

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PARENTING

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“Culture includes the beliefs and the ways of living that groups have handed down from one generation to another. Religion, geography, and history also influence how cultures develop.” Karen Zaleski in Mile Marker 2, “Discovering Diversity”

“Dr. Richard Curwin has made the point that it is what parents and children do, not their ethnic background or where they live that determines the degree of risk. The behavior rather than the situation is the key – and behavior can be changed.”

Ken McCluskey in Mile Marker 1, “Looking for Gifts in All the Wrong Places”

“Parents model many behaviors for their children – a strong work ethic, punctuality, trust, self-care, healthful eating habits, concern for the environment, service to community, frugality, interest in the news, and involvement in a faith community. Similarly, parents can model self-abuse, isolation, poor coping with stress, poor work habits, anti-authority attitudes, distrust, and dangerous aggressiveness. When parents respect the “self” of the child, they send a message that individuals differ from each other, even within families and that it is good to respect differences – including those in school peers who are quite different from them.”

Jean Peterson In Mile Marker 2, “Parents as Models: Respecting and Embracing Differences.”

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- “Poverty is a vicious killer of fine minds.” Nancy Robinson
- “Poverty involves the extent to which an individual does without resources: financial, emotional, intellectual, physical, relationships, role models and innumerable external support systems.” Barbara Clark
- “More than 33% of African American children live in poverty.” Frank Worrell
- “Both low-income students and minority students may appear socially marginalized in school settings due to their socio-economic backgrounds in respect to clothing, mannerisms, and circle of friends.” Joyce VanTassel-Baska
- “Recent literature has demonstrated the positive potential . . . that views cultural and linguistic diversity as a strength rather than as a risk.” Harry, Klingner & Hart
- “The cultural heritage is learned and is not innately a part of the child.” B. Clark
- “When will we teach them who they are? We should say to them, you are unique. You are a marvel. In this whole world there is no one like you and there will never be again. Pablo Casals
- “Hispanics and Asian Americans tend to be less comfortable with teachers and defer to schools more than African Americans and non-Hispanics.” S. Nieto
- John Ogbu makes a distinction between voluntary minorities, who come to this country by choice to seek economic opportunity for greater political freedom; and involuntary minorities, such as African Americans, who were originally brought to this country against their will. Voluntary minorities see primary cultural differences as barriers to assimilation that must be overcome. Involuntary minorities see secondary cultural differences as protectors of their

very identity and have no strong incentives to give up these differences as long as they believe they are still oppressed.

PROJECT SYNERGY: James Borland Research Study

(As reported in *Gifted Child Quarterly*, Winter 2000 Vol. 44, #1)

For six years, high ability kindergarten disadvantaged students were selected in a NY school that was 90% minority. They were followed for 6 years. The five whom they interviewed in-depth were all Black or Latino, lived in poverty, and four lived with a single parent mother. The following assertions were made about the families of the successful students.

1. The families do not believe in a totally inflexible caste system to whose bottom rungs, their children will inevitably be consigned.
2. The parents believe that academic success can lead to upward mobility and they socialize their children accordingly.
3. The parents create a home environment in which the prevailing norms resemble middle class norms, lessening the pressure on the children for assimilation without accommodations. School and home values are constant. (Example: they spoke standard English.)
4. The parents are unwilling to attribute all disappointments to racism or are willing to ignore some instances of racism for their children's sake. Racism was no excuse for failure.
5. The parents recognize and encourage their children's giftedness.
6. There are positive role models for the children in the home including parents.
7. The parents are willing to take risks.
8. The families, although headed by a single mother in 4 of 5 cases, are stable, provide love and support for the children.

The children's families are an important factor in the children's academic success. The interaction of individual abilities with family and environment support results in educational achievement that, in turn, requires an appropriate response from the educational system.

B.J. Shade in his article, "Social-Psychological Characteristics of Achieving Black Children," suggested that African American children who do well in school and on achievement tests tend to have parents or guardians who: *

1. maintain a quality of communication that stimulates the child's problem-solving ability, independence, and productivity;
2. express warmth, interest, affection, and encouragement;
3. establish close family ties;
4. maintain structure and order for the child;
5. establish goals of performance;
6. use control mechanisms that include moderate amounts of praise and blame, moderate amounts of punishment, and no authoritarian tactics; and
7. give assistance when requested or when the need is perceived.

A. W. Boykin in Barbara Clark's "*Growing Up Gifted, 7th Edition*," identifies nine cultural styles that AFRICAN AMERICAN students MAY show:

Spirituality: Hold deep belief systems; give great validity to the power of spiritual forces in their lives; value spiritual activities.

Harmony: Feel that self and environment are interconnected; Read nonverbal behaviors well.

