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Cross-Cultural Studies of Child Development: *Implications for clinicians*

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Cross-cultural studies of child development provide infant/family practitioners with three invaluable, if not indispensable principles which can serve to support and direct culturally-inclusive clinical reflection and practice. First, while studies of child development in different cultural settings contribute to our appreciation of the rich diversity of child rearing practices and belief systems across the globe, they also challenge our own assumptions about the very nature of child development and in turn help to free us from whatever residual nostalgia we may

have for the primacy or superiority of our own cultural world view. Second, cross-cultural research reminds us that experimental-controlled studies are by no means the only source (or even the chief source) of data collection or information-gathering about child development. Studies conducted within the classic empirical tradition often tell the practitioner little about the dynamic nature of child-environment relations or the context of development and as such provide us with few reliable guidelines for working with families from different cultures. Third, cross-cultural research forces practitioners, program designers, advocates and policy makers to question the appropriateness of every program goal and the validity of

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