

QUALITYstarsNY -- BUILD Cultural Competence Initiative Strategic Plan | September 2012

Purpose: This strategic plan focuses on improving cultural competence in the New York State early childhood system. Specifically, this plan is aimed at the following: 1) better integrating cultural competence into QUALITYstarsNY, 2) the identification and/or development of resources and trainings that promote cultural competence, 3) conducting or accessing research that informs the content of cultural competence resources and trainings, and 4) a dissemination strategy that ensures early childhood practitioners across New York state receive support around cultural competence. Further, a major goal of this strategic plan is to ensure that cultural competence is reflected throughout the QUALITYstarsNY standards. Implementation of this strategic plan will be led by the Quality Improvement Work Group of the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) in consultation with the ECAC and other key stakeholders beginning in the Fall of 2012.



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How this Document is Organized

The QUALITYstarsNY - BUILD Cultural Competence Strategic Planning Initiative is presented in two documents. The first document provides a graphic representation including our theory of change around improving cultural competence and the second document includes implementation plans, which provide concrete guidance for conducting this work.

Theory of Change: The theory of change (this can also be referred to as an outcomes framework) provides a graphic representation of the outcomes that we expect to effect and the activities and strategies necessary to do this work.

Implementation Plans: In a companion document, we provide implementation plans, which give concrete guidance about how to carry out this work.

Definition of Culture

Culture is embedded in everything that we do and it shapes how children and families understand and interact with their environments. Culture is a multifaceted construct and it has fundamental influences on families' learning and developmental expectations for their children, and how they support child development. The QUALITYstarsNY - BUILD Cultural Competence Strategic Planning Team define culture as follows:

- Social histories
- Identities
- Socialization practices
- Values and beliefs
- Behaviors
- Language and non-verbal communication

All of which are learned, shared, and exhibited by a group of people (Yosso, 2005).

Definition of Cultural Competence

Many definitions of cultural competence exist because of the complexity associated with culture. The definition of cultural competence as it relates to this strategic plan is based on the NAEYC Pathways to Cultural Competence Project.

“NAEYC believe that for optimal development and learning of all children, educators must accept the legitimacy of children’s home language, respect (hold in high regard) the home culture, and promote and encourage the active involvement and support of all families including extended and non-traditional family units (NAEYC, 1995, pg. 2). Since all children are rooted in their families we see a child’s family structure and all that it entails as the core of their family’s culture (NAEYC, 2010, pg. 1).”

The Role of Cultural Competence in High-quality Early Care and Education

Culture influences every aspect of child development and shapes children's early learning experiences. Families' cultures guide their child-rearing practices and expectations (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). It follows that children's cultural and family socialization practices should be consistently integrated into early childhood program practice to provide high-quality early care and education (Gonzalez-Mena, 2010; Grant & Ray, 2013).

It is also important to note that we recognize the knowledge all families possess and use to guide their child-rearing practices.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE STRATEGIC
PLANNING TEAM

**The QUALITYstarsNY - BUILD Cultural Competence Strategic
Planning Team consists of members of the ECAC Quality
Improvement Work Group**

Cindy Lamy
Peggy Liuzzi
Kimlee Marquise
Elba Montalvo

QUALITYstarsNY Staff

Ola Friday

Technical Assistance Specialist

Taniesha Woods

Theory of Change

