



Opening the Culture Door

The Connection Between Challenging Behavior and Culture: Creating Culturally Respectful ECE Environments

Presented by Barbara Kaiser

What is culture?

- a: “The integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations
- b: The customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group
- c : the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes a company or corporation”

“Culture has an influence on the beliefs and behaviors of everyone”

- A children's culture is essential to their self concept
- Children have the need and right to be proud of their cultural heritage, language, abilities, values, attitudes, history and “way of doing things”



Culture is absorbed

Overt Culture

Language

Religion

Philosophy

Customs

Family practices

Covert Culture

Behavior

Perceptions

Social learning

“Culture is passed from generation to generation”

Cultural elements

- Norms
- Values
- Rules of Etiquette
- Social Patterns
- Gender Roles
- Socio-economic/Classes
- Prejudices
- Attitude to Weather
- Religion
- Customs
- Timing/Rhythm
- Political System
- Economy
- Family Structure
- Gestures
- Language
- Role of Nature
- History/Heritage
- Child Rearing Practices
- Family Structure
- Territorial Space
- Colors
- Textures
- Shapes
- Spatial
- Architectural Styles

Culture is an integral part of everyone's identity

- Children naturally develop the characteristics that their own culture values
 - Emotional display and affect
 - Moral development
 - Gender roles
 - Cognitive abilities
 - Language

Children begin to construct their identity by how others see and relate to them



**In order to understand
other people's culture
you must first
understand your own**

Who are you?

Identify 3 things that describe how you see yourself through a cultural lens that would help someone know you better



Thinking about your cultural beliefs and experiences.

