



DIVERSIFY YOUR PLAYROOM

IN SIMPLE STEPS



Communicate
to Connect



HEY THERE!

I'M ANDREA, NICE TO MEET YOU!

A playroom stocked with diverse toys and books is the key to raising open-minded and inclusive children.

So let's make that happen, starting now.



Diversity through play happens when we offer kids a variety of toys, music, clothes, books, food, and art that highlight and celebrate similarities, as well as differences.



WHY DIVERSIFY YOUR PLAYROOM?

- Children are aware of race and gender from about three years of age
- **All children deserve to see themselves in books**
- Every child needs to see that they can be the hero in stories and in play
- **Books and toys can either reinforce stereotypes or dispel them**
- There is beauty in diversity and inclusion

So, how do we go about creating a space for them?

Let's get started! >>



DON'T TURN
PLAYTIME INTO
LECTURE TIME.
PROVIDING A DIVERSE
SET OF OPTIONS WILL
NATURALLY SPARK
CURIOSITY.

WHAT MAKES A PLAYROOM DIVERSE?



Toys and materials that reflect experiences outside of a child's own.

Books with main characters of different ages, races, ethnicity, abilities, identities, beliefs, family structures and more.

Open lines of communication where a child's curiosity, questions and observations about similarities and differences are encouraged.



Diversity is more than
race.

It includes gender
identity, different
abilities, faiths, beliefs
and more.



THE GOAL

TO INTRODUCE DIVERSITY INTO HOME-BASED PLAYTIME AND LEARNING

1

TOYS

Add toys, dolls and action figures that reflect diverse skin tones, hair textures, sizes and abilities. Having a variety in dolls helps your child appreciate the uniqueness of others. Assign positive attributes to all dolls. Don't forget the doll house! Look to add pretend food sets that are multi-cultural.

2

MULTI-MEDIA

Ask your child what they liked about a show or tv program and why. Talk about the main characters. Do any of the characters look like their friends? Follow your child's lead and respond to their thoughts and observations.

3

MUSIC AND DANCE

Expose your child to music and dance from different parts of the country and world.

4

PRETEND PLAY

Conversation is a big part of pretend play. Listen to how your kids negotiate roles in play. Who gets to be the princess? Can anyone be the 'bad guy'? Be mindful of your own words when you play with your child.

5

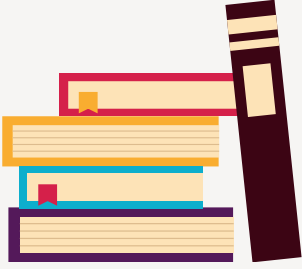
FRIENDS

Your child will mimic you so model inclusive behavior. Seek and encourage diverse playgroups. If your child comments on someone's skin at the park, use it as an invitation to model acceptance, kindness and inclusion. "Yes, their skin is brown. Let's go say hello."

6

CONVERSATIONS

Discuss with your children about all the above experiences and bring home the lessons of diversity and inclusions.



AND BOOKS !!!

CHILDREN'S BOOKS WITH DIVERSE CHARACTERS NEED TO BE IN EVERY HOME.

HOW DO WE DO THAT?

LET'S DO A SELF AUDIT FIRST

1

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2

Look at your human character pile. Separate this pile again based on whether you believe the content or characters represent some diversity.

3

From the pile that you believe is diversified, sort it again. Pull out those books that just happen to have pictures of children with different skin tones, ethnicities, and/or abilities but they are not the main character, nor do they have a central role in the story. How many books do you have left in which the protagonist represents someone from a group that has been underrepresented?

WHEN SEEKING OUT A DIVERSE BOOK, CONSIDER WHAT VIEW OF THE WORLD THE BOOK REFLECTS AND WHO IS TELLING THE STORY.

WHEW! CAN I REALLY DO THIS?

YES!!!!

YOU'VE TAKEN THE FIRST STEP
BY MAKING
A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO
EXPLORE PLAYTIME
IN A WAY
THAT REFLECTS BOTH YOUR
FAMILY DYNAMIC & POSITIVELY REFLECTS
OTHER EXPERIENCES.



REMEMBER

01 -

Diversifying play should not feel stressful.
Keep play fun.

02 -

Learn alongside your kids. Seeing color is
OK.

03 -

When we acknowledge our differences, we
learn to embrace our similarities.

04 -

All kids deserve to be celebrated through
everyday play.

>> FOR MORE INFO, VISIT WWW.ABCBOOKNOOK.COM



Words to keep
in mind as you
take these next
steps



Through play kids
build a world,
dismantle that
world, and build new
worlds, many times
over.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS:

My heart belongs to my debut book, **Molly Morningstar, A Doll for Me**.

I remember the evening I sat down in my mother's dining room and wrote this story. My daughter had made a comment that day.

“I wish I had a doll that looks like me” and that broke my heart.

She had lots of dolls and toys but it didn't matter how many she had. What she wanted was one that allowed her to see herself as worthy and beautiful.

So I worked long and hard on this book. It's been through many revisions. What has remained is a story that validates the feelings my daughter had when she made that comment.

I hope you enjoyed this guide, and that you keep the spirit in which it was written in mind as you play with your kids.

YOUR FRIEND,
ANDREA

