Weekly Reflection Week\_7\_\_\_\_ Dates \_2\_/\_21\_ - \_2\_ / \_27\_

**InTASC Standard 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice**

This past week I read an article talking about the idea of a culture of poverty. The article discussed how there are several myths about what society perceives to be a culture or collection of traits that are associated with people who are low-income. Some of these myths included a lack of value for education and an increased presence of drugs or alcohol among other things. One by one the article presented information to refute each of these myths by demonstrating not only the flaw in a study conducted several years ago in which the term “culture of poverty” was coined but also in each of the myths about characteristics of people experiencing poverty.

The information in this article was not necessarily a new concept to me, but it caused me to really consider how I approach some of the families we work with in Early Access. Since homelessness, drug exposure, and foster care are automatic qualifiers for Early Access many of the families we work with naturally fall into these categories. I found that in my own thinking about Early Access there may be a bias toward what to expect from families that qualify for one or more than one of these reasons. While these biases are not directly related to the idea of a culture of poverty they are loosely linked. In some cases it may seem easy to come to the conclusion that a mother whose child has been drug exposed may not value their education or that a family who is low-income or homeless may not have a safe clean home that is desirable to visit. However, this is not always the case. Sure in some instances the stereotype may hold true, but in many more cases families and children will surprise you if you allow them to which is not possible if you enter a home with preconceived expectations. Just like you can’t necessarily expect a child to work on the activities you planned, as happened during the home visit with Ethan Wednesday morning, you also cannot expect a family to fit into a stereotype. Each child and family are different and each has the potential to change and grow. While I would like to think this is something I recognize readily, it is an important concept to keep in mind when working with families and children. They will rise to the expectations you set if you are realistic and meet the family where they are at, which I have seen over and over the last several weeks in Early Access.