

Delta Child & Youth Welcoming Programs

The Early Years Action Team of the Delta Child and Youth Committee offers these prompts for programs to use to reflect on their current practice and identify opportunities to improve.

Principles to encourage reflection and conversation

Welcoming is an Open Stance: Value all participants for their strengths, present and future.

Representation Matters: Ensure children and families see themselves and their diverse community reflected in visuals, materials, and programming.

Inclusion begins with Accessibility: Design spaces and activities for diverse abilities. Adapt environments and programs quickly when participants experience challenges.

Connection Strengthens Relationships: Bonds are strengthened through shared experiences, working towards common goals, and noticing similarities between ourselves and others.

Responsiveness Expresses Care: Expand and adjust options to meet the needs of all participants in the program. Work with families to remove barriers and build skills for success.

Cultural Humility Boosts Reflection: Make a habit of examining your assumptions and biases. When you have insights that cause you to rethink your initial instincts/choices share them with others to strengthen a culture where diverse perspectives are honoured and program leaders interrogate their beliefs, values, and actions.

Visuals



How do the visible elements in the program space reflect your unique location, program participants and the diversity of the wider community around you?

Stand in your empty space and look for artifacts representing:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Local authentic Indigenous cultures and history | ☐ Non-dominant cultural backgrounds and ethnicities of program participants and wider community |
| ☐ Diverse family structures (single parent, same-sex parents, multigenerational & blended families) | ☐ Economic and physical features of your community |
| ☐ Different expressions of gender | ☐ Symbols of welcome (i.e. pride flag) |
| ☐ Variety of physical abilities. | |

Space and Environment

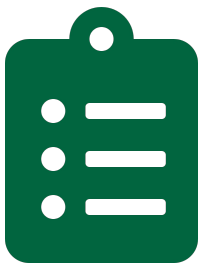


How does the physical set-up of the room enable participation and success of people with diverse abilities and needs?

Consider your space from the perspective of someone with a visual, auditory or physical disability as well as neurodiverse program participants. Look for:

- ☐ Wide pathways to get around
- ☐ Comfortable places to sit for all ages
- ☐ Minimized visual clutter
- ☐ Defined areas that offer quiet and calm ways to participate
- ☐ Program materials that are accessible to everyone who needs them and well organized
- ☐ Visual program schedule & clear directions for use of program
- ☐ Defined areas for movement and self expression
- ☐ Options for solo and social participation
- ☐ Materials that encourage sensory rich exploration (tactile, weight/ resistance, auditory, olfactory)
- ☐ Materials that reflect local environment, cultures, animals, plants, physical features etc.

Programming



How does the program involve and respond to the diversity of program participants?

Consider your plans over the recent weeks and look for evidence of and opportunities to enhance:

- ☐ Participants sharing their culture/experiences/strengths
- ☐ Daily routines that are predictable and made visible
- ☐ Daily routines that can adapt to the needs of program participants
- ☐ Honour celebrations and traditions from a variety of cultures
- ☐ Learning about local First Nations history and culture and other Indigenous cultures
- ☐ Food for different dietary needs and restrictions
- ☐ Food from a variety cultures
- ☐ Open-ended invitations to play, create, & explore where there isn't a particular product or goal in mind
- ☐ Explicit naming, modelling, and practice of the knowledge, skills, and behaviours that enhance success in the program (i.e. how to clean-up after selves)

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Language

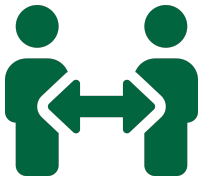


What is the message and tone behind the visible and spoken language that participants encounter when visiting for the first time? (Including signs and welcome/promotional materials)

Follow the footsteps of a new family. Trace their journey from outside the program in and look for:

- ☐ Expressions of welcome
- ☐ Positive description of expectations. (ie. Limit phone use to enjoy time together vs. No Cell Phones)
- ☐ Simple and clear language
- ☐ Gender neutral language (i.e. they instead of he/she, adults instead of Moms and Dads, everyone instead of boys and girls)
- ☐ Assumptions of privilege/ universality of experiences that are not accessible to everyone. (i.e out of town vacations)
- ☐ Translated words and materials (when useful and possible) including materials in the languages of program participants, surrounding community, and local First Nations
- ☐ Access to speakers of different languages for support
- ☐ Use of more accurate and inclusive language with openness to feedback from participants(i.e. diverse ability, Indigenous to include Metis, low cost instead of cheap)

Staff Interactions



How do program staff-participant interactions communicate welcome and support?

Choose a family/participant who seem to be on the periphery of your program, or a family that might be feeling less than fully comfortable in the program so far. Reflect on your recent interactions looking for opportunities to communicate:

- ☐ Intentional welcome with a moment and orientation
- ☐ Enthusiasm for their participation
- ☐ Normalization of challenges
- ☐ Empathy and compassion
- ☐ Openness to learning and change
- ☐ Respect for different parenting choices and styles
- ☐ Invitations for feedback through a variety of formats (electronic, in person, paper, voice notes) on how they experience the program and how it could improve