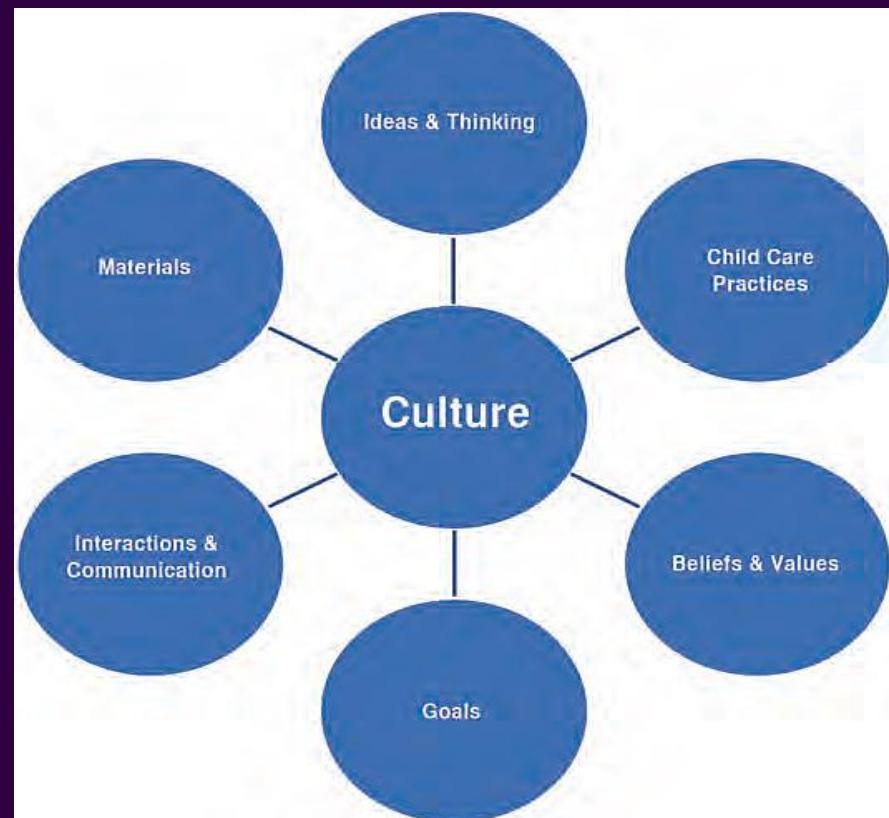


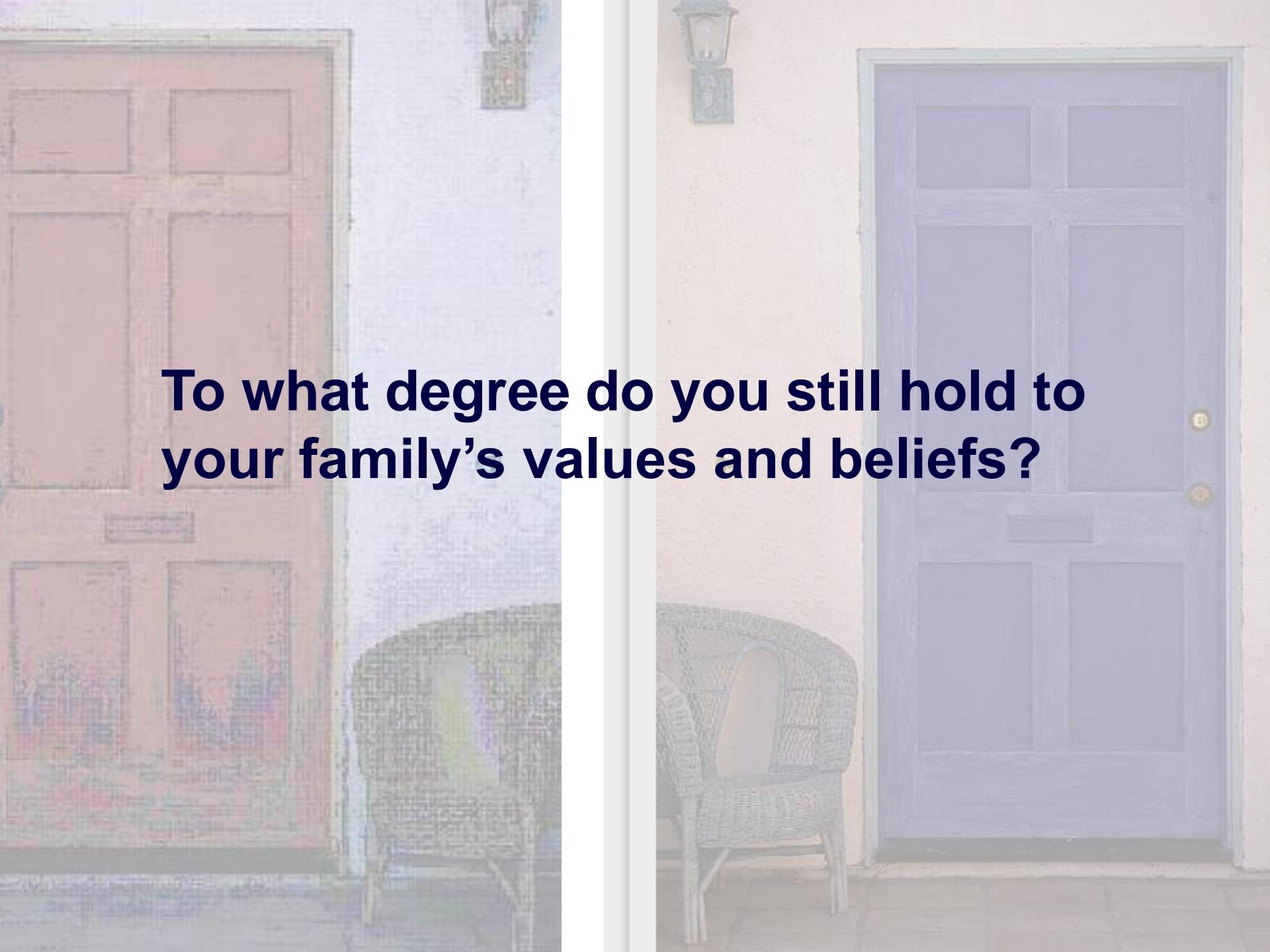
- Do you remember how you first learned about your own ethnic identity?
- What is important to you about this aspect of yourself?
- If you've traveled to another country — or even to a different area — how did you feel in those strange surroundings?

