

Exploring Diversity



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What is Diversity?

Diversity is all the differences we enjoy as humans.



- ♥ Our race
- ♥ Our native language
- ♥ Our gender
- ♥ Our socio-economic status
- ♥ Our ethnicity
- ♥ Our nationality
- ♥ Our abilities
- ♥ Our exceptionalities
- ♥ Where we live
- ♥ Our strengths and weaknesses
- ♥ Our likes and dislikes
- ♥ Our past experiences

Why is Diversity Important?

Incorporating diversity into your program is important because research shows it:

- It builds self-awareness and pride which leads to a positive sense of self
- Increases children's awareness and appreciation for diverse beliefs and cultures
- It builds a cohesiveness within the group that celebrates inclusion
- It empowers children to identify and then act against unfairness

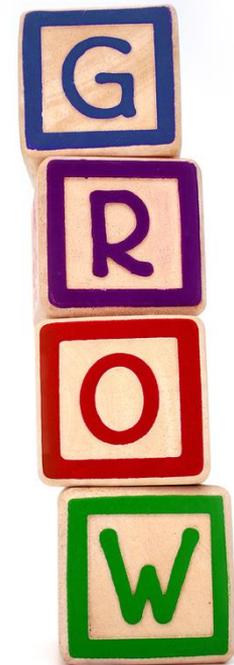


Washington, Valora, Ph.D. Diversity and Inclusion in Early Care and Education. Council for Professional Recognition. Washington, D.C., 2015. Reprint with permission.

A Starting Point

First...you must look at yourself...

- What is your own cultural background?
- Do you have a “hidden curriculum” based on your own past educational experiences? (e.g., what you think all children must know)
- What personal biases do you have? (and we all have them!)
- What personal experiences do you have with discrimination and how might they affect your approach with children?



What “hidden curriculum” do you have?

Take a minute to think about your own “school” experience? How does what you experienced as a child affect what you believe children should “learn” and how they should learn it?



How Can You Develop Cultural Understanding?

- Ask questions!
- Accept and celebrate the differences in cultures of the children in your group. Diversity is a good thing!
- Create an environment in your program where ALL families are welcome. This should include more than parent conferences and meetings.
- Encourage children and families to share cultural stories and experiences with the group. This not only fosters respect, it also helps children gain knowledge about cultures other than their own.



- **Make your program a place where ALL children feel valued and appreciated.**

What Do You Know?



Take a minute to write down the names of all of the children in your group. Then, write at least one thing you know about each child's culture or background beside his/her name. How did you do?

Data Gathering

- Encourage families to share their cultural backgrounds with you from the time they enroll.
- What celebrations are important in their family?
- Who is a part of their immediate family (e.g., lives in the same home as the child)?
- What language(s) do they speak at home?
- What foods does their family enjoy eating that are part of their culture?



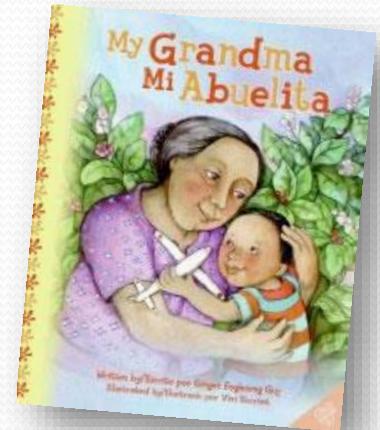
What other questions
could you ask?



Home Languages

It is very important for children to maintain their home language as they learn English. You can celebrate and incorporate the children's home languages into your program by:

- Books in different languages
- Labeling objects in the room in both English and the home languages. Use Google Translate to help you!
- Picture chart – point to what they need
- Translator?
- Music & rhymes
- Parent/Guardian book readers – in native language
- Older children – teach their language to younger ones
- Amazing resources such as these from Head Start:
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/culture-language/article/multicultural-principles-early-childhood-leaders> AND
- <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/culture-language/article/teachers-caregivers-family-service-staff-support-children-who-are-dual>



Bring Diversity into Your Program!

- Planned & spontaneous experiences
- Problem-solving – often more than one solution
- Classroom materials/toys that promote diversity
- Music
- Diversity Wall
- Visitors
- Language used (DLL) – see resource links on previous slide



Which Materials Do You Have in Your Program?



To learn more about Gee Whiz Education and how our curriculum addresses diversity, please visit our website at:

www.geewhizeducation.com

