



Family Activities to Consider to Increase Cultural Competence

There is a lot of pressure on kids these days. The great thing is that most kids are resilient and eager to help. If you are a caregiver of young children, you can foster inclusion early. Here are some tips to consider as you think about how you and your family can be better allies. Keep in mind there is no one size fits all approach and making wise choices to use age-appropriate language is necessary.

ACTIVITY 1 - My Friends Are Cool (Teaching Kids About Allyship)

1. Talk to your children about their friends. Have them describe their friends without using any of the standard categories (race, gender, orientation, religion, age, disability, ethnicity).
2. Ask your children what qualities make a good friend.
3. Ask your child if their friends have any family traditions that might be different than yours and explore it with them.
4. Now ask your child what is different about their friends and what is the same.
5. Then ask which of the different qualities they find the most fun/interesting/exciting and celebrate that.
6. Ask your child how they can be a buddy if someone picks on their friend because of something different. Guide them to helpful behaviors such as going to talk to their friend at lunch to make sure they are ok or playing with them on the playground. Stress the importance of remaining safe while still being a friend to their friend.

ACTIVITY 2 - Inclusion Inventory (Broadening Your Inclusion Lens)

1. Do a deep dive inventory of your own friend circles to check for inclusivity (remember diverse thinking can also be a consideration based on personal experiences)
2. Do a deep dive inventory of your business network to check for inclusion and belonging practices.
3. Look through your home to see if things like paintings, books etc were created by people who don't share your race, gender or culture.
4. Think about the last 5 shows or movies you watched. List how many have a highly diverse cast.
5. Think about the music you listen to. How many artists on your favorite playlist are come from different areas of life or the world?
6. Are you a designer clothing connoisseur? How many of the items in your closet were designed by an array of different designers?
7. Check your own biases. Harvard's Project Implicit is a great way to check for yourself. Click here for the link.
8. Now look over results from the activities above. What insight can you glean from these activities? What changes can you make? Can you add a few books, some music or pieces of art to your collection from artists/creators that are different than you? Can you expand your personal or professional circle by joining groups where you can learn about others? Can you make a bucket list of different shows or movies to watch when you can? What were your bias results? Can you plan to work with intentionality on being aware of when your biases are in play?

This activity thread is not a one and done activity. It is instead a opportunity to grow regularly by continuing to evaluate the various things in your life to expand your horizons.

ACTIVITY 3 - Inclusion Inventory for Kids (Helping Kids Create Patterns of Inclusion & Belonging)

1. Peek at your children's toys. Do dolls and action figures represent a mix of characters?
2. List the holidays you celebrate. Are they representative of ONLY your culture and mainstream culture?
3. Look at the books your children have. Look up the authors to see if there are any unique characteristics that fall into different categories of inclusion? (Are they diverse in nature)
4. Ask your child to list all the great people they know of through history. Are any of them people of color, aged, women, or of different faiths?
5. Think about the friends your child talks about. Is their friend group mixed with different cultures and experiences? Do they go to a inclusive after school program?
6. Now consider the information you gathered above and consider the following:
 - a. How can you create a vaster array of toy choices for your child?
 - b. What other holidays can your family learn about? Plan to do so.
 - c. What books can you add to your child's library to represent different authors, different mindsets, and even different abilities?
 - d. Introduce your child to heroes with different identities than the heroes they listed. Consider those who identify as differently as well.
 - e. Think of ways you can broaden your child's horizon with their friend group.