



## Linguistically and Culturally Appropriate Practice

Through their family, a child engages in their earliest and closest relationships and it is within these relationships that children experience the cultural belief system of their parents and family. These cultural belief systems are translated into parenting practices and guidance for child development. The home culture, including language/s, creates the background for all interactions and early learning within the family. In addition, the family culture provides the child with a sense of identity and a framework for interpreting the world. Every family has its own cultural and linguistic background and brings its unique experience, values, and beliefs to being a family and raising young children. The family's cultural influence on health, growth and development, child-rearing, family relationships, and learning expectations shapes the child's (and family's) development, school readiness and school success.

The Illinois Early Learning Council recently adopted guiding principles related to cultural and linguistic responsiveness in early childhood programming; within these principles is a collective vision that each and every child will have early childhood experiences that promote healthy development that respects, promotes, and builds on their cultural, racial, ethnic, and other family backgrounds and experiences. The Guiding Principles include a commitment to ensuring the following characteristics exist to support services to young children:

- Early childhood professionals who understand that developing a child's first language supports the acquisition of a second language.
- Early childhood classrooms that embrace and include a rich range of diversity, allowing all to learn from it and enhancing all children's learning and development.
- Teacher preparation programs that incorporate the individual and unique needs of each child and family and the experiences they bring to the classroom.
- Programming that incorporates all types of diversity, including but not limited to: gender, culture, language, ethnicity, ability, race and economic status.
- Policy implementation that reinforces families and communities as children's first teachers.
- Diverse state and local organizations and agencies that are meaningfully responsive to each and every child and family they serve.

The Award of Excellence for Linguistically and Culturally Appropriate Practice, part of ExceleRate Illinois, reflects and advances these principles, including the acknowledgment of the fact that supporting dual language learners rests in the very best of all teaching practices and instructional quality. The teaching practices must include a responsiveness to the children and regard for their perspective, a sensitivity to their needs, and an ability to utilize a variety of instructional formats to reach and engage the children.

***Has your program already achieved the Gold Circle of Quality? If so additional technical assistance can be received to work toward this Award of Excellence at <http://modules.lcexcel.com/>.***

***For more information, contact [gov.ExceleRateAoEs@illinois.gov](mailto:gov.ExceleRateAoEs@illinois.gov).***

# Standards

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| <b>Standard 1</b>  | <p>Program demonstrates exemplary linguistic and culturally appropriate classroom learning environments.</p> <p><b>Evidence:</b> Self-Study and Program Portfolio demonstrate: No classroom with an overall ERS score below 4.5 AND no classroom below a 6 on Activity Subscale item #28 ECERS and item #24 ITERS: Promoting Acceptance of Diversity; OR no classroom with CLASS Emotional Support scores below 4.5 AND no classroom with Classroom Organization scores below 4.5.</p>   |
| <b>Standard 2</b>  | <p>Program demonstrates exemplary support for learning and development in both English and the children's home language in its curriculum, lesson planning, and instruction.</p>   |
| <b>Standard 3</b>  | <p>Program demonstrates exemplary linguistic, culturally and developmentally appropriate instructional practices.</p>  |
| <b>Standard 4</b>  | <p>Staff conduct child assessments utilizing a dual language approach for children who are English Language Learners, conducting assessments in both the child's home language and English. (Programs may use family and community resources as appropriate to assist in assessments for children who speak languages of lower incidence). Program reviews children's progress in developing both languages as part of its continuous improvement efforts.</p>   |
| <b>Standard 5</b>  | <p>Staff develop individualized learning plans to reflect each child's dual language goals.</p>  |
| <b>Standard 6</b>  | <p>Parent and family conferences will be conducted in the family's home language.</p>  |
| <b>Standard 7</b>  | <p>Program makes an intentional effort to solicit the input and involvement of all families, including culturally, racially and linguistically diverse families (i.e. parent cafes, family support groups, English as a Second Language classes, teen parent play groups, etc.).</p>   |
| <b>Standard 8</b>  | <p>Staff support child and family transition to a new program by providing information about language services and supports available in the receiving programs and by initiating communication between the programs.</p>  |
| <b>Standard 9</b>  | <p>For children whose families speak a language other than English at home, the program explicitly seeks to promote both children's home language development and their English Language Development. This is reflected in the curriculum and in the learning materials available in the classroom.</p>  |
| <b>Standard 10</b> | <p>Program has hiring practices to recruit and retain culturally, racially and linguistically diverse and competent staff that reflect the children and families being served.</p>   |
| <b>Standard 11</b> | <p>Each classroom will have qualified staff members that are proficient in the languages of the children. At minimum, qualification is demonstrated by a teaching team consisting of at least one lead teacher with a bachelor's degree and an assistant with at least an associate's degree, an ISBE paraprofessional certification, or a Gateways Level 4 Credential. At least one of these two is proficient in the home language of a majority of the children, and at least one of these two has bilingual or English as a second language training. (Additional requirements for teacher certification/licensures and bilingual/ESL endorsement apply for Preschool For All classrooms.)</p> |
| <b>Standard 12</b> | <p>In classrooms where the majority of children speak a single language other than English at home, at least one classroom staff person is a proficient speaker of that language. By 2020, in classrooms where the majority of children speak a single language other than English at home, the lead teacher is a competent speaker of that language.</p>  |
| <b>Standard 13</b> | <p>All classroom and special services staff who provide direct services to children have current knowledge of recommended practices for serving children in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.</p>  |