2.4: Responsiveness to Culture and Language Supports Children’s Learning

Responsive environments create a climate of respect for each child’s culture and language when teachers and other program staff partner and regularly communicate with family members. They work to get to know the cultural strengths each child brings to their early childhood education program. An essential part of being culturally and linguistically responsive is to value and support each child’s use of home language, for continued use and development of the child’s home language is beneficial, as is becoming multilingual (learning English in addition to any home languages).

Equally important are nurturing interactions with children and their families in which “. . . teachers attempt, as much as possible, to learn about the history, beliefs, and practices of the children & families they serve. . . .” In addition to being responsive to the cultural history, beliefs, values, ways of communicating, and practices of children and families, teachers create learning environments that include resources such as pictures, displays, and books that are culturally rich and supportive of a diverse population, particularly the cultures and languages of the children and families in their preschool setting. Community members add to the cultural richness of a preschool setting by sharing their art, music, dance, traditions, and stories. [29]