



"PBIS is not fully implemented until it is culturally responsive."

Levenson, M., Smith, K., McIntosh, K., Rose, J., & Pinkelman, S. (November 2016). Cultural Responsiveness Field Guide: Resources for Trainers and Coaches. OSEP PBIS Technical Assistance Center. www.pbis.org/school/equity-pbis

Culturally Responsive PBIS systems (CR-PBIS) are uniquely designed to fit the cultural backgrounds of the individuals they serve. This sometimes requires educators to change the way they think about, support, and/or address student behavior.

CR-PBIS systems are characterized by:



A student-centered focus

"Culturally responsive practices utilize the cultural knowledge, life experiences, and learning styles of culturally and linguistically diverse students to make learning more relevant and effective for them" (Banks & Obiakor, 2015). A student's unique cultural and learning experiences are used as the starting point for establishing expected behaviors and learning goals, not an afterthought.

A strengths-based perspective

Culturally responsive schools validate and affirm all student and family cultures, and focus on the strengths of each individual. Practices that frame students' cultures in a negative light are avoided, and school personnel work to provide opportunities where culturally-based behaviors and language may be used and respected.



Integration of staff, student, family and community perspectives

Culturally responsive PBIS (CR-PBIS) systems are much more than an occasional expression of appreciation for diversity. Disciplinary procedures, behavioral lesson plans and reward systems will reflect students' and families' perspectives, and evidence of students' cultures will be readily observed in hallways, classrooms and textbooks.

Authentic and meaningful collaboration

Culture is flexible and dynamic, and changes across settings, context, and time. Culturally responsive schools take steps to engage stakeholders from marginalized groups, ensuring that school practices and policies reflect ideas from all stakeholders, not just standing committee members or school and district personnel.



Self-Reflection as a regular part of practice

Culturally responsive practices require educators to learn more about their students' backgrounds and engage in self-reflection to uncover personal biases that impact their understanding of others' behavior. All behavior serves a function, and it is the responsibility of school staff to understand the ways in which "different" behaviors serve their students and families.