

Getting it Right

Cultural Care Planning for Children from Ethnic Minorities in Alternative Care

Practice Guide - March 2016

This practice guide has been drawn up with input from a number of relevant child care professionals in order to facilitate the Cultural Care Planning process for children from ethnic minorities who are placed in alternative care. It must be highlighted that the areas for consideration outlined in this guide are not an exhaustive list, rather they are provided as a reference guide to promote a deeper level of reflection on and consideration of a child's cultural needs in the care planning process. This is a working guide and shall be reviewed and updated in March 2017.

“In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.”

Article 30 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Valuing Diversity

Children and young people are provided with foster care services that take account of their age, stage of development, individual needs, illness or disability, gender, family background, culture and ethnicity (including membership of the travelling community), religion and sexual identity.

Article 30 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

“The Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity”

Article 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights

Children are encouraged to understand and appreciate their cultural, ethnic and religious heritage.

National Standards for Foster Care :2003: 15



Wherever children are placed outside their own cultural, ethnic or religious group, foster carers are supported to enable the children to develop a positive understanding of their origins and background.

National Standards for Foster Care :2003: 15

Whenever possible, children are placed with carers from their own cultural, ethnic and religious background.

National Standards for Foster Care :2003: 15

Definition of Ethnicity

The fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition.

Oxford English Dictionary

Definition of Culture

The ideas, customs, and social behavior of a particular people or society..

Oxford English Dictionary

Factors such as the child's family circumstances, gender, age, stage of development, religion, culture and race should be considered when taking protective action.

Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children: 2011:4



Considerations for Cultural Care Planning: Parents

4

What are the parents' wishes regarding support for their child in the following areas:

- Language
- Religion and/ or Spirituality
- Daily Routine
- Cultural Traditions (E.g. important celebrations)
- Self Care (Including hygiene, skin/ hair care)
- Education
- Boundaries and Rules
- Food and dietary requirements
- Sport
- Music
- Pets in the home
- Clothing
- Sexuality
- Gender Issues
- Relationships and Socialising
(Including male and female interaction and dating)
- Extended family roles and dynamics
- Social Etiquette (E.g. addressing adults, the importance of greetings)



Considerations for Cultural Care Planning: The Child

- How are the child's cultural needs in each of the above areas being met?
- With which culture does the child identify? (For children born and raised in Ireland who have parents from an ethnic minority background)
- Is there conflict between the parents' views and the child's views? If so, what work can be done to support this?
- What does the child know about their own culture?
- Do they have access to information about their culture? (E.g. verbal stories, written literature, internet, community)
- Does the child need more information and support to assist their knowledge and understanding? If so, who is going to provide the support and how?
- How can their birth family contribute?
- Does the child have opportunities for regular contact with members of their own community?
- Is the child's ethnicity and culture promoted and respected in their placement on a daily basis? How is this done?
- Is the child supported in their education placement with appropriate accommodations for cultural specific needs? (E.g. prayer time and dress code)



Considerations for Cultural Care Planning: Carers

6

- Do the carers have adequate information about the child's and/or parents' culture of origin?
- What are the carers' views of the child's and/or parent's culture?
- Has there been discussion between the carers and Social Work team about practical challenges and how these will be met?
- Are there aspects of the child's cultural and religious background that pose a particular challenge for the carers? Are there any conflicts of values and, if so, how will these be managed?
- Have the carers received any cultural diversity/awareness training or support? Would additional training be beneficial?
- Do the carers support the child to have a positive sense of their cultural heritage/ identity on a daily basis? How is this done?
- What ongoing supports would assist?

* Carers and Residential Key Workers should be mindful of their own values and attitudes regarding different cultures and how these might potentially influence the provision of cultural supports for the child.



Considerations for Cultural Care Planning: Social Work Department

- Does the Social Work team working with this child and their carers have information on the child's and/or parents' culture of origin? How can any gaps in information be addressed?
- Has the Social Work team received training on cultural diversity/ awareness to guide how they work with the child and/or parents? How does this impact on their day-to-day work with this family?
- Does the Social Work team have adequate skills in this area to be able to provide guidance to carers and residential staff?
- Would further training be beneficial?
- Have you considered consulting with other significant members of the child's culture of origin or with a culturally specific support service?

* All professionals working with a child should be mindful of their own values and attitudes regarding different cultures and how these might potentially influence the provision of supports for the child.



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