

Working with Students Of Different Cultures



Students in Seattle Public Schools come from many different families, cultures, and communities—each with its own set of values and beliefs. Our own culture, beliefs, values and behaviors seem so naturally a part of who we are that it is often difficult to understand others with different traditions.

Because of the many different ethnic groups represented in Seattle Schools, children speak many different languages and have many different beliefs and customs. Children from those cultures must learn to acculturate—that is, live in both cultures. Each individual must honor the beliefs and habits of their own culture, while learning to respond to the beliefs and habits of the school culture.

Cultural differences may affect a student's background knowledge, learning style, behavior, and social skills. Specifically, you may experience cultural differences with regards to:

- Varying learning styles
- Eye contact
- Sense of time
- Effective discipline
- Student motivation
- Personal space and appropriate touch

Understanding the students' cultures and helping them to understand the school culture will increase your ability to help them learn.