when I was helping him put on his gloves.*

- **Ian is proud to share about South Korea.**

**From my journal, March 14, 2017, I often tell Ian how special it is that his family is from South Korea and speaks a different language. Today he yelled across the classroom, "Ms. Ashley! Look at my fuzzy vest! It is from South Korea!". I came over and commented on his warm and fuzzy vest. I asked if his grandparents were still visiting. He said, "Yes, but my uncle and auntie from South Korea are leaving my house today!".*

Reflections on the Korean Music Lesson





Collage Made By Families

Velma Thomas CPS 2018



Family Project for Natural History Study

U-46 Schools



Family Project- Community

West Chicago D33

Connecting with Families

- A naptime playlist compiled of each child's or family's favorite lullaby
- Classroom displays of children with the important people in their lives
- A class or school-wide potluck that invites families to share a favorite dish
- Describe your child's favorite part of the day.
- What new skills is your child practicing?
- What helps your child feel better when they are having a hard day?
- What things does your child want to do again and again?

<http://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/articles/2019/building-connections-with-families>.

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