

# Quick Reference Sheet: Recognizing and Responding to Culture Shock

PHYSICAL SIGNS	RESPONSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easily ill (e.g., Upper-respiratory infections, low grade infections or weight loss)</li> <li>• Tire easily/Have difficulty sleeping/ Need frequent sleep</li> <li>• Listless, lack energy or be unable to sit still/ Increased nervous habits (e.g. nail biting)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage families to keep the child home if they begin coughing or showing signs of a cold</li> <li>• Encourage families to practice cold and flu prevention (e.g., dressing their children for the weather, washing hands frequently, having a balanced diet and getting lots of sleep).</li> <li>• Allow the children to sleep more often and for longer periods</li> <li>• Encourage families to provide outlets for active play</li> <li>• Ensure you make time for active play in your program</li> </ul>
EMOTIONAL SIGNS	RESPONSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extreme anxiety on separation</li> <li>• Loss of emotional control</li> <li>• Emotional display – more volatile or more passive</li> <li>• Regressive behavior (e.g. wetting pants, sucking thumb)</li> <li>• Withdrawn or apathetic</li> <li>• Unable to engage in play</li> <li>• Remain in one area of the room</li> <li>• Wait for instructions from caregiver</li> <li>• Lack focus, easily distracted</li> <li>• Different behaviour at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gradual separations</li> <li>• Move in more rapidly if children seem aggressive</li> <li>• Provide outlets for emotional expression</li> <li>• If child is in one area, bring toys to them or guide them to another</li> <li>• Make changes to the room when children are there</li> </ul>



SOCIAL SIGNS	RESPONSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dependent on one caregiver</li> <li>• Prefer to play alone – fearful of others or unaware of them</li> <li>• Remain rigid when picked up</li> <li>• Aggressive OR very passive in their play with others</li> <li>• Difficulty forming relationships with others – may avoid eye contact</li> <li>• Observe others for long periods of time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the regular caregiver will be absent, use same transition methods as with parent</li> <li>• Allow time to observe others – model language and play strategies</li> <li>• As child grows confident, encourage broader interactions</li> <li>• Help build friendships by engaging two children in play and then gradually retreating</li> <li>• Provide words needed for social play</li> <li>• Do not use complex phrases</li> <li>• Use playful ways to engage children</li> <li>• Reduce expectations and pressure in play/learning</li> <li>• Encourage the family to use their first language at home</li> <li>• Encourage all parents/caregivers that speak the child's language to use it</li> </ul>

**Remember:** Seriously question previous assessments where symptoms seem to mirror the signs of culture shock.

*Reference: Julie Dotsch*

