



Understanding the Role of Culture in Foster Care

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- Foster parents are service providers. They are responsible for providing foster care services to children of all cultures, races and religions.

- It is important for resource families to be competent at supporting the culture and identity of all children needing care.

Objectives: Foster Parents will be able to:

- **Explain why valuing and making a commitment to cultural competence is an essential task of the foster care team.**
- **Identify ways to demonstrate valuing and respecting the cultural diversity of children, their families and foster families.**
- **Explain why promoting a child's cultural norms and values helps to develop self-esteem.**
- **Describe the importance of seeking support as necessary from community members in addressing children's cultural concerns.**
- **Identify ways to incorporate children's traditions, customs, and events into the everyday life of the foster family.**



A Cultural Journey



- What is your cultural or ethnic background?
- What values did you learn to live by?
- When you were a child, how did your family view cultural and racial differences?
- Which of these views do you still share? Why?
- Which did you decide not to keep? Why?
- How has your cultural background affected your views and behavior?

The Foster Parent



- Knows how to promote a child's positive sense of cultural norms and values to help develop self-esteem.
- Recognizes cultural, social, and economic similarities and differences between a child's primary family and foster family.
- Knows the importance of complying with NMPCR policy on allowing a child to practice the religion of the primary family
- Knows how to promote a child's sense of identity and history to develop self-esteem.



CULTURE is the shared values, norms, traditions, customs, arts, history, folklore, and institutions of a group of people.

Each person here comes with a history of shared values, rules, foods, and ways of relating to one another. (cultural bingo exercise)

Enhancing Self-Esteem through Promoting Cultural Values and Norms



- As members of a professional team responsible for meeting children's developmental needs, we must understand and appreciate the significance of self-esteem and how a person's self-concept is developed and influenced.
- Much of a self-concept comes from the way we are treated by people who are close to us. Children's feelings about themselves are learned through the interactions they have with important people in their lives.
- They derive a sense of self from the attitudes reflected by those who care for them.
- Identity and self-esteem come from being part of a group or a family, sharing their feelings and values.

Trans-Racial Adoption



- Is it for you?
- Are you ready?
- What do you need to do to prepare?

BE READY



- You know another moment like this will happen, so prepare yourself for it.
- Think of yourself as the one who will speak up.
- Promise yourself not to remain silent.

Identify the Behavior.



- Sometimes, pointing out the behavior candidly helps someone hear what they're really saying: "Janice, what I hear you saying is that all Mexicans are lazy" (or whatever the slur happens to be). Or, "Janice, you're classifying an entire ethnicity in a derogatory way. Is that what I hear you saying?"

Appeal to Principles.



If the speaker is someone you have a relationship with — a sister, friend or co-worker, for example — call on their higher principles: "Bob, I've always thought of you as a fair-minded person, so it shocks me when I hear you say something that sounds so bigoted."

Responding to:



- **Be Ready.**
- **Identify the Behavior.**
- **Appeal to Principles.**
- **Set Limits.**
- **Find an Ally/Be an Ally.**
- **Be Vigilant.**

Transracial, Transtribal, Trans-gender or Transcultural Fostering

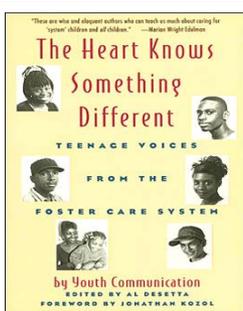


- Transracial or Transcultural fostering means placing a child who is of one race or ethnic group with foster parents of another race or ethnic group.
- In the United States these terms usually refer to the placement of children of color or children from another country with Caucasian foster parents.



- Foster parents have an important role to play in helping children achieve a positive cultural identity. This is done best through respecting and promoting the child's cultural values and norms.
- Foster families must remember that each child has a unique culture, history, and identity.
- All families and people within a specific culture are not alike. These identities need to be fostered and supported.

RESOURCES



Book, 232 pp., Edited by Al Desetta; Forward by Jonathan Kozol.

Forty-one powerful stories which explore Family, Living in the System, Who Am I?, and Looking to the Future.

"These are wise and eloquent authors who can teach us much about caring for 'system' children and all children."

—Marian Wright Edelman

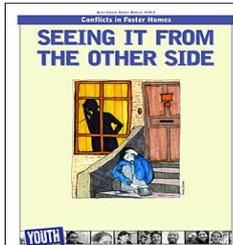


Since 1993, *Represent* has tackled tough issues about foster parents, family court, staff relations, anger, loss, mental health, and other topics. The magazine also offers regular columns on independent living and life after care. <http://www.youthcomm.org/Publications/FCYU.htm>



Teaching Tolerance

<http://www.teachingtolerance.org>



Living in a foster home can be a disorienting experience. Many young people form strong bonds with their foster parents, while others are not so lucky. Teens write about facing (and resolving) a variety of conflicts with foster parents.

SELF EVALUATION



- What might have been difficult about this activity?
- How comfortable were you during this discussion?
- What similarities did you see in this group?
- What differences?
- Do you feel you know and/or better understand the people in this group as a result of this activity? Yes, No, Unsure

REMEMBER

Self-awareness is the first step in understanding others. Then, as we learn to better understand the children we work with and their families, including their culture backgrounds, we will be better equipped to support and help them. The more we can help children understand and accept who they are, the better they will feel about themselves.



