Preschool Promoting Acceptance of Diversity Tip Sheet

Families of different cultures will have different kinds of interaction styles, languages, and traditions. Children benefit when teachers and families establish healthy partnerships and define common goals.

Unconscious bias is when someone forms an opinion without being aware and makes assumptions or have expectations about members of a group. Biases reinforce very negative messaging about who children are and how they are valued in society.

Children are not born with attitudes that cause them to discriminate (show prejudice) against others. However, they quickly learn such attitudes as they watch what others do and say. Teachers should intervene appropriately to counteract microaggression (a subtle but offensive comment or action directed at a minority) shown by children or adults. We can teach children to respect and value all people regardless of the color of their skin, physical abilities, identities, or culture.

Diversity Materials

Diversity includes much more than just race and examples should be present in the classroom to show diversity in **race, culture, ages, abilities, and gender**. Many types of diversity should be represented in books, displayed pictures, and materials (i.e. puppets, dress up clothes, play food, dolls, eating utensils, etc.).

Harms, T., Cryer, D. & Clifford, R. (2014) Early childhood environment rating scale (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Teacher's College Press.

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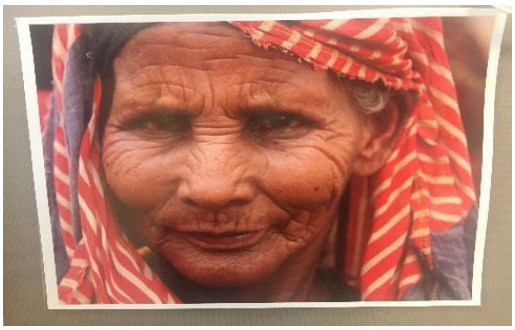
Diversity Descriptions

Race refers to skin tones and facial features.
Culture refers to lifestyle, eating, dress, religion, language, etc. and is more than just skin tones or facial features. It refers to a way of life. Culture does not always mean from another country.
Ages show people who are of varying ages – not just infant through preschool. It should also include teenagers, middle age, and elderly people.
Abilities refers to people with varying abilities – a person that uses hearing aids, eye glasses, sign language, a wheel chair, or walker, etc.
Gender shows men and women in non-stereotypical roles. For example, women as carpenters, doctors, or construction workers; men as teachers, nurses, or hair stylists.

Items or materials can represent more than one category (i.e. race, culture, ages, abilities, or gender), but diversity needs to be shown through a contrast of two or more items (i.e. the contrast in the pictures below show diversity in race and age).



Cultural awareness should be shown in a variety of ways as part of the regular classroom experience. Diversity activities teach children to respect and celebrate the differences in all people. Learning about different cultural aspects offers new experiences. For example, demonstrate the importance of music to different cultures by playing a variety of music, featuring different types of instruments in the music center, and displaying pictures of various multicultural dancers in the classroom. Explain each featured culture and how music plays a role in their traditions. You can also invite families to share something about their culture with your classroom.

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