

**Excerpted from *Skilled Dialogue: Strategies for Responding to Cultural Diversity in Early Childhood*  
by Isaura Barrera, Ph.D., with Robert M. Corso, Ph.D., and Dianne Macpherson, MSW, CISW**

**Guide to Identifying Cultural Data Related to Potential Culture Bumps**

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

*Note:* The questions in the second column tend to arise frequently. There may be others that are not identified on this form. Feel free to add any other questions that need to be answered. Use this guide prior to completing the Cultural Data Table.

Developmental/curricular area	Questions to answer
<b>Communicative-Linguistic</b>  Language(s) of the child's primary caregiving environment(s)	1. Which language(s) is spoken in the child's primary caregiving environment(s)? 2. Which caregivers speak which language(s) with the child?
Child's relative language proficiency (degree of proficiency in English and other language[s] used)	1. How proficient is the child in understanding and using the language(s) other than English for communicating? 2. How proficient is the child in understanding and using English for communicating? 3. Would the child be considered monolingual? Partial bilingual (speaks and understands one language, only understands another)? Bilingual, dominant in one language (speaks and understands both languages but is significantly more proficient in one)? "Balanced" bilingual (similar levels of proficiency in both languages—may not be strong in either, or may be equally strong in both)?
Patterns of language usage in the child's primary caregiving environment(s)	1. With what situations and topics does each language tend to be associated? 2. Which varieties of each language are spoken (e.g., if English is spoken, in which ways is it similar to or different from what is considered the "standard" variety of English)? 3. If two or more languages are used, what seems to govern which language is used when?
Relative value placed on verbal and nonverbal communication	1. To what degree is communication in the home verbal? To what degree is it nonverbal? 2. What is the relative value placed on nonverbal communication as compared with verbal communication? Is this true in all situations, or only in some?
Relative status associated with the languages other than English and with bilingualism	1. What is the social status accorded in the community to the language(s) other than English spoken in the child's home (e.g., is the accent associated with it considered a mark of distinction or of low education)? 2. What is the social status accorded in the community to persons who are bilingual? Is being bilingual considered a desirable goal?

**Figure 8.** Sample version of the Guide to Identifying Cultural Data Related to Potential Culture Bumps.

(continued)

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**Figure 8.** (continued)

<p><b>Personal-Social</b></p> <p>Degree of acculturation into EuroAmerican Normative Culture (ENC)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How familiar is the child/family with ENC?</li> <li>2. How much experience does the child/family have participating in this culture?</li> <li>3. How skilled is the child/family at negotiating within this culture (e.g., accomplishing desired activities/goals)?</li> </ol>
<p>Degree of acculturation into U.S. early intervention/early childhood special education culture</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How familiar is the child/family with early intervention/early childhood special education culture (e.g., rules and expectations)?</li> <li>2. How much experience does the child/family have participating in this culture?</li> <li>3. How skilled is the child/family at negotiating within this culture (e.g., accomplishing desired activities/goals)?</li> </ol>
<p>Sense of self (e.g., relative weight given to independence, dependence, and interdependence)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How does the family define autonomy? To what degree is it valued?</li> <li>2. To what degree is cooperation and group interaction/support valued?</li> <li>3. What are the characteristics of persons with high credibility in the family's culture? Which characteristics/behaviors seem to be most highly valued?</li> </ol>
<p>Perceptions of identity and competence</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do family members define themselves; (e.g., by ethnic, professional, or other labels; by personal attributes)?</li> <li>2. Which characteristics denote competence?</li> </ol>
<p>Roles and rules associated with parenting and child rearing</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How would family members describe "good" parenting?</li> <li>2. What skills/attributes do they consider desirable in a "well-brought-up" child?</li> <li>3. What roles do different family members play in child rearing? Who is responsible for what?</li> </ol>
<p>Knowledge and experience related to power and social positioning</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the family's experience regarding social and personal power? In what situations, if any, would family members describe themselves as powerless or "at a disadvantage"?</li> <li>2. Does the family belong to and identify with a group with "minority" status?</li> </ol>
<p>Values and beliefs associated with instrumental support (e.g., additional services) and emotional support (e.g., personal support)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How does the family obtain support? What sources are valued?</li> <li>2. When does the family believe that it is acceptable to seek instrumental support? Emotional support?</li> </ol>

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<p><b>Sensory-Cognitive</b></p> <p>Funds of knowledge (type of knowledge that is valued)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Which areas of knowledge are valued and supported by the family?</li> <li>2. About what are the family members very knowledgeable?</li> <li>3. Are funds of knowledge primarily personal, communal, or institutionalized?</li> <li>4. To what degree are funds of knowledge oral? To what degree are they written?</li> <li>5. What role does the family's cultural identity (or identities) play in its funds of knowledge?</li> </ol>
<p>Preferred strategies for learning</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the child's/family's preferred strategies for learning (e.g., modeling, questioning)?</li> <li>2. To what degree are the strategies explicit and direct? To what degree are they implicit and indirect?</li> <li>3. To what degree are the strategies oral? To what degree are they nonverbal?</li> <li>4. How do different family members teach the child something that they consider important?</li> <li>5. Which of Gardner's (1993) seven intelligences tends to be favored?</li> </ol>
<p>Preferred strategies for problem solving and decision making</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the child's/family's preferred strategies for problem solving and decision making? Do these differ according to certain characteristics of the problem or situation? If so, how?</li> <li>2. To what degree is problem solving or decision making independent? To what degree is problem solving or decision making a cooperative activity? If viewed as cooperative, who gets involved in the process?</li> <li>3. To what degree are the strategies linear? To what degree are they circular or global?</li> <li>4. To what degree is problem solving deductive? To what degree is it inductive?</li> </ol>
<p>Worldview (i.e., assumptions about how the world works and about what is right and what is wrong)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How does the family tend to explain events such as their child's developmental challenges?</li> <li>2. What assumptions does the family hold about how the world works (e.g., mechanistic, organic-ecological)?</li> <li>3. What views do family members express about cultural and other differences? Do they favor the view that there is only one "right" way, or do they accept that multiple realities can exist?</li> </ol>