What do you remember about how you were raised?

How has your upbringing influenced your thinking about children's behavior?

- As a child, how were you expected to behave at home?
- What were the adult-child relationships like in your family?
- What behavior was expected in your school?





**To what degree do you still hold to
your family's values and beliefs?**

POLL



Cultures change

“Culture is dynamic and changes according to the contemporary environment”

- When they come in contact with other cultures
- Across generations
- Children's experiences in schools and communities

Examining your attitude

- **What behaviors push your buttons?**
- **How do these behaviors make you feel?**
- **Everyone has different buttons**
 - Past experiences with children
 - Training experiences
 - Level of support for dealing with challenging behaviors
 - Culturally based beliefs (Your childhood)
 - How you were disciplined?



How does your culture influence your teaching style and expectations?



Have you ever experienced an incident that you thought was a child being difficult, but it may have actually been a cultural disconnect?

POLL



United States Population

Total Population 314,289,000

European American 223,553,265

Hispanic/Latino* 50,477,594

African American 38,929,319

Asian 14,674,252

Native American or

Alaska Native 2,932,248

Native Hawaiian or

Pacific Islander 540,013

Other 19,107,368

*US Census Bureau considers Hispanic to mean a person of Latin American descent (including persons of Cuban, Mexican, or Puerto Rican origin) living in the US who may be of any race or ethnic group (white, black, Asian, etc.)

2010 Census



Cultural dissonance

- Not being recognized
- Feeling incompetent
- Feeling confused
- Not understanding the rules
- Not feeling accepted, respected, or valued

Results in challenging behavior

What do I mean by challenging behavior?

Makes it
impossible
to achieve
our goals
& interferes
with learning
opportunities

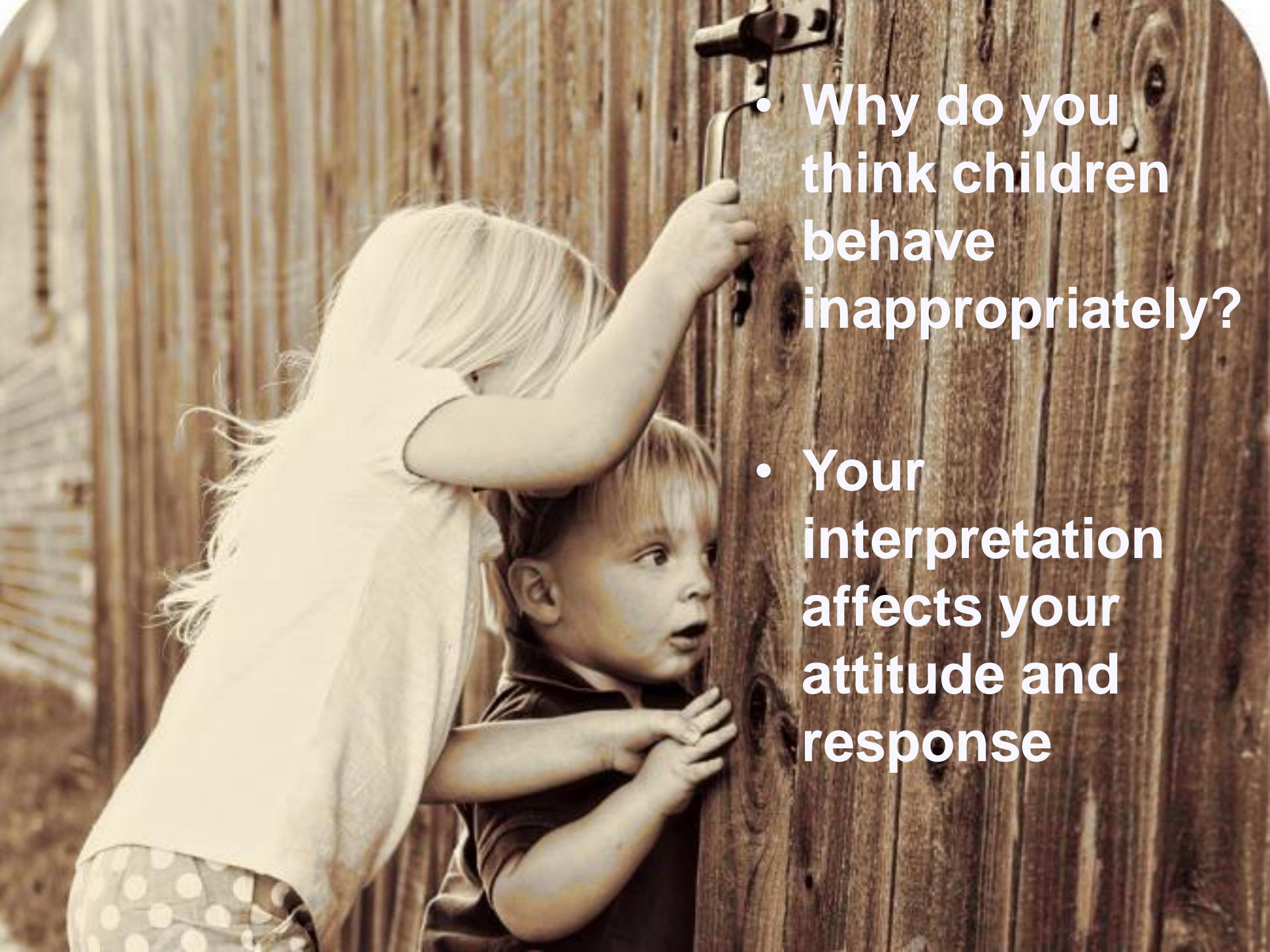
Not a diagnostic term
There may be no diagnosis
Need to survive period before diagnosis

