

Assessment

WandaJean Jones

Master of Science in Early Childhood Studies, Walden University

CP001: Capstone

Dr. Carol Todd

March 14, 2022

Applying Professional Knowledge and Skills

Early childhood professionals have been striving for years to evolve within this field. The importance of life-long learning, communication skills, and utilizing culturally responsive practices cannot be emphasized enough. This document serves as a rationale for the artifacts which are present at www.drjoneseducation.org.

The Importance of Culturally Responsive Practice

A child's healthy development is dependent on the relationships that continue to evolve between his or her family and childcare teachers. Infants and toddlers benefit from responsive and nurturing relationships with loving people. Early care professionals offer children with the comfort and support they need to develop a feeling of security and explore their world. Infant and toddler group care should be designed to encourage the building and development of ties between each of the different early care professionals, as well as between children and their families. Not only will respecting and learning about the cultural identity of each family enrich your perspective as an early development professional, but it will also provide you insights into how to form good connections with children and families. Bringing the culture of each child into context through developmentally appropriate practices is the key to ensuring that children are learning new concepts, based upon the world that they currently know. The media, educational institutions, and the economy all have an impact on an individual's basic values, and they all have different effects (Language and Culture Worldwide, 2020). Texts and curricula that promote “Western life and culture” as the right way for children to pattern their lives, childcare teachers run the danger of misinforming and marginalizing students from different cultural backgrounds. Teachers who do not understand the importance of culturally responsive teaching demonstrate a cultural bias towards members of ethnic minorities. The way people operate on a

range of cultural levels has an influence on the formation of their cultural identities in different ways. Individual, family, group, and universal are the four levels of analysis.

When dual-language learning programs are implemented, they explicitly promote the cultural identity of the community while simultaneously teaching English-language ability (Eastern Connecticut University, 2013). Whether it is centered on the classroom environment, classroom materials, instructional or assessment methods, or any other aspect of education, cultural bias arises when educational practices do not allow for various points of view and favor the majority and prevailing culture. Cultural discontinuity prevents activities and learning that are representative of ethnic minorities and children from varied backgrounds from taking place (Maschinot, 2008). The first step in developing programs that are culturally responsive and supportive of all cultures is to have a complete knowledge of the children and families who will be served in order to construct a program that will satisfy the requirements of all of the children who will be served in the program (Office of Head Start, 2018). Many programs are serving children whose family are not English speaking. Using a dual-language approach, children may continue to develop their native language while simultaneously learning English (Washington Educational Telecommunications Association (Producer, 2010). Dual-language instruction is beneficial for cognitive development, particularly in early childhood programs. The most successful early childhood language programs encourage children to listen to language, create representations of what they see and hear, and give resources in both their native language and English. Early childhood language learners should be evaluated using a combination of formal and informal exams that assess their progress toward academic abilities as they mature in their language skills. It is appropriate to utilize a variety of assessment procedures across curricular subjects and languages, including diary entry observation, manipulation, questioning, and

evaluation. Children under the age of five should not be subjected to paper and pencil tests, regardless of their linguistic abilities. Slowly reading aloud to children with clearly proclaimed words aids in the development of phonological awareness in the young kid. As an additional benefit of word games that rhyme, phonological awareness may be improved; however, flash cards are less effective since the words are not constantly pronounced, making phonological awareness difficult to acquire. An essential literacy skill to have is the ability to comprehend. The understanding of English Language Learners may be examined in a variety of ways, including a discussion of journal entries, open-ended questions after a tale is read aloud, and other non-paper and pencil means of assessment.

Childcare teachers may benefit from considering their own personal experiences and prejudices in order to better understand how biases affect interactions with all students. When early care teachers react effectively to children and families from varied cultural backgrounds, this is an excellent example of teacher care”. These early care teachers are experimenting with different approaches to include a diverse variety of cultural concepts into their lessons (Gonzalez-Mena, 2008). Knowledgeable teachers understand that creating goals for the child, involving their family, will lead to success. If one type of lesson is not effective in helping the child grasp new concepts, the teacher is relentless to try new things in order to help the child reach their goals. It is possible for early care teachers to appreciate cultural diversity while still delivering a good learning experience for all children by integrating cultural values into lessons, demonstrating teacher caring, and using culturally responsive instructional approaches.

