Collecting Demographic Information from Families in Your Program

This document provides a sample letter that a program might send to families to gather demographic information for the first time. The letter informs families about why the program collects demographic information and aims to alleviate families' concerns. Sample demographic survey questions are offered for your consideration. In creating your survey, only use the questions for the demographic information you need for analysis or evaluation reporting. In your letter, you might provide examples of how your program will use the demographic information (e.g., use of culturally responsive practices, providing materials in children's home language, continuous program improvement). After your program has collected demographic information for the first time, you can plan to add these questions to the annual enrollment packet for families.

Sample Letter

Your team will want to revise what is below to fit your program.

> At Sunshine Early Learners, we are committed to creating a supportive and nurturing environment where each child in our program can thrive. To further this commitment, we have decided to collect demographic information about children and families, including gender, race, and home language. Collecting demographic information will help us understand the diversity of the children we are supporting and help our program meet the needs of each and every child. The information will help us better support your child and family.
>
> We are sending you this brief survey to initiate this process. Participation in the survey is voluntary, and we will keep the information you provide confidential. If you choose not to share this information with us, we respect your decision, and it will not impact your child's enrollment.
>
> We understand that you might have concerns, and we want to reassure you that the information will be used solely to enhance our program. The information you share will help us ensure quality and equity, particularly around implementing the Pyramid Model.
>
> Your trust is of utmost importance to us, and we are here to address any questions or concerns you might have. Please do not hesitate to reach out to our staff for assistance. If you have any questions, please reach out to XXXX in person or contact them via telephone (xxx) or email (xxx).

Sample Demographic Survey Questions with Considerations

Name of person completing this form: _____

Relationship to the child enrolled in the program: _____

The respondent can write in the response to this item, or you can provide a list. Examples of choices you might include are below.

- ☐ Biological or Adoptive Parent
- ☐ Step-parent
- ☐ Grandparent
- ☐ Foster parent
- ☐ Other: Relative
- ☐ Other: Non-Relative

Language(s) used at home: _____

The respondent can write in the response to this item, or you can provide a list that includes commonly used languages in your program's community. You might include an "Other" option for the respondent. You might also ask the respondent how the language is used (read or speak) and indicate which language is the primary language used in the home. Example:

- ☐ Spanish: ☐ Read ☐ Speak ☐ Primary Language
- ☐ Other: _____ ☐ Read ☐ Speak ☐ Primary Language

Language preferred for receiving communication from the program: _____

The respondent can write in the responses to each communication type.

- What language is preferred for phone calls: _____
- What language is preferred for written communication (for example, newsletters, emails):

_____

Name of the child enrolled in the program: _____

Child's gender: _____

The respondent can write in the response to this item, or choices can be provided. An "Other" or "Nonbinary" category can be included if programs wish to collect these data.

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Nonbinary
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Child's Date of Birth: _____

Child's Ethnicity and Race: _____

There are two ways to gather this information. The respondent can write in the responses to these questions:

- Child's Ethnicity: _____
- Child's Race: _____

OR choices can be provided. Please note, you must provide both questions below.

- Is your child Hispanic or Latino/a/x?
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
  - ☐ Prefer to not answer
- What is your child's race?
  - ☐ African American or Black
  - ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
  - ☐ Asian or Asian American
  - ☐ Middle Eastern or North African
  - ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
  - ☐ White
  - ☐ Not listed here or prefer to self-describe: _____ _____
  - ☐ Prefer not to answer

What is your child's primary language? _____

Does your child have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer to not answer

Does your child have a Section 504 Plan?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer to not answer

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Pub: 05/20/24