

CULTURAL STANDARDS FOR CURRICULA

All training projects and activities of the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program are designed to promote culturally-competent child welfare practice throughout Ohio.

Cultural competence is the understanding of how values, beliefs, attitudes, and traditions influence behavior; the understanding of the content and dynamics of specific cultures; and the ability to use this knowledge to work productively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

It is essential that trainers provide information in their workshops regarding cultural issues at least at the awareness and understanding levels. Trainers can help participants understand that cultural variables affect their work and the reaction of others; and explore participant's belief systems that may create value dilemmas and impact their jobs.

The OCWTP has developed a set of standards to help trainers, IHS, and RTC staff in developing workshops that reflect cultural competence. The standards are included here to assist you in developing your workshops.

1. Basic Definitions and Terminology

Standard 1: Curriculum develops trainees' awareness and knowledge about particular cultural concepts and terms as they apply to the content being trained.

Criteria:

- Uses common cultural terms accurately and defines them for trainees (e.g., stereotypes, culture, ethnocentrism, cultural relativism, ethnicity, or pluralism)
- Defines how cultural concepts apply to the particular content being trained, such as, "Why is culture important in child development?"

2. Self-Awareness and Cultural Understanding

Standard 1: Curriculum helps trainees recognize and acknowledge potential discomfort when talking about diversity and creates opportunities for participants to discuss cultural issues in a safe and supportive training environment.

Criteria:

- Challenges people to think about their own values, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors as they compare and contrast them with others
- Creates a safe atmosphere within which to discuss culture

Standard 2: Curriculum reinforces the concept that one's own cultural background and experience influence one's values, attitudes, and perceptions of others, and that the understanding of one's own culture is a prerequisite to working effectively with persons from other cultures.

Criteria:

- Helps trainees gain knowledge about their own racial/ethnic and cultural background and how it affects their preconceptions of normalcy and dysfunction
- Provides trainees with opportunities to consider and share information about their own cultural backgrounds, values, etc.
- Provides opportunities for trainees to identify similarities and differences in their values, attitudes, and perspectives about the topic being trained
- Stresses that, despite apparent differences, trainees share commonalities

Standard 3: Curriculum affirms that culture is an important force in determining the course of a person's physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and overall development.

Criteria:

- Helps trainees look at culture to explain why people are the way they are and behave the way they do, and helps them better understand how development can vary so greatly
- Helps trainees differentiate between stereotyping about group behaviors and knowing about general group characteristics

3. *The Role of Culture*

Standard 1: Curriculum should reinforce the concept that culture is complex and extends beyond race, gender, and ethnicity or national origin.

Criteria:

- Helps trainees define culture in a real and practical manner
- Discusses cultural components, such as language, economic systems, political systems, social/interpersonal factors, and religion, among others

Standard 2: Curriculum reinforces the fact that cultural competence does not solely focus on “minority groups,” but is a concept that involves all cultures and all peoples.

Criteria:

- Uses examples from a variety of cultural groups and perspectives
- Helps separate cultural factors from noncultural issues in areas such as case intervention and preparation

4. *Training Practices and Methods*

Standard 1: Curriculum reinforces understanding of the perspectives of other cultures regarding the topic area by using a variety of means throughout the curriculum to present cultural issues, such as case examples, trainee handouts, and describing relevant field practices.

Criteria:

- Audio-visual materials consistently represent (and accurately portray) multicultural population groups
- Discussion questions and dialogues should challenge trainees to always consider cross-cultural issues
- Suggestions are provided on how to apply learnings in at least two different cultural settings
- Case examples and practice exercises incorporate cross-cultural approaches and strategies
- Interactive exercises are used by trainees and modeled by the trainer

Standard 2: Curriculum presents a range and diversity of viewpoints about the topic being trained.

Criteria:

- Utilizes learnings from a variety of publications and resources that illuminate other viewpoints and address knowledge and practices oriented toward working with different groups

Standard 3: Course content should be consistent with and reinforce OCWTP competencies related to culture and diversity.

Criteria:

- Identifies relevant and appropriate OCWTP cultural competencies that will support and enhance, as these are appropriate to the topic or module being trained

5. *Skills Acquisition and Field Application*

Standard 1: Curriculum helps identify culturally relevant ways to deliver supportive and other special services to children and families.

Criteria:

- Information is presented on how basic principles of the curriculum can be applied to at least two different cultural groups; for instance, presenting child-rearing patterns as practiced among two or more distinct population groups
- Sections of the "idea catcher" are to be exclusively used to reflect application of cultural concepts back at the workplace and in the field