



Becoming Culturally Competent is a Journey

by Lee Mun Wah, Ms. MA

"Cultural competency has become a buzz term in the past few years for adoptive and foster families, work places, schools and social agencies. There is not an easy answer or a quick solution as to how to become culturally competent, rather, it is a process, or more exactly, a journey that takes a lot of time, curiosity, and a desire to widen the scope of one's experiences. The Buddhists say that we do not learn from experience, but rather by our willingness to experience. In the Western culture, which often boasts of being multicultural, there is still so much to learn about each other and much that is taken for granted. And so, the journey that is needed begins with first acknowledging what we don't know and being open to what it is that we need to learn.

Cultural competency requires many facets of understanding. For many, awareness of the social issues and contexts surrounding another's cultural history and upbringing is often the first level of cultural competency. Here are some important ways for foster families to become more culturally competent:

1. Begin where your foster child is, not where you want them to be.
2. Learn to correctly pronounce their name. Honor their name, as well as their ancestors and their heritage.
3. Learn about the important people in your foster child's place of origin, such as artists, musicians, writers, not just their foods.
4. Share your culture, so your foster child doesn't think they are the only one who is different.
5. Even though you see the goodness in your foster child, others may not. Talk to your foster child about racism. Be curious, empathetic, and open to another reality outside of your own
6. Notice and appreciate the interests of your foster child that may reflect their ethnic background.
7. Notice what your child is saying and what they are not. Be curious and open to what they are trying to say.
8. Try to understand how a foster child's past affects who they are and how those experiences affect their relationships with you.
9. Be prepared when your foster child brings up your ethnicity and what it means to them. Try not to take it personally if your foster child says something negative; rather, listen and ask lots of questions. Be open to how they are feeling, even if it takes the form of anger or hurt. Children need to talk and trust that you will listen and be understanding.
10. Invite people of other cultures into your home for dinner or other occasions; in other words, widen your circle of friends."

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES



REMINDER: IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN YOUR PROCTOR LICENSE YOU **MUST** COMPLETE 50 HOURS OF TRAINING THE FIRST YEAR AND 32 HOURS ANNUALLY THEREAFTER. If YOU ARE MARRIED, YOUR SPOUSE MUST COMPLETE AT LEAST 2/3 OF THE ANNUAL HOURLY REQUIREMENTS ALSO.

Ouch

CPR/1st Aid Training

West Jordan Library (1970 W. 7800 So.)

Thursday, September 11 5:30 p.m.

West Valley Library (2880 W. 3650 S.)

Saturday, September 6 10:15 a.m.

Hunter Library (4800 W. 4100 So.)

Monday, September 29 5:30 p.m.

Sandy Library (10075 S. 1350 E.)

Saturday, September 20 10:15 a.m.

Save-A-Heart

call 582-7114 for more information

Make certain you let them know you are with

CBTS when you attend

CBTS PROCTOR TRAINING

Wednesday, September 17

6:30 p.m.

220 E. 3900 S.

Presenters: Kim Ontiveros & Lori Nadeau

Topic: Mandatory Contract Obligations including PRS, Code of Conduct, Emergency Preparation, Medicaid, etc.



You Make the Difference!
Protecting & Empowering Youth



2 Day Foster, Proctor Parent & Community Partner Conference

Tuesday, September 23 & Wednesday, September 24

University of Phoenix

5373 South Green Street Murray

Continental breakfast 8:00 - 8:30 a.m. both days

Tuesday's Schedule

8:50 - 10:00 a.m. Mark Shurtleff, Utah Attorney General
Topic: "Keeping Youth Safe" (Internet, computer safety, cell phones, pornography, etc.)

10:10 - 11:20 a.m. Dean Workman, VMH LPC
Topic: "Assisting youth in building & sustaining healthy relationships"

11:30 - 12:55 Lunch or DBT 1 Session

1:00 - 2:30 p.m. Rick Rawlins, LCSW
Topic: "Preventing Sexual Acting Out with Highly Sexualized Youth"

Wednesday's Schedule

8:35 - 10:00 a.m. Dr. Gerald Newmark, Ph.D.
Topic: "How to Raise Emotionally Healthy Children"

10:10-11:30a.m. Topic: "Working with Special Needs Kids/Teaching PRS Skills in the Home"
or Metro Gang Unit Presentation

11:30 - 12:55 Lunch or DBT II

1:00-2:30 p.m. Tammer Attallah, LCSW ARTEC
Topic: "Walking in Their Shoes"

You can attend a portion or all of the conference. It is free of charge. Call Joan or Janis at 955-9686 to reserve your seat. You may also email Joan at joans@vmh.com

If you want your child to behave appropriately, you have to first set the standards for the behaviors you want. You need to specify exactly how you want your child to behave, but it must be behavior appropriate for the child's age. And you must present a united front. It is important for the parents to sit down with each other and be very clear in terms of how they want their children to behave. Then they need to develop strategies to achieve those behaviors.

