



Inclusion and Diversity for Children

Inclusion and diversity seem to be challenging terms for children but if we simplify the definitions, we can define them as the act of differentiating one another and accepting the differences. The definition may seem a little abstract and difficult to grasp, but we tried to incorporate inclusion and diversity into our family. Our daughter has been made aware of this term from a very young age. We tried to expose her to various cultural activities, such as taking her to try different cuisines (for example meals at a wet market, eating Japanese food on tatamis and even experiencing a Korean barbeque). My husband and I

enjoy new experiences in different parts of the world, and we began to take our daughter to travel around Asia Pacific and North America to experience and engage in different local cultures.

The background of our families also further compliments inclusion and diversity. Our parents bring experiences from different cultures such as Korea, Hong Kong, United States and Canada due to their previous experiences and current living situations. Often, we celebrate many festivals regardless of where we live. These include:

Thanksgiving; Mid-Autumn Festival; Tsing Ming Festival and Christmas to name a few. We tried to explain to our daughter where and how these



celebrations originated and why we celebrate them annually.

Giving our daughter exposure to different cultural experiences will allow her to get to know and hopefully accept and respect the differences we encounter. By explaining the origin of these cultures and the reason behind these festivals, we can hopefully allow her to gain a better understanding of different cultures and their differing ways of eating and celebrating. Therefore, it is completely normal and acceptable to encounter differences, understanding this will assist her in respecting others.

Teaching inclusion and diversity takes time, they are not terms that can be easily taught as they should be part

of a child's life experiences. To assist this life-long learning, we as parents should set an example by being open-minded, passionate to learn and understand cultural differences; then accept and respect these differences. The most fulfilling experience for us is to explore the differences together as a family.

I remember we went to a restaurant where we didn't speak their language and the menu did not contain any pictures. We ended up ordering food with our body language and ordering new and exciting dishes that we now order every time we visit this restaurant. We also had the opportunity to get to know the owner and become friends. Furthermore, we made a



promise to return to the same restaurant every time we are in the area.

We have been back during different stages of our lives, from traveling with my husband as friends, shortly after marriage, during my pregnancy and finally bringing our daughter. The owner witnessed different stages of our lives, and we have explained to our daughter the importance of cherishing these experiences and keeping the momentum to explore and experience new and exciting cultural differences, in the hope that you will respect and hopefully become friends with the local community.

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