

# CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

HELPING KIDS UNDERSTAND AND RESPECT DIFFERENCES

As our society becomes more diverse, children are increasingly exposed to people from different backgrounds and cultures. It is only natural that young children wonder about those who are different from them in some way, so it's important to teach your child about the value of diversity. Show him that these differences in beliefs, cultures and religions only serve to enrich our lives and bring new ideas and energies to our world. As a parent, you can help prepare your child to be accepting and tolerant of others by celebrating differences and creating opportunities for your child to interact with people from various backgrounds.

### Valuing Diversity

Talk about the value of diversity. Healthy social and emotional development is often defined by the environment and culture in which a child is raised, and it varies from child to child. Children start identifying as part of a group based on race, ethnicity, religion or other affiliations.

Teach your child about diversity by explaining to him that even within his own group, people are different, and that there is not one standard that is better than the others. You can also do this by asking him how he would feel if all of his toys were the same or if all of the crayons in the box were the same color.

Discuss your family's background with your child. Many people come from a range of backgrounds and their family trees include an array of nationalities and cultures. If you have ancestors who were immigrants to this country, ask your child why they came here and what it must have been like for them in a new country. If you want to host an event to celebrate your family's cultural history, have your child ask family members about the importance of this particular holiday. Celebrating the traditions from different parts of the world can help foster a sense of appreciation for cultural differences and spark curiosity to learn more about other people.

### Understanding Difference

Teach your child to respect others. Whether his classmate has two moms or dads, lives with their grandparents, comes from a biracial family, or has different physical capabilities, your child will always encounter classmates who are different from him. For example, when speaking with your child about physical differences, keep your explanations simple, like, "Your classmate is in a wheelchair because a part of her body needs extra support" Or if another child has a learning disability, you can tell your child, "Your classmate's mind works differently from yours, and it sometimes takes him longer to learn." Be sure to include comments about what these children can do, and what they do well, like "I notice that Cindy smiles and brings joy into your classroom, too." Explain to him that a disability is just one trait that a person may have and it does not mean that he shouldn't try to interact with or befriend them.

[www.Parenttoolkit.com](http://www.Parenttoolkit.com)

## Next Months' Issue: Let's Talk Growth Mindset!

### Kindness Campaign

**Wear Orange on Wednesday  
October 24th**



"I bet I'd learn to play piano better if the keys came in more colors than black and white."

Wear Orange on Unity day to show we are together against bullying and stand united for kindness, acceptance and inclusion. Students all over the U.S. will be wearing orange on Wednesday, October 24th to send one giant message of hope and support to show that we believe no child should be bullied. This strong show of solidarity will help students feel less alone and empower them to speak up, seek help, come to someone's defense or to reach out and befriend someone in need of support.

### Tips to use at Home

**Te Quiero I love you.** Teach your child words in the native language of your family. Also teach key phrases such as "thank you" in a language

represented in your child's classroom.

**Celebrate Others.** Watch movies like My Neighbor Totoro and The Red Balloon. Read books that focus on children and families from other cultures such as It's Okay to be Different (Diversity), The Skin You Live In (Acceptance), Whoever You Are (Diversity), Don't Call Me Special (disabilities), My Brother Sammy (Autism).

**Exposure to Different Cultures.** Encourage friendships with children from different cultures or family compositions. Expose your child to foods from different cultures, attend festivals, go to history museums with a focus on different cultures. [Www.PBS.org](http://Www.PBS.org)



NEWSLETTER