Communicating with Families

According to studies on family engagement, parental involvement in children's early learning promotes both school preparation and subsequent academic achievement. When it

comes to family engagement, factors such as encouraged and validated family participation in educational decision-making for their child, families and early childhood education programs collaborating and exchanging information, and early childhood education programs and families working together to create and sustain learning activities at home and in the community are all considered. One of the most major drawbacks of parent participation initiatives is that they force parents to participate in events and opportunities provided by the childcare program rather than co-creating possibilities for mutually beneficial interaction with the program. It has been shown in research that the availability of activities that increase children's learning while also being seen as valued by families is one of the most important variables in enhancing family participation (Halgunseth et. al, 2009). This family involvement technique, according to research on the advantages of home visits, is connected with greater trust in parents' participation in their children's educational programs (Allen, 2008). Early care providers must employ various ways to share messages with families. This includes daily notes home, website communications, letters and emails to families, and newsletters (Zero to Three).

According to research, focused parental engagement in parenting programs is connected with changes in parenting techniques on the side of the participants. According to surveys, during the preceding 14 years, parents have become more conscious of the information and talents their children need to be successful in kindergarten. This is a big win for early care providers. Parents, on the other hand, have not enhanced family activities in order to support the effective acquisition of necessary information and abilities. A number of studies have shown that certified early childhood programs are more likely to communicate with families regarding child assessment and to include families in the assessment process. Families should be encouraged to interact with teachers, participate in classroom activities, and engage in family activities at home

in order to achieve comprehensive family involvement (Sanabria-Hernandez). Email might be used to notify families about future events as well as to offer general information in this case. In today's technologically-driven world, email, websites, and electronic newsletters are all examples of communication tactics that families might use (CSSP, 2010). When using these tactics, it is critical to remember to maintain cybersecurity best practices, in order to keep all children's personal data private and locked down. Parents may ask questions on discussion forums or instant messaging sites where they can get help with activities to help their children accomplish lessons at home. These are just a few examples of technology that might be valuable in aiding children's growth and learning at home (Allen, 2008). Online polls designed to gather family opinions, online discussion forums where families can debate important issues, and e-mail surveys designed to gather opinions are all examples of technologies that could be used to help achieve the goal of increasing family participation in decision-making goals (Jones, 2010). There are also various sign-up and volunteer sites that teachers may use to engage parents.

The most effective family involvement efforts, according to research, are those that concentrate on boosting academic performance. Families have positive goals in mind for their children.

According to research, the benefits of home visits include the establishment of reciprocity, the building of mutual trust, and the opportunity for teachers to learn about the experiences, abilities, and knowledge of the family members being visited (Graham-Clay, 2005). Parent engagement programs that are centered on creating connections and assisting families in obtaining the skills necessary to support children's development have been shown to have positive outcomes. Open communication, an open-door policy, chances for parent volunteers, and involvement in parent groups and advisory councils are all essential components of a home-school system that is culturally sensitive and collaborative. When parents are unable to participate in activities due to

work schedules or other potential barriers, when there is a lack of child care and transportation to activities, and when there is a general lack of positive communication between families and staff, parental involvement may be limited, according to the findings of research. No family member ever wants to be judged or made to feel guilty about how they are (or are not) contributing to their child's success. Early care teachers can remain sensitive to the tone they take with parents and realize that parents are the first teacher, but teachers are the experts.

Commitment to Life-long Learning

To prepare for their own personal growth and development, early care providers, with the support of their management or child care director, must set aside time in their daily schedule. Becoming a life-long learner is an essential trait, and one from which all early care teachers would benefit (Newman, 2017). There is always something new to learn in any field, especially when it comes to early childhood education. Teachers can start by considering what they already know, what talents they have, and what they need to learn in order to support their own thoughtful, personal, and professional progress. This will serve as a beginning point for their professional pursuits and investigation. The early care field has many different facets. However, caring for children and understanding their developmental needs is a primary skill to master.

Before deciding on their professional aims and objectives, teachers should consider what they would want to learn more about in the future. Early care professionals will gain from this component of self-assessment for professional development since it will assist them in identifying specific areas for growth and improvement (i.e., providing a foundation for goals). It is necessary to compile a list of specific areas in which the teacher wants to improve, and the next step is to prioritize the areas in which they plan to focus their efforts first. It is important for their success that they meet all of their commitments on time, by developing S.M.A.R.T. goals

(Bowen, 2013). The ability to get a thorough understanding of what it will take to achieve each of their goals, on the other hand, provides important knowledge that will force their timelines to move as a result (Garfield Heights City School District). When developing a professional development plan, self-reflection should be included into each phase, as well as the monitoring of progress over time (NAEYC, 2010). The director or leadership staff can help by aligning teachers to projects and new opportunities, based upon their goals and aspirations.

Developing personal questions about one's professional identity is a vital component of the self-evaluation process; they are questions that can only be answered by the individual who has developed them. The need to arrange time for meaningful self-reflection must be prioritized.