Too often, parents look only at undesirable behaviors, and consequently their parenting styles dissolve into complaining and reacting. This is like trying to drive a car by looking through the rearview mirror. You see only what is being done instead of what lies ahead. The list of proper behaviors isn't all that long or complicated. Kids should be expected to follow directions, respect adults, stick to schedules and act like they have good sense in public, at least. If you focus on developing the positive behaviors in your child, then the negative behaviors won't be so overwhelming and you can feel good about your parenting.



Step 1: Identify Specific Target Behaviors

Focusing on the positive is always the best way to deal with a child. Target those behaviors that you want your child to begin performing. For a behavior to be an appropriate target, it must be:

1. *Within the scope of the child's abilities.* Avoid overreaching and make sure that what you are asking the child to do fits the specific circumstances in which it is to occur. They have to be old enough to do it and have ample opportunity.

2. *Narrow in scope.* An appropriate target behavior should address a specific action rather than a broad array of issues. If a child is resistant to performing personal hygiene, you would want to address only one or two behaviors at a time. A sensible target behavior might be one of the following:

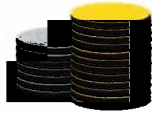
- brushing teeth for two minutes without prompting
- Taking a shower before bedtime

3. *Unambiguously defined.* It should be clear not only to the child but to the whole family what the target behavior is. This might be helpful if a sibling can offer support when you are not there. Do not expect the child to guess at what you want. Use two-way communication to ensure that your child knows and can articulate exactly what is desired. "Be good" just isn't enough instruction. What do you mean by "be good"? Be precise.

4. *Be measurable.* Whenever possible, the target behavior should be quantifiable. The following are some example target behaviors that are quantifiable and can be used as measures of improvement:

- number of words spelled correctly on a test
- amount of time studying
- number of times room was cleaned per week

Don't waste your time just telling your child what *not* to do. Spend your efforts and energy guiding your child in what *to do*.



Step 2: Determining Currency

Based on human nature, there must be a reward or payoff for your child to actively adopt more desirable behaviors. It is human nature. Everyone approaches a given situation thinking, "What's in this for me?" to some degree. You have to meet them where they are, and if children are greedy, then appeal to the greed. Children want what they want when they want it and they want it now. So figure out a way for them to get as much of what they want through appropriate behavior.

All of us work for payoffs at some level. What constitutes a payoff varies from one person to another. It is for that reason that you must define whether a given consequence is truly positive for your child. You must determine a positive currency for your child based on what she likes or dislikes and what she is willing to work to get. One of the most powerful currencies for a child is the parents' acceptance and approval. Do you know your child's currency? Do you have a plan for using it to shape behavior? Currency is anything that when presented during or immediately after a target behavior will increase the likelihood of that behavior occurring again. In other words, it is something the kid will work to get.

Currency can also motivate a child in the negative. What that means is that children are willing to perform Behavior A in order to escape Consequence B. An example would be that children will study (Behavior A) in order to escape a bad grade (Consequence B). Children will speak to their parents with respect (Behavior A) to avoid getting grounded (Consequence B). In the real world children will perform to escape the negative consequences or to avoid losing privileges.

(cont.)

Categories of Potential Positive Currency

- ◆ **Tangible/Extrinsic Reinforcers:** Materials, money, food, token economics. External rewards are derived from the world and the people in it—as opposed to self rewards. But, be careful not to overdo the external material rewards. To the extent that extrinsic rewards such as toys, privileges and money go up in value, internal motivation goes down. A parent who wants to boast about his child's grades and gives twenty dollars for each A is offering extrinsic reinforcement that is unlikely to inspire the child to take pride in the grades or to develop a healthy thirst for knowledge. A major mistake parents make is overrewarding their kids to the point that it becomes bribery.
- ◆ **Token Economics:** Many times a parent can give token rewards that can later be redeemed for other values. These economics help in maintaining a system of accounting for behaviors and serve as an easy way to create credit systems. Tokens can be anything—poker chips, tickets, gold stars or even play money. The parent can set the value for each token, such as one token equal an ice-cream; five tokens equal a movie at home; ten tokens equal a trip to an arcade; etc.
- ◆ **Social Reinforcers:** Attention, affirmations, affection
- ◆ **Implied Reinforcers:** Certificates, privileges
- ◆ **Natural/Intrinsic Reinforcers:** The good feelings the child gets inside for making progress toward goals, the satisfaction of performance and self-concept changes.

