


FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES IN THE CLASSROOM & CURRICULUM

-  Below is a list of practical ways to integrate the child's family (culture) and community into the classroom and curriculum:



Curriculum

1. All about me poster (learning about families at the beginning of the program year).
2. Parent questionnaire at enrollment (about child's family/home).
3. Create culture sensitive communication (considering all family types).
4. Show and Tell.
5. Career Days (ask parents to participate).
6. Holidays Around the World.
7. Food activities (foods from around the world / culturally diverse foods).
8. Play cultural games and sensitive take-home activities (considering education levels and linguistic abilities).
9. Hold activities and events where all family members are welcome.
10. Be sensitive to Mother's/Father's Day activities and projects for children who have a mother/father figure.
11. Invite speakers from the community to talk to/engage with children (zoo, police, health department, poison control, fire department, swimming safety, etc.).

Classroom

1. Turn your dramatic play area into a community store (i.e., Winn Dixie).
2. Add menus or fast food containers to the dramatic play area.
3. Turn the writing center into a community book store or library.
4. Turn the classroom into a community location (i.e., Jax Beach).
5. Play culturally diverse music or bring in cultural instruments for music time.
6. Make cultural crafts, instruments, dolls, toys, etc.
7. Use dual language labels in the classroom (English, Spanish, etc.).
8. Teach dual languages in the classroom (English, Spanish, etc.).
9. Read cultural books that include dual languages or aspects about many cultures.
10. Have diverse books and toys, including puzzles, puppets, dolls, and dress-up clothes that represent a variety of races, ages, needs and culture.
11. Use cultural colors in the classroom or hang cultural flags in the classroom.
12. Provide art activities that use cultural colored crayons and paints.
13. Display pictures of familiar community buildings and landmarks.



TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR PROGRAM

Children need to see themselves, and people who represent the diversity of their families, communities, and world, in the environment where they live, work, and play. Use the guide to ensure you have created a bias-free inclusive environment.

Does the environment reflect diversity in family styles, configurations, and socioeconomic class? Does your program have:

- Books that contain diversity in family styles, configurations, and socioeconomic class?
- Images of diverse family styles, configurations, and socioeconomic class?

Do you have materials for children to explore their physical selves? Does your program have:

- Mirrors and/or cameras for self-examination?
- Paper, paint, clay, play dough, markers, crayons, pencils, and collage materials reflecting the full range of skin, eye, and hair colors and tones?
- A magnifying glass to investigate similarities and differences?

Does the environment accurately reflect a diverse group of people's current lives (home, work, traditions, recreation)?

- Magazines with pictures representing different ethnic groups, religions, ages, and backgrounds in every day dress, engaged in many different activities?
- A variety of types of cooking and eating utensils for dramatic play: chopsticks, forks, spoons, spatulas, rice bowls, wooden bowls, plates, woks, tortilla presses, etc.?
- Labels in other languages, especially in the languages of the families of the children in the program
- Different types of blocks and building materials to build the various types of homes seen in current life?
- Images of people from diverse backgrounds interacting with one another?
- Images that demonstrate the geographic diversity of family dwellings, neighborhoods, and communities?

Does the environment represent all cultural groups within the community, across the United States, and in the world?

Does your environment have:

- Multiethnic dolls reflecting all different skin colors, hair textures, and clothing styles?
- Artwork and music by male and female artists and musicians from around the world and from various religious and cultural groups?
- Play and work clothes ranging from suits to uniforms: pants, dresses, hard hats, batik, saris, kimonos, serapes, kente cloth, ponchos, tunics, scarves, moccasins, sandals, etc.?
- Musical instruments from around the world: castanets, conch shells, brass bells, rattles, wooden flutes, maracas, gourds, bongo drums, guitars, etc.?

Does the environment reflect diversity in gender roles? Does your environment have:

- Alternatives to the pretend kitchen, such as a workbench, home office, store, office, hospital, etc.
- Gender neutral career puzzles?
- Images of men and women in non-stereotypical roles, such as male dancers, female doctors, women demonstrating physical strength and men performing domestic tasks and caring for children?

Does your environment include the full ranges of abilities and body types? Does your environment have:

- Materials for children with disabilities such as painting alternatives for children who physically can't hold a paintbrush, cutting alternatives for children who can't use scissors and pillows for story time to prop up children with disabilities?
- Images of people with a range of abilities and body types engaged in a variety of activities?

Do you use inclusive language throughout your environment? Do you use:

- Language that puts the person before the disability ex. the person who is blind, instead of the blind person?
- Terms that include non-traditional families such as caregiver and guardian?
- Language that avoids perpetuating stereotypes, for example, avoiding phrases such as "sitting Indian style?"