Why is this so important?

Because challenging behavior

- Can interfere with a child's cognitive, social, or emotional development
- Is harmful to the child, other children, or adults
- Puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure

Timid and withdrawn behaviors also qualify as challenging

- 
- Why do you think children behave inappropriately?
 - Your interpretation affects your attitude and response

- The child does not know what you expect
- The child doesn't KNOW how to behave appropriately
- The child is unaware that his/her behavior is inappropriate

AND/OR

- **BIOLOGICAL RISK FACTORS**
 - Genes
 - Temperament
 - Attention Deficit Disorder (Add)
 - Complications of pregnancy and birth
 - Developmental delays
 - Gender
-
- **ENVIRONMENTAL RISK FACTORS**
 - Family factors and parenting style
 - Poverty and the social conditions surrounding it
 - Exposure to violence
 - Violent media
 - Cultural dissonance
 - School



The culture of school/childcare

Values in diverse cultures

Teachers expect children to work independently and compete for rewards

Children help one another learn
Individuals are valued as members of the group

Teachers instruct by asking questions to which they already know the answer

Children find such questions puzzling
Adults ask questions to challenge them or to find out new information

Children must be called on and respond one at a time

Children may not want to stand out from the group
They are expected not to share their views but to watch and listen
They join in and add their opinions
They demonstrate their wit and intellect by responding spontaneously and creatively

To show they're paying attention, children sit still and maintain eye contact

Listeners join in and respond with gestures, movement, and words

Teachers use indirect statements and questions to tell children what to do

Parents use direct statements to tell their children what to do



An anthropologist who proposed a game to the kids in an African tribe. He put a basket full of fruit near a tree and told the kids that who ever got there first won the sweet fruits. When he told them to run they all took each others hands and ran together, then sat together enjoying their treats. When he asked them why they had run like that as one could have had all the fruits for himself they said: UBUNTU, how can one of us be happy if all the other ones are sad?

