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Garfield County DHS Childcare Quality and Licensing

Friday Tip
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Anti-bias education strategies are ways for early childhood professionals to foster respect among differences in young children. This may be undertaken in a curriculum unit, perhaps an “All About Me” week where children explore their similarities and differences. Anti-bias education also happens when professionals create an environment that is respectful of similarities and differences. Some key points to remember when evaluating how your program supports respect for diversity, based on the ideas in the book *Anti-bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves*:

- ✚ **Connect cultural activities to concrete, daily life experiences.** “Culture,” as an idea, is too abstract for children to talk about. Instead, use opportunities to talk about the different things families in your program do. Simply asking children what they did over the weekend, how/when they eat dinner, or what they read encourages them to understand that people do things differently. Model for them a respectful attitude towards differences in your replies to help them learn to be open to those different from them.
- ✚ **Include the cultural life of all families in your activities.** When talking about culture, remember that *all* people have a cultural background. Even in programs where families are of the same ethnicity, there are differences in the way they live and do things that influence the way they see the world. It’s worthwhile to use these concrete experiences to explore differences. Similarly, in a program where ethnic diversity does exist, resist focusing on those in the ethnic minority (or those from an ethnicity different from yours), as examples of “different.” Draw on the differences and similarities among all the students.
- ✚ **Explore cultural similarities, as well as cultural differences, among the families in your program.** If you’re engaging in a formal unit to promote anti-bias thinking, begin the unit by talking about differences. Everyone eats, sleeps, wears clothes, has a family, gets to childcare or preschool. Build off of those similarities to explore differences. Everyone sleeps, but where? What do people eat for dinner? How do people get to childcare? Laying this foundation gives children concrete ways to make the connections between what they do and what others do.
- ✚ **Avoid making assumptions about how children live, or inadvertently sending the message that there is a right way to do something.** Sometimes adults do this when talking about how “we” do something. “Here, we celebrate...” A better way to frame these statements is to say “I celebrate...” Or, “At our school, we celebrate...” This gives children a better perspective that even though their teacher or school does something, they (or others) may do it differently at home.

Looking for more?

We have the following books
in the childcare program office:

*Developing Positive Identities:
Diversity and Young Children*

*A World of
Difference: Readings on
Teaching Young Children in a
Diverse Society*

*Anti-bias Education for Young
Children and Ourselves*

PBS has activities to support
diversity awareness in early
childhood, including ideas for
celebrating holidays:
<http://www.pbs.org/kcts/preciouschildren/diversity>

Have a great week!
Amelia