



Differences & Diversity

Caregivers will learn

- How to expose infants and young children to differences and diversity and how to foster understanding about it.
- The developmental stages of how children learn about differences and diversity.
- The importance of caregivers talking with children at a very early age about this topic.
- The importance of caregivers sharing their own stories to reflect and learn from.

Key Messages

- Children start becoming aware of differences related to race, ethnicity, gender, culture, families, and disabilities, etc. at a very young age. It is never too early to start developmentally appropriate conversations on these topics.
- Caregivers can help guide the child they care for in their learning about differences and foster a comfortable space for exploration and questions.
- There are many ways caregivers can turn everyday moments into teachable moments as it relates to teaching children about differences and diversity.
- General tips for caregivers
 - Use facts and be honest. If you do not know something, admit it and say, "let's find out together." It is okay to not know the answer. Turn it into a learning opportunity for you and the child.
 - Meet the child where they are and help them process their understanding and observations of differences. Ask questions like "Why do you think or say that?"
 - Be a role model. Lead by example and show tolerance and acceptance of differences so that children can learn from adults around them.
 - Children are very observant. Negative body language, facial expressions, language usage, and other cultural messages can aid in developing real prejudice when reinforced by biases that exist in society.
 - Attend cultural community events to enjoy and learn from.

For more information click links below

Children's Books

[Lee and Low Books](#)

[Mahogany Books](#)

[Social Justice Children's Books](#)

[Rainbow Booklist](#)

[We Need Diverse Books](#)

Tools for Selecting Children's Books

[Guide for Selecting Anti-Bias Children's Books](#)

[Selecting and Rating Titles for Social Justice Books](#)

Webinars

[Creating an Inclusive Kaleidoscope Play & Learn Group and Welcoming Families with Special Needs](#)

[Guiding Children's Learning about Differences](#)

[Racial Equity in Kaleidoscope Play & Learn: Let's Talk About Race](#)

Other

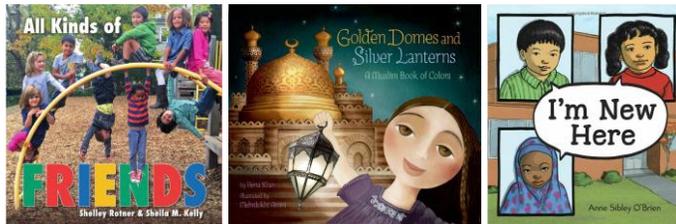
[Institute for Learning & Brain](#)

Coordinated Group Activity

Story Time

1. Share the Key Messages with caregivers and explain to everyone that you will be reading a book together that will help us think about how people are different and special.
2. Read or tell the story. Consider selecting books with pictures of real people and not only just drawn characters. Choose from one of the books below or bring another book of your choice. See *Diversity and Differences Expanded Book List* for more suggestions. Visit your local library for books in other languages and for more children's literature written by authors of color.

Critically examine the books before sharing them with children. See "Tools for Selecting Children's Books" in the righthand column. Examine everything from the potential effects on a child's self and social identities, to the use of words that carries racist overtones (primitive, backward, etc.). Consider the author's or illustrator's background and perspective as all authors write from a cultural as well as a personal context.



- *All Kinds of Friends* by Shelley Rotner
 - *Everybody Cooks Rice* by Nora Dooley
 - *Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns: A Muslim Book of Colors* by Hena Kahn
 - *I'm New Here* by Anne Sibley O'Brien
 - *The Colors of Us* by Karen Katz
 - *We're All Wonders* by R.J. Palacio
 - *You and Me Together: Moms, Dads, and Kids Around the World* by Barbara Kerley
3. Discuss: Talk about how people and families are different. Examples you can give include how people eat different foods, some people are taller, some people are shorter, some celebrate different holidays, some do not celebrate holidays at all, some family sizes are small or big, etc. Ask questions related to the story time book. For example, if you read a book about families, you can ask children who are the adults in their

[Sciences – University of Washington: Racing Toward Equality: Why Talking to Your Kids About Race is Good for Everyone](#)

[Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences – University of Washington: Race Today: What Kids Know as They Grow](#)

[National Association for the Education of Young Children: Anti-Bias Education Positive Racial Identity Development in Early Education](#)

[Scholastic: Infants & Toddlers/Activities: Activities That Celebrate Differences Teaching Diversity: A Place to Begin](#)

[Scholastic: Teaching Diversity: A Place to Begin](#)

[Talking to Children About Racial Bias](#)

[Teaching Young Children About Bias, Diversity, and Social Justice](#)

[Teaching Young Children About Race](#)

[The Science of Skin Color](#)

[Talking Race With Young Children](#)

[Sesame Street: Lupita Nyong'o Loves Her Skin](#)

[How Racism Harms Children – Harvard Medical School](#)

lives. Follow up and explain how families are different and give examples, for instance:

- a. Single Parent Family (One adult who has a child, such as biological or adopted)
- b. Extended Family (Relatives by blood or marriage living together)
- c. Grandparent Family (Grandparents raising their grandchildren)
- d. Same-Sex Family (a same-sex parented family)

Talk about how to use everyday moments to talk about these topics. For example, when eating meals, talk about the different foods other people eat or other kinds of utensils people use. When combing hair or shampooing during bath time, talk about how people have different hair colors and textures. When doing laundry, talk about how people wear different types of clothes. When listening to music in the car talk about how people sing and talk in different languages. Have a dialogue about the differences and similarities they notice within their own family and of other families they know. Reinforce the idea that although people have differences, people also have a lot of similarities.

Toddlers to Pre-K

Craft: Part I



Materials: construction paper of different shades of skin color; crayons of different skin shades; paper; scissors; poster or butcher paper.