Following the process of self-reflection, the construction of an action plan for bridging knowledge gaps via learning is carried out (University of Nebraska). A lifelong learner is someone who takes advantage of any and all educational opportunities that come their way during their whole life. Formal learning experiences include things like taking a structured class or getting a formal degree from an approved school or university, among other things. A technique of self-education is more likely to be chosen by those who want to further their education. Organizing a learning program might be beneficial for certain people because it provides them with the structure and support, they need. Going to a physical location and using the responsibility that comes with being a part of a group of people are examples of engagement tactics. Having money to pay for tuition and supplies is not something each teacher can do.

Despite the fact that it is not guaranteed, it is possible that informal learning chances may live alongside formal, more structured learning opportunities in the future (ScienceDirect, 2010). In order to provide better service to students and their families, educators may choose to continue their education for a variety of reasons. These include professional advancement, increased

income opportunities, new information, and the desire to provide better service to students and their families. The number of performance gaps will decrease for instructors who get further training in a range of teaching styles and methodologies. It is essential for any educator to be driven to continually improve his or her methods in order to best serve all of their children.

References:

- Allen, J. (2008). *Family partnerships that count*. *Educational Leadership*, 66(1), 22–27. Retrieved from the Walden Library databases.
- Bowen, R. (2013). *Sample SMART professional development goals*. Retrieved from <http://www.brighthub.com/office/home/articles/72258.aspx>
- Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP). (2010). *Growing and Sustaining Parent Engagement*. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED536819.pdf>
- Eastern Connecticut University (2013). Supporting English Language Learners in the Preschool Classroom. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09PrmLppQ1A>
- Garfield Heights City School District. (n.d.). *Individual Professional Development Plan: Examples of educational goals that are applicable to the district/building goals*. Retrieved April 26, 2019, from <http://www.garfieldheightscityschools.com/Downloads/ExamplesEducGoals.pdf>
- Gonzalez-Mena, J. (2008). *Diversity in Early Care and Education: Honoring Differences* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw Hill.
- Graham-Clay, S. (2005). Communicating with parents: Strategies for teachers. *The School Community Journal*, 16(1). Retrieved from <http://www.adi.org/journal/ss05/Graham-Clay.pdf>
- Halgunseth, L. C., Peterson, A., Stark, D. R., & Moody, S. (2009). *Family engagement, diverse families, and early childhood education programs: An integrated review of the literature*. Retrieved from https://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/EDF_Literature20Review.pdf
- James Madison University. (2019). *Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP)*. Retrieved from <https://www.jmu.edu/humanresources/hrc/performance/ipdp.shtml>

Jones, J. M. (2010). *Culturally diverse families: Enhancing home-school relationships*. NASP Communiqué, 38(6). Retrieved from the Walden Library databases.

Language and Culture Worldwide. (2020). *Iceberg or beacon? How the cultural iceberg guide us toward greater inclusion*. Retrieved from <https://languageandculture.com/iceberg-or-beacon-how-the-cultural-iceberg-guide-us-toward-greater-inclusion/>

Maschinot, B. (2008). *The Changing Face of the United States: The Influence of Culture on Early Childhood Development. *Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE. Retrieved from https://web.archive.org/web/20170604215627/http://www.cehd.umn.edu/CEED/projects/ecassesment/11/The_Changing_Face_of_the_US_Machinot.pdf

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). (2010). 2010 standards for initial early childhood professional preparation. Retrieved from <https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/higher-ed/standards-summaries>

Newman, K. M. (2017, April 20). *What is lifelong learning? its importance, benefits & examples*. Greater Good Science Center. Retrieved March 14, 2022, from <https://www.valamis.com/hub/lifelong-learning>

Office of Head Start. (2018a). Principle One: Every Individual Is Rooted in Culture. In *Revisiting and Updating the Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs Serving Children Ages Birth to Five* (pp. 11–19). Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/principle-01-english.pdf>

Sanabria-Hernandez, L. (n.d.). *Engaging families in early childhood education*. Retrieved from <http://www.rtinetwork.org/essential/family/engagingfamilies>

ScienceDirect. (2010). *Informal Learning*. Informal Learning - An Overview | ScienceDirect Topics. Retrieved March 14, 2022, from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/informal-learning>

University of Nebraska-Lincoln (n.d.). *The Individual Professional Development Plan (IDPD): A career management tool*. Retrieved from <https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/connections/individual-professional-development-plan-ipdp-career-management-tool>

Washington Educational Telecommunications Association (Producer). (2010). *Preschool for English language learners: Language learning and assessment* [Video file]. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.colorincolorado.org/webcasts/preschool/>

Zero to Three. (n.d.). *Early experiences matter: Effective communication with parents*. Retrieved from <http://www.zerotothree.org/early-care-education/family-friend-neighbor-care/effective-communication-with-parents.htm>