

Philadelphia Infant Toddler Early Intervention Cultural Competence in Early Intervention

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Early Intervention regulations defines culturally competent service delivery as follows:

“Conducted or provided in a manner that shows awareness of and is responsive to the beliefs, interpersonal styles, attitudes language and behavior of children and families who are referred for receiving services.” (PL 14-452, Title 55, section 4226.5)

It is the goal of Philadelphia County that **everyone** providing services in Infant Toddler Early Intervention is **‘culturally sensitive’**. Philadelphia County's perspective on culturally sensitive service delivery encompasses the above definition contained in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Early Intervention regulations and also maintains that:

1. There are many cultures, races, nationalities and religions represented among the population we serve that we value equally.
2. The nature of Early Intervention being delivered in a family's home and community, places the service provider face-to-face with a family's culture, practices, attitudes, interpersonal styles and belief systems.
3. Regardless of the orientation of the service provider, or the level of their education or training, no individual can truly be competent in another person's culture, but **all individuals** can work toward developing an appreciation and understanding of another person's culture.
4. It is every service provider's responsibility to become sensitive to the fact that their presence in a person's home and community **will** impact the family and has the potential to breach certain beliefs and practices; and it is their responsibility to determine what the impact will be and to eliminate or alleviate it.
5. We take a family centered approach to cultural competence. Therefore, **in every situation** the family is the expert and should be 'asked' if they are comfortable with what we are doing/using/suggesting, etc. and if we have permission to proceed.
6. When family centered practices are being used, the service provider lessens the chances of offending a family or overstepping their cultural boundaries. Our focus on family centered practices in Early Intervention goes hand-in-hand with cultural sensitivity because it takes into account the family's interpersonal styles, centers on using the things in the family home; joining in on the family's already established routines and activities and has the family implementing the interventions that the service providers have demonstrated for them. The suggested interventions themselves should be "compatible" with a family's beliefs, values, orientation, etc.
7. Culturally sensitive service provision will be determined by the context in which the evaluations, assessments and interventions are framed as noted in the MDE, IFSP, session notes and correspondence.
8. We will use County sponsored training to address the Commonwealth's regulation that each Infant Toddler Early Intervention service provider receive annual "training related to cultural competence." We will do this by assuring that every topical training opportunity offered (or approved) by Philadelphia County will include a discussion that considers what the impact of that subject/practice area might be relative to a family's practices, interpersonal styles, race, beliefs, attitudes, language nationality and/or ethnic group.