



# Health:

## Exploring the Impact of Families and Culture on Children's Development of Health Practices

### Focus Statement

Students explore the ways families' diverse beliefs, values, practices, and circumstances are related to children's behavior and knowledge regarding health by role-playing scenarios.

### Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP) Student Learning Outcomes

The Curriculum Alignment Project's (CAP) lower division eight courses and student learning outcomes are mapped onto each instructional guide learning experience. See Appendix A for the specific student learning outcomes, objectives, and examples of course content and topics for the courses listed below.

- Child Growth and Development
- Child, Family and Community
- Introduction to Curriculum
- Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children
- Health, Safety and Nutrition
- Teaching in a Diverse Society
- Practicum-Field Experience

### Instructional Methodologies

- Class discussion
- Peer review and feedback
- Reflection—individual or large group
- Role playing
- Small group work

### California Early Childhood Educator Competency Areas to Consider

The Faculty Initiative Project will be undertaking a comprehensive process in the future to map the content of the instructional guides to the California Department of Education, Child Development Division's California Early



Childhood Educator Competencies. “The Competency Areas to Consider” below are listed in this instructional guide as a preliminary exploration of how particular competency areas might be addressed through these learning experiences.

- Child Development and Learning
- Culture, Diversity, and Equity
- Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance
- Family and Community Engagement
- Special Needs and Inclusion
- Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- Leadership in Early Childhood Education
- Professionalism



# Health:

## Exploring the Impact of Families and Culture on Children's Development of Health Practices

### Before You Start

This learning experience guides students in thinking about ways families' perspectives about health practices may be different from their own and how these differences might impact their understanding of how children acquire the knowledge and skills in the health foundations. By thinking through the scenarios in this learning experience, students will also become aware of different family situations and circumstances that may impact health practices.

When discussing how to role-play a scenario, students may have different ideas about how to address the situation or issue raised in the scenario. If there is strong disagreement, encourage the students to role-play the scenario in different ways and explain their reasoning for the different approaches. Use this as an opportunity for additional discussion about how different experiences and beliefs shape our perspectives and actions.

Five scenarios based on different foundations are included as Handout 1 with this learning experience. An electronic version of the handout will be available when this instructional guide is online at [www.wested.org/facultyinitiative](http://www.wested.org/facultyinitiative). You may wish to develop additional scenarios or substitute these with ones that specifically reflect some of the beliefs and practices held by the families in your community.

### Information Delivery

Students will be asked to become familiar with the strands and substrands in the health domain. These are found on page 79 of the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 2* (PLF, V2) and listed here for reference:



Slides 2-4

#### Health Habits (Strand)

- 1.0 Basic Hygiene (Substrand)
- 2.0 Oral Health (Substrand)
- 3.0 Knowledge of Wellness (Substrand)
- 4.0 Sun Safety (Substrand)

#### Safety (Strand)

- 1.0 Injury Prevention (Substrand)



## Nutrition (Strand)

### 1.0 Nutrition Knowledge (Substrand)

### 2.0 Nutrition Choices (Substrand)

### 3.0 Self-Regulation of Eating (Substrand)

## Active Learning

### Getting it started

Begin by having students review the foundations in the health domain. Ask them to think about the ways that families' experiences, beliefs, and practices might relate to the foundations.

If you have done the learning experience in this instructional guide, titled "Exploring Family and Community Beliefs and Practices About Health," students can refer to their interviews for a review of family experiences and cultural beliefs and practices related to health, safety, and nutrition.

### Keeping it going

Divide the class into groups of three or four students per group, and assign a scenario to each group. Depending on your class size, more than one group may have the same scenario.

Give students time to discuss their scenario, and ask them to identify key points to consider. They may refer to the themes identified in their interviews. Each group is then to plan how they will role-play their scenario.

### Putting it together

Have the groups take turns role-playing their scenario for the rest of the class.

After each presentation, ask the class to comment on these questions:

- What did you observe?
- What reaction did you have?
- What were the considerations raised in the role-playing?
- Would you have done anything differently? If so, what?

### Online Options

Instead of role-playing the scenarios, students could write a short script depicting a conversation between a teacher and parent that addresses the scenario.



Slide 5

### Another approach/way

Instead of using the scenarios included with this learning experience, have students develop their own scenarios based on a substrand or foundation. The students who develop the



scenario could then role-play their own scenario, or you could have a group of students role-play the scenario developed by another group.

### Reflection



Slide 6

After the students have role-played all the scenarios, ask them to reflect on their experience by responding to these questions:

- What one image stands out for you from these role-playing demonstrations?
- Did you find it easy or challenging to role-play your scenario? Why? What were some considerations your group discussed?
- What insights did you get from thinking through how you were going to role-play your scenario?
- What is one thing you want to remember from role-playing these scenarios when you work with children and families around health?



