



## Celebrate Diversity

### The Facts

The future of the human race and survival of our planet may ultimately depend upon people developing a better appreciation for the diversity and connectedness of each other. Recognizing and celebrating diversity among families becomes more important as the roles and expectations of the family continue to be redefined by life in modern society. As many struggle to retain their traditions and heritage, parents are in the best position to teach children about prejudice and respect for ethnic differences.

### Teach Tolerance

Simply telling children prejudice is “bad” is not enough. Children form attitudes from the adults around them. Parents must carefully examine their feelings and attitudes about other ethnic and racial groups and consciously choose to model a policy of acceptance and appreciation for diversity in daily life.

- Talk with children about stereotypes that emerge in conversations, on television, or in the news. Point out prejudice when it happens and discuss it with your children. Encourage them to speak up when they see someone, especially another child, being treated unfairly.
- Talk about the differences among people with your child. Although we share some of the same needs and drives, people around the world, develop very different customs, beliefs and values.
- Discuss the ways certain cultural patterns were either developed or influenced by differences in climate, history, conditions of the land, inventions, language, literature and art.
- Remind your child that what’s important about a person is what’s inside, not outside. Help them look beyond the surface in understanding others.



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➤ A person's race, gender or physical condition should never be the basis for ridicule or rejection.

➤ Teach children to not stare or separate from those who are unlike themselves, but to talk openly with peers of different abilities.

➤ Take pride in your own cultural heritage and share it with your children and others.

➤ Encourage your child to explore the world of diversity through multicultural pictures, books, movies, music, games and toys.

➤ Introduce your child to a playgroup or encourage your child's involvement with ethnically diverse playmates by alternating visits to each other's homes.

➤ Visit museums, festivals, ethnic restaurants, and other places that expose your family to different customs and lifestyles.

➤ Try to have direct contact with people whose cultures or lifestyles are different from your own. Children are less likely to fear what they know. Churches, 4-H clubs, and other organizations often arrange exchanges.

➤ The library offers a wealth of resources including: music, videos and well-written children's books addressing cultural differences, prejudices and fostering diversity.

➤ Volunteer with your child in a community center for another culture. You could teach English or share a special skill or hobby.

All parents can and must work to see that their involvement in local schools, religious groups and community organizations helps to promote respect for diversity and cooperation. Our daily lives are the most influential teaching tools we have. Given that conflicts and misunderstandings are so deeply embedded in our society, we can't expect our children to grow up free of prejudice without an effort on our part. A change in the attitudes of future generations can only come from our positive work today.

Produced by

**PARTNERS IN PARENTING (PIP) (800) 457-2736**

Colorado Family Education, Resources & Training

Colorado State University Cooperative Extension

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