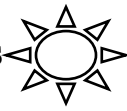


## Section for Parents and Caregivers Cultural Understanding

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### **The DVD chapter on cultural understanding addresses the following topics:**

- Parents' views on the differences between home culture and school culture
- Immigrant families' experiences and process of adjustment upon arriving in Canada
- Additional hardships and challenges faced by refugee families
- Concerns parents have about their children's schooling in a new culture
- Fears that children will be caught in a cultural divide
- The school's role in providing an atmosphere of understanding and cultural sensitivity
- The school's role in recognizing their students' ethno-cultural backgrounds
- Collaboration between parents and educators to understand cultural factors unique to each community

### **Questions to consider before viewing:**

- What values, beliefs, and traditions do you want your children to keep from their culture?
- What concerns do you have about your children being immersed in Canadian culture?
- What aspects of their culture might newcomer families particularly want to retain when they move to Canada?
- How might schools aid newcomer families in their adjustment to a new culture?

### **Questions to consider after viewing:**

- What did the newcomer families feel were most important in aiding their cultural adjustment to Canada? Why did they feel this way?
- What was done by schools featured in this DVD to promote cultural understanding?

## **Activity 1: Canadian Dreams and Nightmares**

**Time:** 15-30 minutes

**Materials:** Pen/pencil, “Canadian Dreams and Nightmares” worksheet

**Objective:** To express your hopes and concerns for your child’s future.

**Procedure:** Read each question. Write your answer on the lines provided. Alternatively, discuss your answers with the group.

## Canadian Dreams and Nightmares

Think about some of the dreams or hopes that you had when you first came to Canada.

Read each question.

Write your answer on the lines provided or discuss your answers with the group.

1. What dreams do you have for your children in Canada?

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2. What fears/nightmares do you have about your child attending school in Canada?

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3. What fears/nightmares do you have about your child growing up in a culture that is very different from the one in which you were raised?

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4. Have you spoken to your child's school about some of your concerns, dreams, and nightmares? If so, what was their response? If not, why not?

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## **Activity 2: How Culturally Sensitive is Your Child's School?**

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Materials:** Pen/pencil, "Culturally Sensitivity and Awareness Checklist" handout

**Objective:** To determine if your child's school shows cultural sensitivity and awareness.

**Procedure:** Read each statement in the "Culturally Sensitivity and Awareness Checklist." Circle the statements that are true. When you have finished, look at the circled statements in the *No* column. What could you do to help your child's school become more culturally aware?

## Cultural Sensitivity and Awareness Checklist

### How does your child's school rate?

Read each statement in the "Culturally Sensitivity and Awareness Checklist."  
Circle the statements that are true.

When you have finished, look at the circled statements in the *No* column.  
What could you do to help your child's school become more culturally aware?

Is my school culturally sensitive?	YES	NO
Communication	<p>The school makes an effort to make sure that information is conveyed to me.</p> <p>If my child's teacher has a question regarding my culture, he/she contacts me or asks a member in the community.</p>	<p>Miscommunication occurs frequently.</p> <p>Even though I speak English, my child's teacher often misinterprets what I am saying.</p>
Cultural identification	The school took time to find out about my child's culture and to learn about beliefs and practices that are important.	The school has made little/no effort to learn about my child's culture.
Cultural beliefs	The school is aware of and respects my child's (and other children's) cultural beliefs.	The school is not aware of my child's (or other children's) cultural beliefs.
Cultural practices	The school is aware of and respects my child's (and other children's) dietary restrictions, holiday customs and dress code.	The school is not aware of my child's (or other children's) dietary restrictions, holiday customs and dress codes.
Holidays	The school acknowledges and/or celebrates cultural holidays such as Diwali, Eid, Kwanzaa, etc.	The school does not acknowledge and/or celebrate cultural holidays except for Easter, Halloween, Christmas, and other Western calendar holidays.