

CHILD CARE PLANNING COUNCIL OF SONOMA COUNTY



Statement on Culturally Responsive Early Care and Education

Our Mission	The Child Care Planning Council of Sonoma County’s mission is to advocate, advise and plan for quality, accessible and affordable child care services in Sonoma County.
Our Vision For Children	All Sonoma County children (0–18 years of age) in child care and early learning programs, (including family child care homes, school based child care and center based care), will be cared for in programs that are safe and healthy, nurturing, stimulating, interactive, culturally appropriate and sensitive to the needs of all children.
Our Understanding of Cultural Diversity	We understand and believe that culture includes race, ethnicity, religion, language, sexual orientation, physical and mental ability, immigration status, gender identity, age, socio-economic status, etc. We want to emphasize that quality early care and education and cultural responsiveness are directly connected.
Culturally Responsive Early Care and Education	<p>We believe that a strong foundation in child development, combined with a disposition toward flexible thinking, acceptance and openness, and respect for meeting a child’s individual needs, prepares early childhood professionals to create culturally responsive programs.</p> <p>We believe that culturally responsive practices require more than the presence of children from different backgrounds; practices must focus on the full and active participation of all children and their families in community activities, services, and programs. Although a family’s preferences may at times seem to conflict with the needs of the group or best practices within ECE, we believe that sincere dialogue can help uncover areas of agreement and ways in which caregivers and families can work together to support the child and family.</p> <p>Intentional focus on the following professional development concepts and program policies will prepare ECE professionals to successfully meet these goals.</p>
Professional Development	<p>To prepare ECE professionals to both create and sustain culturally responsive settings, coursework and training opportunities must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Information, activities and time to practice building a disposition toward lifelong learning, and self-reflection that increases awareness of one’s own

biases and privileges and power;

- Information on children’s development of (1) identity, (2) awareness of differences, and (3) awareness of and participation in prejudice and bias (racial, ethnic, gender, ability, etc.);
- Curriculum and activities that support children’s identity development within their own cultural community and within the broader community of Sonoma County and California;
- Information about anti-bias education with opportunities for mentor and peer support through onsite practical experience;
- Information on and practice with handling difficult conversations about bias and prejudice with children, families and co-workers;
- Opportunities to learn about a community and it’s strengths and forming community partnerships;
- Opportunities to learn about specific cultural groups (dual language, mixed race families, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning [LGBTQ]) and to explore teaching practices that support children who live within these groups;
- Information on how culturally responsive care is provided in a mono-cultural community;
- Opportunities to collaborate and network with other professionals to support the commitment to culturally responsive care.

Program Policies

To institutionalize the practices needed to provide culturally responsive ECE, programs must incorporate the following into their existing processes and policies:

- Program policies that specifically reference a commitment to family-educator partnerships; opportunities for ongoing dialogue with families about their child care preferences and cultural practices;
- Multicultural materials and curriculum that are authentic reflections of the staff, children and families within the program and the broader community of Sonoma County and California;
- Expectations that representatives from staff, families, and program administrators/board members participate in regularly scheduled diversity training as well as the presence of books, videos, etc. to support ongoing development related to providing culturally responsive care;
- Regularly scheduled family/educator meetings to discuss classroom practices, parent/caregiver questions and diversity topics;
- Ongoing staff and program evaluation to ensure that practices are in line with the goal of providing culturally responsive ECE.

Note: the terms “staff” and “program administrators” include family child care

providers

A Call to Action

Culturally responsive ECE allows children to be who they are, like who they are, get along well with others who are different than themselves, ask for what they need and feel is right, and stand up for themselves and others. It fosters children's capacity to thrive in school and in life in an increasingly multicultural country and interconnected world.

The Child Care Planning Council of Sonoma County urges all those who work with children and their families to create culturally responsive programs to support our children in reaching their full potential.

With deep gratitude to the Alameda County Child Care Planning Council for sharing their excellent work developing this Diversity Statement.