

Negotiating Cultural Conflicts: Building a Culturally Relevant, Anti-Bias Approach in Early Childhood Programs

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Working with children of color

Story #1.

Tian: Tian is three and a half. She is about to enter your preschool program. Tian's Parents feed her. They intend to continue feeding her until she is five. It is their feeling that children are too independent. They place a high value on interdependence and relationships in which people help each other. They believe that feeding children, because of the great importance food has in their lives, is an important way to teach these values of interdependence and caring for one another...

In your preschool program individualism and doing things for oneself is of primary importance. Children are encouraged to feed themselves.

What is the cultural conflict in this situation?

What are your feelings and thoughts about this situation?

Recognizing the difference in cultural values between your program and Tian's family, how will you integrate Tian into the program?

Story #2.

Tian Part II: Just today Tian finally fed herself during lunch. Your co-teacher, sitting at the lunch table with all the children, really pleased said, "Tian you fed yourself...that's terrific!!! Let's all clap hands for Tian!!! And they applauded..."

What is the cultural conflict in this situation?

What are your feelings and thoughts about this situation?

You are the co-teacher in this classroom... what might you do in this situation?

Story: #3.

Returning to country of origin: Parents planning on returning to their country of origin are concerned that their daughter is learning values that will make it very difficult for her to adjust to the change. They ask her teachers to help prepare her... They (the parents) would like her not to participate in playground games where there is close contact with the boys. She is a very athletic child and loves active games that involve physical contact.

What is the cultural conflict in this situation?

What are your thoughts and feelings about this request?

How might you respond to these concerns?

Story #4.

Too old for a pacifier: Raquel is four and new to your preschool. Her mother sends her with a pacifier each day.

Your co-teacher tells Raquel's mother that she should keep the pacifier at home... Raquel is really too old to have one... and if the other children see her with one, they'll want one too.

What is the cultural conflict in this situation?

What are your feelings and thoughts about this situation?

What might you do in this situation?

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