

## **A Culturally Relevant Anti-Bias Classroom**

- Adapted from “Roots & Wings” By Stacey York Chapter 8 and other goodies hand picked by Henry...
- Classroom environments give children and parents strong messages.
- Use the classroom to reinforce your educational goals.
- The arrangement of equipment and the display of materials affect children’s behavior, attitudes, and learning.
- 3 basic principals underlying the organization and arrangement of an early childhood classroom.
  - 1. Children learn through play and should spend much of their day engaged in free choice play where they can move around the room, make choices about their activities, and freely explore the people and materials that interest them.
  - 2. Toys, books and other learning materials should be organized into at least five clearly defined interest areas and displayed nearly on low, open shelves so that children can tell what their choices are and select their materials without relying on adult assistance.
  - 3. As teachers, we present the curriculum through free play, small group activities, and large group time. We strengthen learning through play by carefully selecting materials, arranging materials on the shelves, rotating materials regularly, and changing bulletin boards and visual displays.
- Children are bombarded with stereotypical images through the media. The classroom should be a place where children can learn simple, accurate information about people and the world around them.
- It is critical that classrooms reflect every child and every family in that room.
- Some materials that can you can add to your environment include
  - Photographs of the children in your class
  - Photographs of the children with their families.
  - Photographs and posters of important people from the children’s home cultures.
  - Photographs and posters of important people from the children’s homelands.( especially important for immigrant, refugee, and first-generation Americans.
  - Art and fabric from children’s home cultures.
- Promote positive attitudes towards diversity.

- The classroom conveys attitudes to the children and parents by what is included in the room and what is left out.
- Careful selection and display of all materials can “normalize’ DIVERSITY.

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- Remember that displaying just one or two pictures is **tokenism**
- **Tokenism** is a minimal attempt to diversify that is manipulative and degrading. Includes a little diversity( less than 25%) in the curriculum and keeps diversity marginalized. Adding a few multicultural needs such as posters or books to the classroom.
- Prevent and reduce Bias and stereotypic thinking by removing older materials that are not current or relevant, watch out for children’s books they can be problematic, and many commercial teaching materials are out-right stereotypic.
- Promote Social Skills and Social action by displaying a peace pledge or kindness pledge in a large group area and discuss this with the children, involve them in the process.
- Show Photographs and posters of individuals and groups working for social justice.
- Suggested areas that promote a culturally relevant and anti-bias classroom.
  - Art area
  - Block area
  - Music area, Play Food and Cooking
  - Dramatic play area
  - Appropriate dolls
- Developmental Principals & Curriculum Goals
  - Developmental Issue **Culture**
  - *To foster each child’s positive, knowledgeable, and confident self-identity within a cultural context.*
- Developmental Principals & Curriculum Goals
  - Developmental Issue **Prejudice**
  - *To foster each child’s comfortable, empathetic interaction with diversity among people.*
- Developmental Principals & Curriculum Goals
  - Developmental Issue **Prejudice and Racism**

- *To foster each child's critical thinking about bias.*
- Developmental Principals & Curriculum Goals
- Developmental Issue **Racism**
- *To foster each child's ability to stand up for himself and others in the face of bias.*