>> Hello, everyone. My name is Robin Getz and I am the Colorado hearing resource coordinator with the Colorado school for the deaf and the blind. I am going to be talking today about how we can ensure that we are being totally competent in our work in early intervention with our family, to help little one was deaf or hard of hearing children.

So, because of the time limit that we have, I will be summarizing everything that's on the slide. So, the goal today is that you will understand the immigration trend and projection. Hopefully understand cultural competency and the importance in implementing that in our work. With our families. And also understanding some very general cultural beliefs. Hearing differences. Tips on working with different interpreters and some common holidays and at the very end, I will have some great resources for you to tap into. So, basically, immigration to the United States from countries all over the world, on average, about 1 million immigrants come per year. To the United States from all over. The majority of the, or the top three countries that see immigrants come from are Mexico, followed by India, and then China.

And, the top three states in the United States that these immigrants come to are California, Texas, and Florida.' now for projections. I find it interesting. By 2035, the white expected to become the majority minority. And by 2050, the United States census bureau anticipates that we will have more Spanish speakers here in the U.S. than any other country in the world. According to the Pew Research Center in 2055, the projection is that we will have more Asians than Hispanic here in the United States. And finally, by 2060, the projection is that non-white will make up about 60% of the total United States population.

So -- that said, the U.S. population has become, and is becoming, more increasingly diverse with more families speaking languages other than English in the home. And, with them, they bring unique cultural norms, beliefs, tradition, languages, rituals and values and so on.

You may wonder, you know, what is culture exactly? And that is believed to be the fundamental building-block of identity for all of us. And, when I talk about culture, I am not just talking about ethnic culture. I am also talking about generations of Americans who have been here for years. We can see cultural differences among them, as well. Culture instilled a strong sense of community among members, beliefs, understanding, trust, activities, beliefs, values, expectations, language. And the interesting thing about language is you cannot separate language from culture.

There are different views on children and individuals with disabilities and culture, cultural views and beliefs can also lead to different developmental beliefs and differences than what we are accustomed to. So, it's important to keep that in mind. When you are working with these families.

And all of this allows us to be able to better respond to unique strengths, need, and desires of the family. As we are working with them.

Key elements of cultural competency with our families who have little ones with deaf hard of hearing children, first of all, it's really important that you research the culture of the family prior to meeting with them if you are not familiar with deaf culture. So that you know what you will be encountering when you have your home visit with them. If need be, check in with a cultural broker of that particular culture. And they will help support you. In supporting this family whenever possible.

This will help you better honor, respect, and understand the culture, language, traditions and child-rearing practices. It's important to try to find out who the decision maker is in the family. And work with that member of the family, as well, in your session or meeting with the family.

Value and celebrate the child's different abilities. Explore with the family, you know, the different developmental milestones and expectations. Meet the family where they are at with them and make sure that you are honoring and respecting their child-rearing practices, as well. Be willing to explore the different strengths, needs and desires of families that you work with and their differences. There can be differences on how they parent their child, how they discipline their child, how they feed their child. Even in the families that have been in the United States for five generations. I am seeing that, you know, between the father and the mother. And, so we have to find the common ground. Let's see.

Understand how to communicate respectfully within their culture and know what's acceptable. So, for example, what's appropriate with icon tact? What's appropriate with physical contact? How and where do you sit? When you are in the home. What do you do when you are offered food, drink, or even a gift? How do you address a variety of different family members in the home? So, all of that is important to know.

And then, um -- make sure that you which dialect if possible of the language that the family speaks because I have gotten referred on families who speak Spanish. But it turned out that Spanish may be their second or third language. And their home language may be another dialect in that region that the family is from. So, don't always assume that what you are told is the actual case.

And try to see if you can find out what the family views are on hearing differences. Disabilities in general, and hearing technologies. Knowing where they are at and where they are coming from will help solidify the partnership and help you move forward with that family.

And then, try to incorporate culturally relevant routine with the knowledge that you have acquired and -- because that is really powerful for the family. Incorporating different -- well I talk about this next. Um -- incorporating the song, the music, the books if they use books. Or even games that the parents use or play as a child. Find out what they loved as a kid and what they enjoyed most and try to parrot that so that they can use that with their child. In your sessions, as well.

Providing appropriate materials and resources in their native language when possible. So, that's another powerful tool. If the family has the literacy skill. And if they do, with -- try to have the interpreter translate a brief summary of what you covered during that meeting or session and, I would also have the family write one or two strategies that they learned in the session on the notes so that they can put it on the refrigerator and refer back to it. Or even explain to another family member later. Try to connect them, if you can, with other families in the region who may be from the same country or culture or language. Because these families like to know they aren't the only ones out there with a child who has a hearing difference.

And then, holidays, find out which holidays are important to the family. How do they celebrate? What do they do? What does it mean to them? And show them how they can include their child in those rituals and have the child understand what it's all about. It's their culture.

And then trauma-informed care. A lot of the families that reach out often come from war-torn countries or refugee camps and they may be struggling to adapt to life here in the states. They may not have connections or resources. So if you can help them find that and also be mindful of what they might be experiencing, that would be great, too. Ok.

