

ACTION 3.8

Embed professional development opportunities that support a deeper understanding of race, culture and unconscious prejudices (implicit bias).

PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT for **TEACHERS** on **CULTURAL COMPETENCY** & **WORKING** with **FAMILIES**



North Carolina’s history and increasingly diverse population calls for cultural competency training and professional development for child care, preschool, and K-3 caregivers and educators. Such training would strengthen their knowledge and skills for partnering with families, particularly families from overburdened and under-resourced communities. Training and development in cultural competence can help educators recognize their own personal biases, apply their understanding of different cultures to classroom management, adapt curricula and activities to better connect with students, support learning by affirming students’ cultural backgrounds, and strengthen family engagement.

WHAT WE KNOW

Educator cultural competence is important for all children and in North Carolina it is particularly salient for American Indian and Indigenous children because North Carolina continues to be the state with the largest American Indian and Indigenous population east of the Mississippi River. As noted by the [State Advisory Council on Indian Education](#): “Culturally responsive teachers are the greatest assets in raising the achievement of American Indian students.”

When care providers and educators are culturally competent they create learning environments that enable

North Carolina is becoming increasingly culturally diverse. Since 1990, North Carolina's **HISPANIC POPULATION HAS GROWN BY OVER 400%** and the **ASIAN POPULATION HAS GROWN BY OVER 140%**

children to feel that their culture and beliefs are valued and accepted while also actively learning about others' cultures. Children who have these culturally diverse and welcoming experiences in their care and learning settings grow up learning to respect, accept, and celebrate people from different backgrounds who have different experiences than themselves. Researchers at the [American Psychological Association](#) report that children as young as three are aware of differences such as gender, ethnicity, and disability and can begin to internalize biases reflected by their family, school, community, and in general.

Dive Into the Data

The Education Trust has compiled the available information on the [diversity of North Carolina's educators](#) to help policymakers and advocates engage in data-informed efforts to develop policies that recruit, support, and retain a high quality and diverse educator workforce.

WHAT WE NEED

Building cultural competency among care providers and educators is of increasing importance as North Carolina continues to grow and increasing numbers of international and multinational companies establish offices/branches in the state. Currently, 8 percent of the state's population is foreign born and it is [becoming increasingly diverse](#).

Care providers and educators must develop the skills to create learning environments that provide children with both a mirror and a window. Children and their families should be able to see their own culture reflected through the activities, decorations, and materials in the classroom (the mirror) and they should also be able to see other cultures in the activities, decorations, and materials (the window).

HOW TO SUPPORT

Care professionals and educators need access to [professional development resources](#) such as evidence-informed self-assessment, reflection tools, and strategies that aid in identifying and overcoming cultural biases to strengthen relationships with families and children from racial and ethnic minority and immigrant groups.

These [competencies are best developed during preparation programs](#) as aspiring early care and education professionals are obtaining their B-K, and K-3 licenses. Training and education courses should include how to develop culturally diverse learning environments, and how to strengthen relationships with immigrant families,

There are four basic [cultural competence skill areas](#): valuing diversity, being culturally self-aware, understanding the dynamics of cultural interactions, institutionalizing cultural knowledge and diversity.

families of color, and families with home languages other than English. Head Start's [Multicultural Principles for Early Childhood Leaders](#) can be used as a model.

INITIATIVES WORKING IN THIS AREA



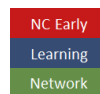
we are
working to extend anti-racist education

[we are](#) (working to extend anti-racist education) provides anti-racism training for children, families, and educators. They offer summer camps for children in rising 1st-5th grade, professional development for educators, and workshops for parents & families. They reimagine educational systems so that all children, particularly Black and Brown, can exist in spaces that affirm their identity and dignity, promote their educational advancement, and support their social and emotional well-being.



Catawba County
Partnership For Children

[Imagining Equity](#) is a series of four professional development modules for teachers of children ages 0-5. Utilizing children's books with a focus on equity, facilitators, Dr. Gail Summer and Ms. La'Gentry Ross, lead teachers through a series of group discussions on common myths on race and how we can dispel those myths. They prepare educators to teach even very young children in a manner that rises above racism and promotes an atmosphere of equity and social justice.



[NC-Early Learning Network](#) (NC-ELN) provides training, technical assistance, and program implementation coaching to state and program level leadership, trainers, and practitioner coaches to build and expand capacity for providing high-quality inclusive settings and practices to improve the outcomes of young children with developmental disabilities or delays. NC-ELN also designs, develops, and delivers training and technical assistance on evidence-based practices to improve equity and cultural responsiveness in the early childhood environment.

[Visit the Pathways Action Map](#) to learn more about these and other initiatives leading efforts in this area.