Oral tradition: Gain & transmit knowledge orally, enjoy engaging in oral presentations, debates.

Affect: Value and trust emotionally transmitted information far more than cognitive learning.

Verve: Understand by performing; use imagery and individual style.

Communalism: Prefer to learn in groups; competition is devalued within their peer group.

Movement: Organize through movement; learn tactilely and kinesthetically, prefer active involvement in the learning experience; if not they become easily distracted and off task.

Social-time perspective: Time with friends is more important than being "on time" for class.

Express individualism: Enjoy and value entertainment and entertaining.

Researchers find that AMERICAN INDIAN students:

- Often work well in groups
 - Are good mediators and communicate effectively
 - Accept responsibility and discipline of leadership
 - Can be quite resourceful
 - Value oral traditions; create stories, poems, and legends
 - Well-developed intuitive ability, excellent memory, good spatial ability
 - Often understand design and symbols as communication
 - Can be very talented in visual arts
 - Attitudes toward nature and natural resources are personal and conservationist
 - Learn best holistically
 - Often have long attention spans
 - Do not seek attention; being recognized for their accomplishments can be uncomfortable
 - Tend to place sharing and generosity above materialistic gain.
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ASIAN AMERICAN CULTURES have a wide variety of beliefs and languages.

- ¶ They often have a serious and caring attitude toward their families
- ¶ Respect for their teachers and other adults
- ¶ Families are usually supportive of their children's achievements
- ¶ Children have a high degree of self-discipline and self-motivation
- ¶ Value academic achievement
- ¶ Have a strong work ethic
- ¶ Excellent problem solving ability

- ¶ Ability to listen and follow directions
- ¶ Are familiar and comfortable with the use of intuitive ability in learning and thinking
- ¶ Tend toward verbal sparseness, families encourage thoughtfulness.

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WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

Corbin and Denicolo as reported in “*Best Practices In Gifted Education*” (Robinson, Shore and Enersen) revealed that students who thrived had parents who (a) sought to know the educational system, (b) were supportive of the school, (c) valued education, (d) set high expectations for their children and themselves, (e) worked to establish rapport with teachers, (f) were not distracted from active parenting by marital crisis, (g) provided emotional support especially when children failed, (h) monitored children’s time and activities (such as TV watching and friendships), (i) discussed school events, (j) took responsibility for learning in their homes.

Karen Zaleski in “Mile Marker 2, ” suggests Picturing Your Own Diversity in her article, “*Discovering Diversity.*”

1. Picture Perfect: Create a picture parade of your family; include buildings, restaurants that are a family favorite tradition, or postcards from a favorite family vacation or reunion.
2. Day in the Life: Think of a special occasion or holiday that your family celebrates. Make a timeline of what you do and compare that to a friend’s timeline.
3. Traditional Traditions: At a family dinner or holiday, do you eat special foods? Do your grandparents tell you special stories you could write down to save for future generations? Are there special clothes, certain decorations or unique gifts that make YOU unique in a diverse world? Place these traditions in a decorated box, a scrapbook, or a journal to keep.
4. Culture Creativity: Dig down to your roots and find out where you are from originally. What cultural traditions do you celebrate because of your heritage? Are there special arts, crafts, games, or dances that you could create to celebrate who you are?
5. Name Game: What does your last name mean? Where did it come from? Has the spelling of your name changed over the years? Make a plaque showing the spellings all the way to today.

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- Talk to your child using good grammar.
 - Read with your child. (Donna Ford in Mile Marker 2, “*Preparing Children for a Diverse World,*” lists book titles to better understand diversity).
 - Do number games; look at weather pages in the newspaper; study numbers on food packages.
 - Obtain puzzle books, in newspapers, on computers; help child until they can do it themselves.
 - Play board games or computer games of strategy; chess, checkers, Labyrinth, Clue, Scrabble.
 - Discuss the portrayal of job roles on television; including how realistically they are portrayed.
 - Provide children with supplies for creative crafts and play.
 - Encourage children to be bi-lingual.
 - Explore the out-of-doors, including parks, state and county recreational programs.
 - Take advantage of free arts experiences, band concerts, art centers and exhibits.
 - Obtain a library card and visit the library and its programs weekly.
 - Arrange for participation in after school sports activities.
 - Allow children time to interact privately with a circle of friends or acquaintances.
 - Secure role models among friends or relatives for your child.
 - Participate in ethnic celebrations and festivals.
 - Insist on healthy and nutritious eating habits.
 - Think aloud and value thinking.
 - Model hard work; value practice and persistence (including doing household chores).

- Have conversations with the child about school experiences and their homework.
- Attend parent teacher conferences and show interest in your child's education.

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