

Diverse culture in early childhood education

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In this essay there will be a range of strategies to support children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds Identified and discussed using perspectives and concepts. In addition, I will reflect on my personal identity and attitudes to diversity in my role as an early childhood teacher. There are multiple strategies that can support children and whanau from cultural and linguistic diverse background. Firstly communication between teachers and parents/whanau or centre and home are an important part of the process.

Having a bilingual staff that can translate and using translation materials to help families understand and feel comfortable (Care for Kids, 2008). We as teacher can meet and greet parents on arrival, while the communication is in progress the teacher could exchange information about their child, so the parent feels inclusive within their child's learning and development and so they know that we as educators can give their child the best learning opportunities. Ask the parents/whanau if they could provide the centre a listing of words and some phrases that their child uses in their language.

In Te Whariki (1996, p. 58) it states that " children and their families experience an environment where they know that they have a place". We can be sensitive and attentive to information about their cultural and religious backgrounds, likes and dislikes these can be related to the child's settling into the centre. In Guo, (2004, p. 6) states that in the " Asian culture parents didn't seem to care if children cried but would leave without hesitation and furthermore assumed that the longer they stay the worse children will behave".

During a mat time we could invite the children's parents/whanau to read a book in their language and translate the story so we can have an understanding on how their words are pronounced properly and we could also hear the pronunciation so we can practice ourselves. The centre could display information using different languages in the newsletter. Routines could be another strategy by finding out the child's routine from home so the centre could incorporate it into their daily routines (Care for Kids, 2008).

Rest time could be a stressful time for the child if they are not use to a rest during the day so the teachers can offer alternate sleeping/rest times like lying quietly on a pillow, looking at a book while the rest of the children are sleeping. To help extend a child's language skills and involve them to, the teachers could spend time talking with the child during meal times, while changing their nappy and setting up the beds. You could ask the child how they say certain words in their language like; bed, sleep, eating, types of food etc.

Using a variety of resources as strategies for instance; the libraries can be an excessive source of information about multicultural, have a multicultural day at the centre and invite the parents/whanau to bring along different things that are relevant to their own culture like clothing, artefacts, toys, books and food. With food we could set up a table so everyone could try other cultures food such as sushi, taro, hangi, Indian curries and many more.

Staff could attend a cultural event or workshops such as flax weaving, language classes etc. Kaiser and Rasminsky (2003) states " to form a positive self-concept, children need to honour and respect their own cultured

and to have others honour and respect it too". The centre could arrange an excursion to a diverse cultural events or get the community cultural groups to come and perform for the children at the centre. For this the children can get involved in the performance.

Programming is great for strategies this we can use; repetitive rhymes and waiata for children whose second language is English, set up environments pertaining to the diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences of the families and involving them through the choice of materials used (Care for Kids, 2008). Using different range of musical instruments from various cultural backgrounds such as; patea a Samoan drum, ukulele etc. Then playing assorted music where the children can identify their own culture, or perhaps show their cultural way of dance. In the dress up corner there could be a variety of traditional clothing.

In addition, being of Maori descent I whakapapa to Ngati Kahungunu, Ngati Porou, and Ngati te Ata. I understand and acknowledge the diversity and attitudes of our multicultural society and how we need to provide an education for all New Zealanders. The Treaty of Waitangi /Te Tiriti o Waitangi has allowed us to provide equality between Maori and Tauwiwi, and other non de plumes. So I believe that " It is our actions and practices that shape the next generation" (New Zealand Tertiary College [NZTC], 2012) and with this in mind I base my philosophy and ideas.

In conclusion there are a range of different strategies identified in this essay to help the transition for different culture background children and families/whanau to be a part of the early childhood centres life. Our

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multicultural society within our bicultural nation is discussed In relation to The Treaty of Waitangi /Te Tiriti o Waitangi - the founding document that forms the basis of the relationship between tangata whenua (people of the land) and Pakeha/Tau iwi (all those of non-Maori descent who have settled here), (NZTC, 2012).