LOW CONTEXT

Majority U.S., Canada, Europe
individual orientation

European American/Western Europe

HIGH CONTEXT

70% of the world

group orientation

African/Native Americans, Asian, Latino

De-contextualized learning:
Emphasize words and facts

Implicit Commands

Indirect statements ask
children to do what they want

**Focus on functioning
independently**

Helping oneself

Standing out

Personal property

Talking about oneself –

Deductive style of inquiry
Emphasize detail

Context is key

Connect what's happening to their
own experience by telling stories

Learn by observation

Explicit Command

Direct statements tell children
what they want them to do

**Focus on interdependence and
the child as a member of a group**

Helping others and being helped

Fitting in

Shared property

Being modest about oneself -

Inductive reasoning

Focus first on the big picture

Comparing Cultures

Eye contact	honesty, attention, trustworthiness	aggressive, disrespectful, or impolite
Emotional display	Open, spontaneous	Restrained, polite
Laugh or smile	Happy or amused	Confused, embarrassed
Personal space	An arm's length	Like to stand close when conversing
Touching	Frequent, an important means of communication	Avoid physical contact

Language and culture

“Home language is a key component of children’s identity formation”

More than 20% of school aged children speak a language other than English

- Home Language
 - Development and learning take place
 - Constructs a framework of understanding
- In a classroom when language and culture are different from the child's home
 - Cognitive development is put at risk



Dual language learners

- **Critical to support a child's home language when learning English**
 - Concepts and skills they learn in their home language transfer and enhance their Standard English
 - Without home language support children often lose their first language within 2 -3 years
 - When the teacher values a child's home language and culture so do the other children
- Karen Nameth has a wonderful blog at:
<http://languagecastle.com/wordpress/>

How can you support dual language learning ?

- Understand the process of learning another language
- Learn key words in the child's language
 - Learn how to say hello and a few simple words in each child's language
 - When labeling or making posters include the children's languages
- Build relationships between you and the child and the child and his/her peers
 - Interact with children as much as possible
 - Create opportunities for peer interaction
- Develop predictable routines and activities that use language
 - Post picture schedules and other visual aids
 - Include visuals and props to make the content meaningful and comprehensible to all
- Include books or magazines from the child's culture and language



Parents are a powerful source of knowledge

- Find out what's important to each family
 - Their cultural norms, values, traditions
 - What do they want their child to learn

A Mother Speaks

“Before you take charge of the classroom that contains my child, please ask yourself why you are going to teach Indian children. What are your expectations? What are the stereotypes and untested assumptions that you bring with you into the classroom?

“. . . My child has a culture, probably older than yours; he has meaningful values and a rich and varied experiential background. However strange or incomprehensible it may seem to you, you have no right to do or say anything that implies to him that it is less than satisfactory. . . .

“Like most Indian children his age, he is competent. He can dress himself, prepare a meal for himself, clean up afterwards, care for a younger child. He knows his Reserve, all of which is his home, like the back of his hand.

“He is not accustomed to having to ask permission to do the ordinary things that are part of normal living. He is seldom forbidden to do anything; more usually the consequences of an action are explained to him, and he is allowed to decide for himself whether or not to act. His entire existence . . . has been an experiential learning situation, arranged to provide him with the opportunity to develop his skills and confidence in his own capacities. Didactic teaching will be an alien experience for him. . . .

“Will [my child] learn that his sense of his own value and dignity is valid, or will he learn that he must forever be apologetic and ‘trying harder’ because he isn’t white? Can you help him to acquire the intellectual skills he needs without . . . imposing your values on top of those he already has?

“Respect my child. He is a person. He has a right to be himself”

Is it possible for children to learn the skills necessary to succeed in the future and at the same time to honor and value their cultural heritage?

How will you go about balancing these two goals in your classroom?

