
 **Our Goals**

To improve our:

- Understanding of Latino cultures, values, traditions, and beliefs
- Communication skills with Spanish-speaking clients
- Ability to apply this understanding and skills to:
 - Child safety and risk assessment
 - Selection of services
 - Comprehensive case planning
 - Placement and permanency planning

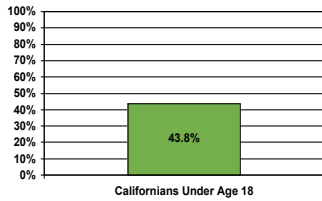
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 **Topics**

- Cultural Norms
- Strategies in Overcoming Language Barriers
- Applying Cultural Competence

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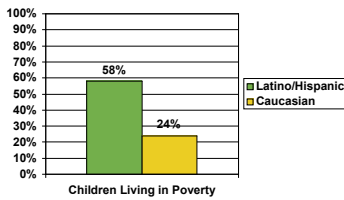
Many of California's Children Are Latino



Nearly 44% of children under 18 years are Hispanic/Latino¹

1) 2000 Census and ACF's "Factsheet"

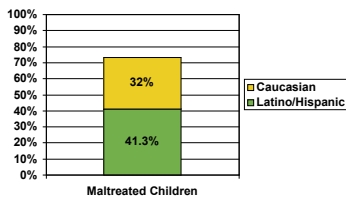
Many Latino Children Live in Poverty



In California, 58% of Hispanic/Latino children live in poverty, compared to 24% of Caucasian children¹

1) 2000 Census and ACF's "Factsheet"

Many Maltreated Children Are Latino



Over 41% of maltreated children in California are Hispanic/Latino, compared to 32% Caucasian¹

1) 2000 Census and ACF's "Factsheet"

Overrepresented in Foster Care

Hispanic/Latino children are overrepresented in foster care, and stay in foster care an average of 26 months longer than Caucasian children.¹



¹) Family Resource Coalition, 1999: www.casenet.org/library/culture/latino-culture.htm

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Overrepresented in the Juvenile Justice System



- In L.A. County, compared to Caucasian youth:
 - Arrested 2.3 times as often
 - Prosecuted as adults 2.4 times as often
 - Imprisoned 7.3 times as often

¹) Institute for Children, Youth, and Families, Michigan State University, 2002

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Harsher Treatment in the Juvenile Justice System

- Longer incarceration than Caucasian youths convicted of similar crimes: 5 months on average
- Anti-gang laws mandate harsher sentencing, although evidence of gang affiliation may be weak



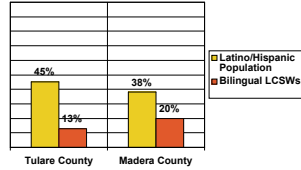
- System fails to provide adequate bilingual services or ensure the cultural competency of staff

¹) Institute for Children, Youth, and Families, Michigan State University, 2002

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Not Enough Bilingual Child-Welfare Professionals

Percentage of bilingual LCSWs in California does not approach the percent of Hispanic/Latinos in the general population, much less the population receiving child welfare services



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The Need for Cultural Competency



Child welfare staff who have not been trained in cultural differences too often rely on personal bias when deciding whether a child should be removed from the home¹

1) CA Dept. of Finance, A Performance Review: California's Child Welfare System, April 1997

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What is Cultural Competence?



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To Be Culturally Competent Is To:

- Be aware of you own values, biases, preconceived notions, and personal limitations
- Actively attempt to understand the world view of your culturally different clients without negative judgments
- Actively engage in developing and practicing appropriate intervention strategies and skills for working with your culturally different clients.¹

1) Sue and Sue (1990)

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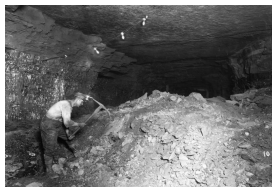
Challenges of Developing Cultural Competence



Requires personal reflection on your own attitudes and biases

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Challenges of Developing Cultural Competence



Ongoing commitment required for continuous improvement

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Challenges of Developing Cultural Competence



May require revisions to programs, policies, procedures; shifts in organizational culture

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Benefits of Developing Cultural Competence



- Better understand and respond to the needs of the population you serve

- Ensure fairness in provision of child welfare services to all children and families
- Make clients feel respected and better served




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Benefits of Developing Cultural Competence



- Attract a larger and more diverse pool of job applicants for openings
- Become more desirable to funders
- Build better relationships with service providers


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**CULTURAL
COMPETENCY**

Cultural Norms

What attitudes and behaviors have you observed?