Now I am just going to touch briefly on common cultural beliefs and hearing differences. There are some cultures that believe strongly that they are being punished when they find out their child has a hearing difference. They think that they did something wrong when they were pregnant with their child. Or that God is punishing someone else in the household. And that's why their child has a hearing difference. Spiritual causes in as many other cultures may feel that is something that is beyond their control. And, some of them do accepting and some don't. So it goes both ways. and then other cultures might feel that their child with a hearing difference is a gift from God. So it can be a positive thing, it could be a negative thing.

The negatives, the families feel that they have to overprotect and shelter their child. Keep them away from the public eye. And others will say oh, no. We got really lucky. It's a stroke of luck and others will embrace the fact that -- so, stigma and -- common emotion feeling that a lot of the families feel. Some of the families will not take their kids out with hearing technology on because it's too obvious. A lot of other cultures will work with faith healers and medicine -- to try to cure the hearing difference. Some will even go as far as taking their baby back to the home country to work with the people back home to try to hear. The hearing difference. Others were would not allow others inside the home because they are trying to drive out the evil spirit that caused the hearing difference. Others are pretty self explanatory. Some people believe the hearing aid will make the hearing loss worse. Old persons, believe it's not possible for a baby to have a hearing difference. Others will say well I saw him respond to someone laughing or a dog barking or a door slamming. He's not deaf. He can hear. So -- these are all possible responses. Some of these have been covered already. Try to determine the dialect used. Review the key terminology with the interpreter prior to the session if possible, because not every language has translatable words in that language.

If you aren't sure about the family is getting everything from the interpreter that you are saying, be sure, or feel free to ask the family to let me know what they heard. Or what they understood. Don't be afraid to do that. Always look at the individual you are talking to. Not the interpreter.

So -- go slow, give the interpreter a chance to pause.' I'm sorry, pause to give the interpreter a chance to gather their thoughts and if possible, try to learn a few key words in that family's language so that you can use with them. They will love you for that. General overview of cultural dos. A lot of families practice taking their shoes off before you go in the home. I mean -- some homes are more obvious than others. Appropriate reading, generally in the beginning, the families tend to be, tend to prefer more formality. Make sure that you greet the -- first before you greet the others. And handshake, right hand is preferred because left hand in many cultures, is considered unsanitary. So -- let's see. It can be just as bad as the deaf community -- forever. See basic words in their language, um -- some languages have a number of different words that they use. Try to find out which words can be used, which word the family uses in that language. Like -- in Spanish, we have several different words for the animal pig. So, find out which one they prefer to use and be sure to use that in your work with the family.

Incorporate, again, the sign, music finger play that the family's familiar with. If they are not used to using literacy with the child, show them how they can just talk about a picture in a book or show them how they can tell stories about their own family. Growing up. Holidays, and -- yeah. Make sure that they incorporate the child into the holidays rituals and festivals and then reminders, these families really appreciate it when we text them or call them, call to remind them of an upcoming appointment. Even audiology appointments. A lot of these families struggle with remembering all of this.

Things that we should not do on a home visit, again, it depends on the culture. Eye gaze, eye contact. Some cultures it's not acceptable to maintain eye contact for any period of time. And some feel it's disrespectful. We want to be mindful of that. This can be a struggle for those of us in the field because it goes against what we are working toward sometimes. Physical contact, handshake. Make sure that you know what is ok in that culture. Again, use the right-hand. Asking questions. It's best to use open-ended questions rather than yes/no questions.

Discipline. Check with the family and see what happens, you know, what they typically do with that situation. How do they handle it? And then help support them with that. Do not attempt to discipline the child yourself.

Male interventionists, some frown on if the mother's home alone with the child or children, they frown on having a male interventionist come into the home. Make sure that you know that you aren't disrupting anything. And being respectful of that.

Make sure that your feet are flat on the ground. A lot of cultures do not appreciate seeing the soles of your feet or, if you are sitting on the floor with the family, do not have your legs straight out. Ok?

It's best to sit still with your feet flat on the floor. Ok? And, do not sit higher than the family. So -- at a higher level than the family. Dress. Make sure that you are dressed appropriately. Bare shoulders are not accepted and sometimes things about the length are not ok. So make sure you know what is ok with them. And the last one is -- bringing toys, objects. I know most of the time we don't. Typically we don't do that. But every now and then we need to. Just make sure that it is something that is not taboo in their culture.

This is -- we don't have time, but this is just some of the major holidays celebrated by some of the languages. Language culture groups. And then lastly, keep in mind the demographic patterns are continually changing. We have an ethical responsibility for fostering cultural competency. While providing effective family-centered early intervention. Continuously check your bias, because this is a continuously evolving process. And fostering cultural competencies have decreased disparities, miscommunication with families. It helps strengthen bond with and connecting with the family. And, increases a successful partnership between yourself and your diverse family.

There's a lot of different resources. Here, you can look through. One of them, the second one, is an appendix, but it has different questions that you can explore with the family. To get to know them better. About their culture.