



Resources for Child Caring

Raising the standard of care for children

Cultural Diversity

--Ellen Booth Church

How will your child's culture be reflected in his/her child care or preschool program? Even three- and four-year-olds are tuned in to matters of culture and ethnicity. For them, the issues are not social but personal, and are closely related to their self-esteem. They want to know, "Am I valued here?" When their races, cultural heritages, and families are respected and reflected in the classroom, children can begin to feel that they belong.

If your child's preschool validates cultural diversity, you'll know it just by looking around. Are a variety of faces represented on the walls? Do the materials and activities reflect the cultures of the children in the room and other cultures as well? Notice what aspects of children's cultures are included in classroom displays, discussions, and in the following:

- Books
- Materials
- Games
- Music
- Food prepared for lunch or snack
- Holiday-themed activities and celebrations

Remember that *culture* is not only about race or nationality, but is also rooted in family traditions. Find ways to contribute aspects of your family's heritage to your child's classroom to enrich the learning experience for all.

"We are all alike and different" is an important concept in the preschool curriculum. Activities that teach about similarities and differences in realistic, positive ways help your child value and respect herself and others as well.

At a Glance

- Note whether diversity is apparent in classroom books, music and snack choices.
- Find ways to contribute your family's heritage.
- Help your child value others by pointing out similarities.

Taken from www.scholastic.com
(9/2007, RA 8/2006)



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