



Culturally Appropriate Child Care in Minnesota

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Definitions related to culturally appropriate child care

The field of early childhood educationⁱ provides the following definitions related to culturally appropriate child care:

- ***Culturally responsive early childhood programs*** foster children's healthy identity development as a member of a family and a cultural community.

Culturally responsive programs share three important components:

- Use curriculum based on children's daily lives
- Incorporate children's home language
- Activities encourage children to learn from their family and home culture

- ***Culturally specific early childhood programs*** are designed to serve children of a specific culture and often a specific language. For example, a program that offers programming in Ojibwe for children who are members of the Ojibwe tribe is an example of culturally specific child care.

The State of Minnesota ~~does not have a formal definition of culturally appropriate child care.~~ However, measures of program quality in the voluntary Parent Aware Quality Rating and Improvement Systemⁱⁱ directly relate to characteristics of culturally responsive care, including:

- Cultural responsiveness. Program evaluates its cultural responsiveness and sets goals using an approved self-assessment tool.
- Shares information with families. Program shares information in a way that meets the needs of all families, including those who speak languages other than English.

Diversity of Child Care Programs in Minnesota

The Department of Human Services collects the following data on the linguistic and ethnic diversity of staff working in child care programs.ⁱⁱⁱ

Languages spoken in child care programs

Family Child Care

- 96 percent speak English only
- 4 percent speak English and other languages (Spanish, Somali, Hmong)
- 6 family child care providers report that they do not speak English

Child Care Centers

- 79 percent have staff that speak English only
- 21 percent have staff that speak English and Other languages (Spanish, Somali, Hmong)

Racial/Ethnic Diversity

Family Child Care

- 94 percent of providers self-identify as White/European American
- 6 percent of providers self-identify as other than White

Child Care Centers

- Data not available

ⁱ York, Stacy. (2003) *Roots and Wings: Affirming Culture in Early Childhood Programs*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.

ⁱⁱ Minnesota Department of Human Services. (2016) *Parent Aware Quality Rating and Improvement System: Standards and Indicators*. Program measures effective July 2017.

ⁱⁱⁱ Child Care Aware of Minnesota conducts an annual survey of licensed child care programs on behalf of the Department of Human Services. Data shown here was collected from January to May of 2016. Survey responses are stored in the Minnesota NACCRRAware data system.