# Role-Playing Scenarios

## Scenario 1–Arthur

*Strand: Nutrition, Substrand: Nutrition Choices, Foundation: 2.1/Demonstrate a beginning understanding that eating a variety of food helps the body grow and be healthy, and choose from a variety of foods at mealtimes.*

Four-year-old Arthur has been in your program for two months. You and the other teachers notice that Arthur eats primarily starches such as pasta, rice, potatoes, and breads. He doesn't eat any vegetables and will eat only a few fruits such as bananas and apples. Meals and snacks are served family style, and children are given the opportunity to serve themselves with some adult support as needed. Arthur usually refuses to try any fruits or vegetables or other new foods that are served or offered.

Arthur lives with his mother and a younger sibling. His mother works at a fast-food restaurant and often brings home food from the restaurant for her family. Arthur's mother walks and takes public transportation to and from work and the children's child care program, so her workday is very long.

Parent-teacher conferences are coming up, and Arthur's mother has arranged her work schedule to meet with you. How might you discuss Arthur's nutrition choices that you've observed?

## Scenario 2–Corina

*Strand: Nutrition, Substrand: Nutrition Choices, Foundation: 2.2/Indicate food preferences that reflect familial and cultural practices.*

Corina is a four-year-old and her family is vegetarian. Her parents have asked that Corina not eat any meat or dairy products at school. A weekly menu is provided to all the families, and you have agreed to highlight any items that contain meat or dairy products. Corina's parents then send in foods to supplement Corina's lunch or snacks on days when some kind of meat or dairy product is served.

One day you overhear Anna, one of the other children, asking Corina why she brings in her own lunch sometimes. Corina tells the other children at her lunch table that she doesn't eat meat because "it's bad for you." Anna replies, "No, it's not. My mommy says eating meat helps me grow."

How would you respond to this conversation between Corina and Anna? What might you say to Corina, the other children, and Corina's parents?



## Scenario 3–Yuri

*Strand: Health Habits, Substrand: Basic Hygiene, Foundations: 1.1/Demonstrate knowledge of more steps in the handwashing routine. Also, 1.2/Begin to independently practice health habits that prevent infectious diseases and infestations (such as lice) when appropriate, with less adult support, instruction, and modeling.*

Yuri is 4 ½ years old and has been in your class for three months. Two of his favorite centers are the dramatic play area and the listening center. He is sometimes a little hesitant in trying new activities, but he likes playing with the other children and usually can be encouraged to participate or try new things. Yuri has very limited vision and uses a wheelchair. When you discussed goals for Yuri with his parents, they requested that you help Yuri become more independent in his self-care skills.

After meeting with Yuri’s parents and an early childhood special education teacher who regularly provides consultation in your class, you have developed a system of supports for Yuri to wash his hands before meals and at other times when needed. However, you’ve noticed that the handwashing is usually initiated by one of the adults or sometimes by one of the children.

How can you know if Yuri is developing independence in practicing health habits such as handwashing? What might you do?

## Scenario 4–Shen

*Strand: Health Habits, Substrand: Knowledge of Wellness, Foundation; 3.2/Begin to understand that health-care providers try to keep people well and help them when they are not well.*

Shen is a four-year-old little boy whose family immigrated to the United States from China. Shen lives with his parents, paternal grandparents, and an older brother. Shen’s parents both work long hours, and Shen’s grandparents take Shen and his brother to school and watch them before and after school.

This is the first time Shen has been in a preschool program, and he spends most of his time with blocks, put-together toys, and trains. He will occasionally look at books on his own or try an art project. He speaks primarily Cantonese but seems to understand more English. There are four other children in your class who also speak Cantonese.

One day Shen is in the dramatic play area, and you notice that he is trying to jab some craft sticks into one of the dolls. One of the other children gets upset when she sees this and tries to stop Shen and pull the doll away. Shen stops but then does this again over the next few days—sometimes taking a doll and the sticks to another area by himself or getting into a tug-of-war over the doll with another child.

Shen's grandparents do not speak English, so you send a note home to Shen's parents and ask if they can call you. When Shen's mother calls the next day, you describe Shen's behavior with the doll and craft sticks. At first Shen's mother seems puzzled, and then says that perhaps it's related to Shen's accompanying his grandmother to an acupuncturist.

What do you do the next time you observe Shen with the sticks and the doll?

## Scenario 5—Serena

*Strand: Nutrition, Substrand: Self-Regulation of Eating, Foundation; 3.1/Indicate awareness of own hunger and fullness.*

You serve snack and lunch family style in your program and encourage the children to serve themselves and try things that may be new to them. Adults provide support for children to learn how to serve themselves appropriate amounts or portions of food. You also recognize that children's preferences and appetites may vary a lot from one day or week to the next.

Like other children, Serena sometimes finishes the serving she takes and other times may say she is full after just a few bites. You also notice that Serena usually is willing to try a new food. She is almost four years old.

This week Serena's mother has a week off from work, and today she is visiting your class. At lunchtime, you observe her making Serena eat everything on her plate even though Serena is getting upset—shaking her head, refusing to pick up the spoon, and pushing the plate away.

What would you do? What would you say to Serena's mother? What are things to consider?