In order to help you determine your child's favorite currencies, answer these questions. You should be able to identify several possibilities.

- ◆ What things does your child like to eat? Buy?
- ◆ What is your child's favorite pasttime?
- ◆ Who do they most like to spend time with?
- ◆ Where is their favorite place to be?
- ◆ How do they like their accomplishments to be recognized?
- ◆ What are they good at?
- ◆ Do they have a routine they value throughout the day?

To stimulate your thinking further, here are some suggestions of activities children tend to value. These are potential currencies you might withhold:

- Attending an event, like a party or a concert
- Dating
- Driving
- Going to the mall
- Playing video games
- Playing music
- Shopping
- Sleeping late
- Surfing the Internet
- Talking on the telephone
- Watching television
- Watching videos



Step 3: Administration of Currencies

It is true that a child's currency works best and most efficiently when it is given consistently and immediately. Still, there is a science to scheduling the administration of currencies in an efficient way. There are two basic schedules: continuous and intermittent. Continuous reinforcements are given every time a target behavior is performed. Intermittent reinforcement is when you give the currency during and immediately after some but not every performance of the target behavior. It is recommended that you offer continuous reinforcement during the learning phase. Once stability is established, you should switch to an intermittent schedule of reinforcement. A child will have the tendency to resist efforts to move to the next level of behavior or into a new area of behavior if a schedule of continuous reinforcement is maintained. Why try something new if the current and comfortable behavior pays you off every time? Children who have learned on an intermittent reinforcement schedule are much more stable and durable in their behavior and emotions. They are much more adventurous and willing to try new things in hope of finding a new way to get paid off, perhaps more frequently. Intermittent scheduling can be used on two strategies. The first is time based: Currencies are given based on a time frame. This schedule is highly effective in shaping target behaviors. The second is based on the number of times a specified target behavior is performed: For example, every fifth time a child is ready for school on time, an allowance is given.

TIPS FROM THE JEFF FOXWORTHY BOOK OF MANNERS



General Information:

1. It's considered poor taste to take a cooler to church.
2. If you have to vacuum the bed, it's time to change the sheets.
3. Even if you're certain that you are included in the will, it is still considered tacky to drive a U-Haul to the funeral home.

Entertaining In Your Home

1. A centerpiece for the table should never be anything prepared by a taxidermist.
2. Do not allow the dog to eat at the table no matter how good his manners are.

Personal Hygiene:

1. While ears need to be cleaned regularly, this is a job that should be done in private using one's OWN truck keys.
2. Proper use of toiletries can forestall bathing for several days. However, if you live alone, deodorant is a waste of good money.

Dating (Outside the family):

1. Be aggressive. Let her know you're interested: 'I've been wanting to go out with you since I read that stuff on the bathroom wall two years ago.'
2. Establishing with her parents what time she is expected back. Some will say 10:00 p.m.; others might say 'Monday.' If the latter is the answer, it is the man's responsibility to get her to school on time.
3. Always offer to bait your date's hook, especially on the first date.

Weddings:

1. Livestock, usually, is a poor choice for a wedding gift.
2. Kissing the bride for more than 5 seconds may get you shot.
3. For the groom, at least, rent a tux. A leisure suit with cummerbund and a clean bowling shirt can create too sporty an appearance.

Driving:

1. When approaching a four-way stop, the vehicle with the largest tires has the right of way.
2. Never tow another car using panty hose and duct tape.
3. When sending your wife down the road with a gas can, it is impolite to ask her to bring back beer.

A couple were celebrating their golden wedding anniversary on the beaches in Montego Bay, Jamaica. Their domestic tranquility had long been the talk of the town. People would say, "What a peaceful and loving couple." The local newspaper reporter was inquiring as to the secret of their long and happy marriage. The husband replied, "Well, it dates back to our honeymoon in America. We visited the Grand Canyon and took a trip down to the bottom of the canyon by donkey. We hadn't gone too far when my wife's donkey stumbled and she almost fell off. My wife looked down at the donkey and quietly said, 'That's once.' "We proceeded a little further and the donkey stumbled again. Once more my wife quietly said, 'That's twice.' "We hadn't gone a half-mile when the donkey stumbled for the third time. My wife quietly removed a revolver from her purse and shot the donkey dead. I shouted at her, "What's wrong with you, Woman! Why did you shoot the poor animal like that. Are you crazy?? She looked at me and quietly said, "That's once." "And from that moment...we have lived happily ever after."

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