

TOLERANCE

Tolerance means being fair and accepting of differences

The focus of tolerance education is to deal with the concept of equality and fairness. We need to establish confidence with children that there is more goodness than horror in this world. —Morris Dees

AT SCHOOL

This month, our school community will focus on the importance of **Tolerance**. We will be working on developing fair and objective attitudes towards people's differences. At school, we will demonstrate **Tolerance** by:

- Listening to others' views and opinions
- Showing understanding for others
- Taking time to get to know what a person is really like and looking beyond all differences

AT HOME

Parents can promote **tolerance** at home in many ways:

- Expose your children to as many different people as possible by taking

them downtown, to the mall, to various playgrounds or to cultural celebrations. The more children are around people who are different, the less they notice obvious differences (like skin color and other physical characteristics), and the more comfortable they become with differences of all kinds.

- Answer your children's questions about people's differences as they come up and as openly as possible in the given circumstances and surroundings.

Teach **tolerance** by participating in activities that foster an appreciation of differences or that bring people of various backgrounds together.

- Learn folk dances; listen to ethnic music (share CDs or tapes with friends or neighbors).
- Play multicultural games (like mancala, bocce or cricket).
- Cook and enjoy traditional meals from other countries.
- Have multicultural craft night.
- Write to pen pals from other states or countries.
- Put together a family tree. Encouraging children to look at their own attributes, their ancestry, cultural background and related traditions gives them a greater sense of who they are.

Promoting Tolerance and Peace in Children

Adults can help children understand the importance of treating all people with dignity and not judging *groups* of people for the actions of a few. **Most importantly, adults must model tolerance and compassion in their words and behavior.** They should also encourage children to explore their feelings about prejudice and hate. Doing so is not only critical to preventing further harm, but the process presents a potentially powerful opportunity for our young people to learn and incorporate into their values the true strength of our country—our commitment to individual freedom and upholding the respect and dignity of all people.

Tips for Parents

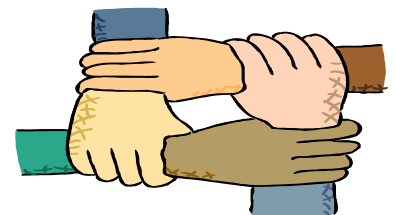
1. **Model tolerance and compassion.** Children take their emotional cues from the significant adults in their lives. Avoid making negative statements about any racial, ethnic, or religious group. Reach out to your neighbors and colleagues who might feel at risk because of their ethnicity, religion or other traits.
2. **Avoid stereotyping people or countries.** Children can easily generalize negative statements to students in their classes and community.
3. **Stop any type of harassment or bullying immedi-**

ately. Make it clear that such behavior is unacceptable. Talk to the children involved about the reasons for their behavior. Offer alternative methods of expressing their anger, confusion, or insecurity.

4. **Emphasize positive, familiar images of diverse groups.**

5. **Learn about the diverse communities and faiths represented in your area.** Knowledge debunks myths about other people and can humanize other cultures. In school, have children share information about their family or cultural customs to reinforce the notion that all people have special beliefs and rituals.

Read books with your children or students that address prejudice, tolerance, and hate. There are many, many stories appropriate for varying age groups that can help children think about and define their feelings regarding these issues. The school or local librarian can make recommendations.



PROMOTING TOLERANCE AND PEACE IN CHILDREN

1. **Violence and hate are never solutions to anger.** Perpetrators of violence—against fellow students or against our country--cause tremendous harm because they act violently against innocent people out of blind hate. We must not act like them by lashing out at innocent people around us, or "hating" them because of their origins, their appearance or their choice of dress.
2. **Groups of people should not be judged by the actions of a few.** It is wrong to condemn an entire group of people by association of religion, race, homeland, affiliations or even proximity. No one likes to be blamed or threatened for the actions of others.
3. **America is strong because of our diversity.** Known as the great "melting-pot" of the world, American democracy is founded on respect for individual differences. Those differences in culture, religion, ideas, ethnicity and lifestyle have contributed to the strength and richness of our country.
4. **All people deserve to be treated with fairness, respect and dignity.** Certainly individuals that are

proven to be guilty of a crime should be punished. No matter how angry we are over these terrible crimes, our Constitution ensures fair and equitable treatment under the law for all Americans.

5. **Vengeance and justice are not necessarily the same.** Justice means punishing the real perpetrators, not innocent people. Hurting other children and neighbors will not make us safer, stop terrorists, or help punish students who harm or harass classmates. It will only add to the hate and anger, increasing the risk of further violence.
6. **We are in this together.** People of all ethnicities are hurt by terrorism and other acts of senseless violence. We need to support each other, comfort each other, and work together to help those most in need during difficult times.
7. **History shows us that intolerance only causes harm.** Some of our country's darkest moments resulted from prejudice and intolerance for our own people because individuals acted out of fear. We must not repeat terrible mistakes such as our inappropriate, often

violent treatment and ignorance of minority groups.

8. **We need to work for peace in our communities and around the world.** By reaching out to our classmates, friends, and neighbors from diverse backgrounds, we can help heal the wounds from tragic events and build stronger, more resilient communities.
9. **Tolerance is a lifelong endeavor.** Although it is critical today to protect our classmates and neighbors from harassment, the issues of tolerance and inclusion go beyond this period in our national life together. We must embrace these values towards all Americans for all time. This includes all races, religions, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and those with special needs.

Adapted from National Association of School Psychologists, NASP Resources, www.nasponline.org



WEBSITES:

Division for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners (DDEL)

<http://www.crede.ucsc.edu>

Diversity Rx

<http://www.diversityrx.org/HTML/TOC.htm>

The Bueno Center for Multicultural Education

<http://www.colorado.edu/education/BUENO/>

Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice

<http://cecp.air.org/cultural/default.htm> (Cultural Competency Page)

Division for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners (DDEL)

<http://www.cec.sped.org/dv/ddel.html>

Project of Southern Poverty Law Center

<http://www.tolerance.org/index.jsp>

Read All About It!

GR Rec.	Title	Author
K-3	All in a Day	Anno, Mitsumasa
	Best Friends for Frances	Hoban, Russell
3-5	Happy Birthday, Molly	Tripp, Valerie
4-6	The Empty Schoolhouse	Carlson, Natalie S.
	Once I was a Plum Tree	Hurwitz, Johanna
7-10	Devil on My Heels	McDonald, Joyce
8-12	The Silenced	DeVita, James
9-12	Fire From the Rock	Draper, Sharon M.
Young Adult	Hot, Sour, Salty, Sweet	Smith, Sherri L.
Young Adult	Under the Permission Tree	Staples, Suzanne Fisher