Code switching

The ability to function in more than one language and culture

Children:

- Perform better academically - clearer thinkers
- Are less likely to drop out of school
- Maintain approval and friendship of their racial and ethnic peers
- Have better inhibitory control
- Can move easily from one culture to the other
- More likely to adapt well to a new situation

A photograph showing a group of young children and an adult teacher in a classroom setting. The children are gathered around a green table, working with colorful clay. One child in the foreground is wearing a pink shirt and has a white flower clip in their hair. Another child is wearing a red patterned shirt. An adult teacher, a Black woman wearing glasses and a white sweater, is standing behind them, observing and assisting. The background is blurred, showing more of the classroom environment.

*Successful programs respect and
incorporate the cultures of children
and their families”*

Becoming a Culturally responsive teacher



- **Form authentic and caring relationships**
- **Build connections between what children already know and what they need to know**
- **Use a curriculum that honors each child's culture and life experience**
- **Shift instructional strategies to meet children's diverse learning needs**
- **Hold high expectations for all learners**
- **Communicate respect for each child's intelligence**
- **Make the implicit explicit**

What can you do?

- **Research the heroes and accomplishments of children's cultures**
- **Introduce culturally relevant topics**
- **Utilize culturally authentic books, songs, dances, and other materials**
- **Buy fruits, vegetables, and canned goods at ethnic markets**
- **Add the empties to the dramatic play area along with dolls, games, menus, clothes, and instruments**
- **Make use of the colors that represent the countries the children come from in your displays**
- **Invite family and community members into the classroom to share their knowledge and skills**



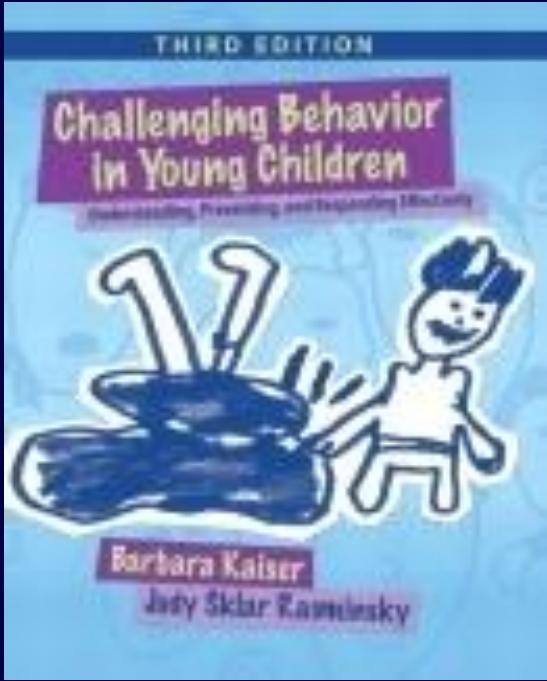
Cross Cultural Competence

**“The ability to think, feel and act
in ways that acknowledge,
respect and build on ethnic,
socio-cultural, and linguistic
diversity”**

Lynch and Hanson, 1993



***“Children have the right to grow up
in environments where differences
are expected and respected”***



THANK YOU



**Challenging Behavior in Young Children: Understanding,
Preventing, and Responding Effectively**

Barbara Kaiser and Judy Sklar Rasminsky
Email: barbarak@challengingbehavior.com



CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR TRAIN THE TRAINER

FEATURING:

*Facing the Challenge DVDs &
Challenging Behavior in Young Children*

October 2-4, 2013 in Villanova, Pennsylvania

Who should attend this training?

- ✓ Directors
- ✓ Trainers and Technical Assistance Providers
- ✓ Behavioral Specialists/Therapists
- ✓ Early Childhood Mental Health/Disabilities Specialists

Participants who attend this 2.5 day session will...

- ✓ Gain a deeper understanding of how to prevent and address challenging behaviors in preschool aged children
- ✓ Learn activities and techniques to enhance training skills
- ✓ Receive guidance, power point slides, trainer notes, and a CD with video clips to leave ready to deliver teacher training sessions based on *Facing the Challenge* and the book *Challenging Behavior in Young Children, 3rd Edition*
- ✓ Explore the resources and training guides to plan your own training sessions