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**Family-Centeredness:
“Familismo”**

- Close relationships within large extended family, which may include non-relatives
- Individual needs may be secondary
- Family gatherings and rituals are important



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Family-Centeredness: “Familismo”



- Defined hierarchy within family

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Family-Centeredness: “Familismo”



- Marriage and parenthood is commonly entered into early in life
- Adults remain geographically close
- Family is source of both support and stress

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“Fictive Kin” and Extra-Household Networks




- Godparents (padrino/madrina)
- Other close friends (compadre/comadre) and co-workers

- Neighbors
- Networks may be bi-national



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Family Privacy



- Turn to extended family for advice and assistance, or possibly priest
- Fear of “shaming” family before outsiders may inhibit disclosure of domestic violence or sexual abuse

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Gender Issues

- Gender roles tend to be traditional
- Machismo: authoritarianism, control, pressure to protect and provide for family



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Gender Issues



- Marianismo: pressure to be perfect wife and mother and uphold “status quo”
- Mothers have special status

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Sexuality

- Sexual matters usually not discussed before children
- The age of first sexual activity for females may be lower in some Spanish-speaking cultures



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Sexuality



- A large age difference between a young female and her boyfriend or husband may be considered acceptable

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Sexuality



- A greater stigma is attached to homosexuality

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Religion and Spirituality

- Religion and church may be of profound importance
- Fatalism and emphasis on self-sacrifice may cause passive acceptance of abuse
- Divorce carries greater stigma



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Religion and Spirituality



- Disease or disability may be regarded as judgment of God, or result of a curse
- May rely on mystical cures, folk remedies, or spiritual healing

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Distrust of Government Entities

- Bad experience in country of origin
- Discrimination experienced in this country
- Lack of knowledge about U.S. governmental systems
- Concerns about immigration status



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Common Places of Origin

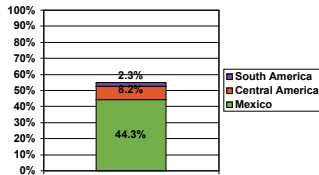


- Cuba
- Puerto Rico
- Mexico
- Central America
- South America
- Spain

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Immigrants in California

- At least 1 in 4 Californians are foreign-born
- More than half of these come from Mexico or Central America



2000 Census Data

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Learning About Your Client


- Generation
- Time living in U.S.



- Reason for immigrating
- Country of origin

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Learning About Your Client



- Race and ethnicity
- Education

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Learning About Your Client




- Extended or nuclear family?
- Who lives in the home?
- Who has cared for children?

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Your Client's Perspective

- What does your client perceive to be the problem?
- What does your client perceive as obstacles?
- What does your client consider to be personal and family strengths? What is working in the family?
- Who does your client turn to for help, or when someone is sick?


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**CULTURAL
COMPETENCY**

**Strategies for Overcoming Language
Barriers**

How have you made your environment more welcoming?



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Physical Environment


- Some studies attribute underutilization of social services to doubt about being understood.
- A physical environment that reflects the national groups and communities it serves may facilitate engagement.¹

1) Inclan & Ferran, 1990

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Cultural Signifiers

Symbols create a sense of familiarity and can increase trust and confidence:



- Maps, photographs and artwork

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Cultural Signifiers



- Signs in Spanish

- Culturally relevant music



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Cultural Signifiers



- Games, magazines, and books in Spanish
- Dolls of different skin colors and features
- Toys, cooking utensils, etc. with cultural significance

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Brainstorm in Pairs

- Imagine that you are accompanying an experienced social worker on a successful home visit with a Spanish-speaking family.
- What **non-verbal** behaviors does the social worker use to help establish rapport?
- Jot your ideas down on a piece of paper. See how many you can think of in one minute.

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Establishing Rapport

- Demonstrate warmth and compassion
- Accept offered hospitality
- Be aware of nonverbal communication



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Establishing Rapport



- Take time for casual conversation
- Convey respect for the family
 - Use titles
 - Pronounce names correctly
 - Do not Anglicize names

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Establishing Rapport

- Deal with immigration status concerns
- Explain the problem and why it is important
- Educate about the system and process
 - Do not assume literacy
- Assure confidentiality




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Have you tried to communicate in a foreign language?



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How can you communicate better with English learners?



