



TRI-COUNTY HEAD START

Cultural Competency Plan



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Introduction

Tri-County Head Start (TCHS) has committed to embedding in its essence/culture, a system that can effectively provide services to people of all cultures, races, ethnic backgrounds, and religions in a manner that recognizes, values, affirms, and respects the worth of all children, families, and staff and protects and preserves the dignity of each.

All children deserve an early childhood education that is responsive to their families, communities, and racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. It is important for our children, families, and staff that we learn about the cultures and families in our communities. All staff will be trained in cultural diversity at hire and annually, in addition to ongoing learning opportunities to further their knowledge of culture and its role in our mission and our organizational culture.

Cultural Competency

Cultural Competence is the willingness and ability to value the importance of culture, ethnicity, race, and religion in the delivery of services and in the messages and examples we project into our communities. It is recognizing that each family's unique culture includes traditional practices, values, and knowledge that show up in the cultural fabric in the communities we serve and each unique culture adds to the community's rich history and culture.

By making a commitment to value and honor the culture of each child and family, as an organization we create an educational community where children can feel a sense of belonging. This sense of acceptance and belonging builds on each child's educational experience and allows them to achieve their full educational potential.

Becoming culturally competent requires each individual to be aware of their own worldview, an awareness of their own biases, and their knowledge of cultural practices. As an organization, it means that there is intentionality in trainings offered and required, data analysis, and practices to ensure cultural competency is embedded into all aspects of the organizational culture.

Purpose

We believe that by addressing the cultural and linguistic needs of our communities, it will improve quality of services and outcomes, in addition to being an example that others in our communities can model. This plan has been developed to ensure all staff are trained in and reflect these core values throughout our organization. TCHS recognizes that respecting the diversity of our children, families, staff, and communities has a tremendous and positive impact on outcomes.

We also know that cultural competence takes time, hard work, and practice to develop and requires effective reflection to identify and implement opportunities.

The Why

In the communities we serve there are obvious examples of deeply ingrained systemic racism and less obvious implicit biases that show up. From the life expectancy outcome variations between Benton Harbor, and St. Joseph, to the quiet requests from families about which classroom or teacher they would like to be placed with, and the racial demographics

of the leadership within the organization, these are all examples of where we as an organization can make an impact and do better.

	TCHS Children	TCHS Staff	Community
Black	23.8%	18%	9.7%
White	53%	79%	81.7%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1%	0%	1%
Multi-Racial/Bi-Racial	21%	2%	4%
Other	1%	0%	3.36%
Hispanic	20%	9%	6%

Goals and Objectives

- We will provide training to all staff at onboarding, and annually, plus offer additional educational opportunities to further knowledge.
 - TCHS staff will be required upon hire and annually thereafter to complete Diversity and Cultural Competency Training
- Work to create an atmosphere of acceptance, civility, and respect for the rights of each individual or family, regardless of economic background or status, ethnic background, political views, sexual orientation, gender, or other personal characteristics and beliefs.
- Incorporate multicultural materials into the curriculum and throughout the classroom, as well as in all marketing materials. We use cultural diversity in the classroom as a learning tool, and a way to help others open their minds and hearts to all people.
- Ensure services are provided in a culturally competent manner to all children and families that honors dignity.
- Review the demographics of our communities, the families we serve and annually compare our staff composition, including race, ethnicity, language, and culture.
- TCHS will continue to build upon the work of the Anti-Racism committee and add members as they complete advanced trainings.

Tools and Resources Used

- Cultural/Diversity classroom checklist (home visiting supplies)
- Books in rooms/homes
- Anti-Racism Committee
- ERRACE or other anti-racism/bias training
- Dual Language Department
- PQA

How it meets need – agency, staff, children, and families

1. We will provide effective, equitable, understandable, respectful, and with dignity quality care and services that are responsive to diverse cultural beliefs and practices, preferred languages, literacy, and other communication needs
2. Ensure diversity in our organizational governance that honors and reflects the unique communities we serve
3. Recruit, promote, and support a culturally and linguistically diverse workforce that is responsive and reflective of the population in our service area.

4. Educate and train governance, leadership, and staff in culturally and linguistically appropriate practices, and policies on an ongoing basis.
5. Offer language assistance, verbally and in writing, to individuals who have limited English proficiency and/or other communication needs.

How it is shared

Annually, this Cultural Competency Plan will be reviewed. Progress will be documented and shared with the staff, Board, and Policy Council.

When reviewed and assessed

- Conduct evaluation and assessments on the progress
- Include in the self-evaluation process
- Will annually evaluate the plan its goals and processes to assess the effectiveness of the Cultural Competency Plan. Results will be used in the annual self-assessment process to determine the future direction of the plan. This evaluation may include family surveys, employee surveys, staff, family and community demographics, trainings completed. Trends will be tracked to identify issues and to implement interventions.