Have children trace their hands and cut them out. Let them color their hands. They can also draw themselves and cut these out, too. Create a poster or arrange all the pieces into a circle or design on a wall so that participants can see all the colors of their pieces together as one community.

Discuss: The colors of all types of people and how they are all different and beautiful inside and out like all the participants in the Kaleidoscope Play & Learn group.

Craft: Part II

Materials: photos; pictures of diverse people from magazines; abilities; cultures; religions; languages; gender; types of families; race; ethnicity;

[Talking to Children Authentically about Race and Racism—PBS](#)

[Your Kids Aren't Too Young to Talk About Race: Resource Roundup](#)

[How to Talk to Children About Identity and Difference](#)

[How White Parents Can Talk to Their Kids About Race](#)

[Helping Kids Deal with Discrimination – Parent Line](#)

[How to Talk to Kids About Race—The Atlantic \(video\)](#)

[Talking to Children About Racial Bias—Healthy Children](#)

[Not My Idea – A Book About Whiteness \(video of picture book read by a dad\)](#)

Resources & Handouts in Kaleidoscope Play & Learn Lesson Guide

Developmental Themes, Tasks, and Goals in Anti-Bias Work

Differences & Diversity Expanded Book List

Goals and Developmental Expectations of Anti-Bias

Overview: Development of Ethnic, Gender, Disability, & Class Identity & Attitudes in Children & Youth

and other traits like age, size, and hair; glue; scissors; poster or butcher paper; color utensils including shades of different skin colors.

Let the children cut and create a collage of all these different pictures to show examples of differences and diversity. Encourage them to draw or cut out figures of themselves and/or their families and friends to add to the mural so they are a part of it. They can take the art they made from Craft 1 to add to the collage.

Discuss: We can celebrate both the differences and similarities that we all have among us.

Food, Diversity & Culture Activity

Organize a food gathering for participants and community members. Provide children with a diverse set of food that represents a variety of cultures. Plan and prepare healthy meals that appeal to the ethnic and cultural tastes of children that are served in a supportive, comfortable, attractive, and social environment.

Implement a meaningful and holistic approach that aligns with Kaleidoscope Play & Learn values and not a tourist approach that emphasizes exotic differences between cultures. A perfect way to do this is to invite the caregivers to lead discussion in ways children can understand.

Discuss: What are different types of food your family cooks and eats at home?

Virtual tip: if you are facilitating a live virtual group invite participants to bring food, such as a meal, snack, or beverage that they enjoy and/or represents their family or heritage, etc, so that participants can enjoy their food together. Foster a discussion on what participants are eating, etc.

Child-Directed Play Activity

Infant

Create infant friendly spaces such as a play and tummy time area with a blanket. Place on the blanket toys, pictures, and board books appropriate for babies that represent a variety of people, clothing, foods, etc. Let the infants explore and play with these items.

Infant to Pre-K:

Have pictures and posters of diverse people in the environment such as on walls, on the sides of play structures, on a blanket for tummy-time, etc. Include pictures that show people interacting positively with one another and spending time together.

Provide dolls and other play items in the play area that represent a

We Are Different We Are the Same

Cultural Considerations

It is important for all children and caregivers to learn about and talk with one another about differences and diversity. Be careful to not single out participants during this lesson. Invitations for participants to engage can go out to everyone as every child, caregiver, and family has their own traditions and culture to share and contribute.

Other Tips

As a facilitator, you are not expected to be an expert on this topic. Serve as a resource for participants to connect them to information. Offer support as needed while they navigate teaching their children about differences and diversity.

Brainstorm vocabulary with participants related to self-love in order to help promote positive self-images among children. Write this list and hang it up. Encourage participants to use these words to describe themselves in healthy ways.

School-Readiness Connection

Children will spend time with others at school who are different than them (as well as

variety of people of different races, shapes, sizes, abilities, etc. Consider offering an activity where participants can creatively make their own handmade dolls. Incorporate their dolls into the play area. Lay out books, including board books for babies, with pictures that represent different groups of people. Read and describe the pictures in the books as infants and children play and hold them.

Sing or play music such as lullabies and children's songs in different languages. Encourage them to sing and dance to the music.

Caregiver Relationship-Building

Invite caregivers to share about what they do to guide their child's learning about differences and diversity. Are there community events they like to go to? Are there children's books, music, dances, or films they want to share? Has their child started to already notice differences and asks questions or makes comments? How do they respond to them? Do caregivers need support in responding to children's questions? What kind of support would be helpful?

Caregiver Leadership

Invite a caregiver volunteer to read the book during today's Kaleidoscope Play and Learn session to the group. Offer the opportunity for caregivers to lead the discussion on tips to foster learning on differences and diversity.

Home Activity

Provide caregivers info from the Resources & Handouts section. Encourage caregivers to read the information at the group and/or at home to learn more about how children learn about differences during their developmental stages. This can also be reinforced verbally. Speak to caregivers about how children learn about differences during their development. Encourage caregivers to reflect at home ways they can support this development at home. Suggest that they try using everyday moments to teach about differences and diversity in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the child they care for. For example, caregivers can ask children about what they notice throughout the day. Does it sound like there are different languages spoken at the library than at the doctor's office? Does the local grocery store smell different than the farmer's market?

Check in for the Following Week

Ask caregivers to share some stories about ways they have exposed their child to dialogue or experiences related to differences. Ask them what ideas they have to continue this as their child grows?

in life) and need to be prepared to understand and process these differences in a healthy and respectable way.

We are grateful for CiKeithia Pugh, Lupita Torrez, and Mike Browne for their anti-racist and anti-bias child development expertise and suggestions for this lesson guide. We also appreciate the children's book recommendations contributed by Maren Ostergard and Susan Anderson-Newham.