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Communicating Better in English (or Spanish)

- Speak slowly and clearly
- Use a limited vocabulary
- Avoid slang, jargon, and idiomatic expressions
- Use a bridge to begin a new topic
- Use gestures and visual aids
- Paraphrase what you are told



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Working With an Interpreter



- Don't allow family members to interpret, especially children!
- Discuss roles and expectations beforehand
- Introduce the interpreter and have interpreter explain his/her role

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Working With an Interpreter

- Allow time to establish rapport
- Use short units of speech
- Set up room to minimize distraction
- Make eye contact with client



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Choosing an Interpreter

- Enlist the help of your Spanish-speaking staff members
- Interpreter must:
 - Be as free as possible from bias or paternalistic attitudes
 - Be familiar with child-welfare terms
 - Understand the boundaries of role
- Emphasize the need for confidentiality


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Applying Cultural Competence

Don't Confuse Poverty With Abuse/Neglect

- Indicators of "neglect" may actually reveal need
- Conditions may be crowded, with extended family and others living in the home
- Children may reside with someone other than parents



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Don't Confuse Poverty With Abuse/Neglect



- Children may share beds
- Crowded living conditions may cause premature knowledge of adult sexual behavior

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Beliefs About Health, Disease, and Disability

- Some less-educated and recent immigrants may attribute disease and disability to religious or supernatural causes



- Some may blame themselves for causing illness or disability
- Some seek religious, supernatural, or folk cures

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Relation of Health Practices to Risk Assessment

- Folk-medicine practices such as cupping and massage may leave bruises that can be misinterpreted as abuse
- Needed medical treatment may not be sought
- May self-medicate with prescription medications purchased over-the-counter abroad



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Cultural Norms of Discipline

- Types of punishment regarded as abuse here may be regarded as normal in place of origin
- Laws on child abuse and neglect are different in different countries



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Youth Gangs

- Present in U.S. since 1700s
- Response of immigrant ethnic groups to poverty, discrimination, victimization, struggle for survival
- Historically Irish, Italian, Jewish, or Polish
- Currently mainly Latino and African-American
- Serious social problem in many communities



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Gang Sub-Culture


- Form of resistance to mainstream culture
- Members may feel they are preserving cultural identity
- An alternative family: belonging, acceptance, protection
- Secretive, exciting, enhances status
- May be multi-generational



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Risks of Gang Association


- Heightened risk of:
 - Criminal activity
 - Substance abuse
 - Violence
- Family members also may become targets
- Creates obstacles to treatment:
 - Divided loyalty between family and gang
 - Secretiveness
 - Resistance to change



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Working With Gang-Affiliated Clients/Families

- Remain objective and non-judgmental
- Educate:
 - What benefits do you get from the gang?
 - How will it affect your future?
 - What are the risks of gang activity to you and your family?




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How can you assess literacy?



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Case Planning Issues



- Language
- Literacy
- Educational & mental health needs of children
- Transportation
- Extended family members

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Case Planning Issues



- Immigration status
 - Eligibility for low-income housing
 - Undocumented teens in foster care
- Incarceration of parent
 - Deportation on release

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Kinship Care



- Preferred by California law
- Less traumatizing and more stable
- Common type placement for Latino children

■ Extended family and “fictive kin” expand pool of placement opportunities

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Kinship Care: Possible Drawbacks

- Kin ask for and receive less government assistance
- Parent may pursue reunification less vigorously
- May not see the need for or want adoption; may fear hurting birth parents



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What make a service a good choice for Spanish-speakers?



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How do you find out about potential services?



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Choosing Culturally Relevant Services

- Work with people from your area. Directions are on page 27 of the *Participant's Manual*.
- Step One: Brainstorm a list of all the agencies to which you refer clients for services. List them. (5 minutes)
- Step Two: Rate each agency from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) based on how culturally relevant it is for Latino and Spanish-speaking clients. (5 minutes)
- Look for areas of strength and weakness.

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Instructions for Scenarios

- Locate scenarios on pages 28-31 of the *Participant's Manual*.
- Read each scenario and note your answers to each of the questions. You may work together with someone at your table if you prefer.
- Be prepared to participate in a group discussion of the scenarios.

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Case Planning Guidelines




- Make efforts to level the balance of power between your client and yourself
- Be thorough. Don't just talk to family members with whom it is easiest to communicate
- Learn about client's history, which may affect current behavior

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Case Planning Guidelines

- Ask about extended family or friends who may be able to provide support
- Be aware of how poverty, overcrowding, and different health practices can mimic symptoms of abuse or neglect



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Case Planning Guidelines



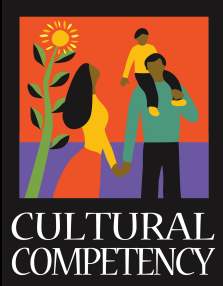
- Focus on family's strengths, not just deficiencies. Apply strengths to solving problems
- Don't excuse actual abuse on the grounds that it is a cultural practice

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Action Planning

- Find the worksheet on page 32 of the *Participant's Manual*.
- Make a list of things you can do personally and with your agency to increase your cultural competence.
- Try to include items in each of the 5 suggested areas.

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**CULTURAL
COMPETENCY**

**Effective Child Welfare Practices
with Spanish-Speaking Children & Families**
