



SESAME SPEAKS!

November, December 2018

The Sesame Sprout Family Culture

November and December bring so many opportunities for us to celebrate together, with family and friends, both old and new. We are fortunate to live in a city where our neighbors come from every part of the globe. We have an opportunity not only to learn about the world by knocking on our neighbor's door, but we can appreciate its beautiful diversity, right in our own backyards, and certainly here at Sesame Sprout School.

This season, every classroom has been filled with children and teachers wearing clothing from their native countries, and sharing their native dishes. The many parents who have visited have watched our children proudly show off their native garments, and listen as they talked about the countries that their families originated from; its traditions, celebrations, languages and customs. Sesame's teachers, who also represent many countries, proudly share their heritage alongside their students. Classrooms are busy preparing for their friendship celebrations and winter festivals, before we take a winter recess with our families. During this break, I hope that many of our families take the opportunity to enjoy the wonderful cultural offerings of our city. There are many festive events planned in Queens, Manhattan and every borough of our wonderful city, one of the most diverse, culture-filled and beautiful cities in this country. While you are enjoying your vacation with your children, take the time to talk about where your family came from as well. Take the time to talk to friends and neighbors about their native roots and find out how they are the same, and how they are different from yours.

It is talking about our heritage with each other; appreciating our differences and celebrating our commonalities, that teach our children daily to appreciate and value neighbors that may look different than us, dress differently than us, pray differently than us. Today's children become tomorrow's adults. Certainly here at Sesame Sprout and in your homes we are creating a generation of future citizens and leaders prepared to contribute positively to this world not only through the academics they will have learned, but by the values they will have acquired and the global citizens they will have become.

Some may feel it is a stretch to believe that today's children can solve the world we leave them tomorrow, simply by learning about their friends from other countries. The problems that threaten the peace of today's world are complex, large and frightening. Perhaps though, the answer is just as simple as teaching our children to embrace, respect and honor their own roots, and the cultural diversity that surrounds them.

Celia Exelbert, Director



Upcoming Dates

Monday, November 12th:
Veteran's Day, School Closed

Thursday and Friday, November 22nd and 23rd: Thanksgiving,
School Closed

Monday, December 10th through
Thursday, December 20th:
Schedule your parent teacher
conference.

Friday, December 21st: Breakout
Holiday Song Parade 9:30 a.m.
Bring your cameras and join us!

Monday, December 24th through
Tuesday, January 1st: Winter
Recess, School closed

Tips to Help Parents Teach Children To Appreciate Cultural Diversity:

Have your kids ever wondered why people look different, or talk with an accent, or celebrate different holidays? Mighty Mommy has 10 tips on teaching your kids about cultural diversity

Never has there been a better time to introduce children to racial and cultural diversity. We are fortunate to live in a country where so many ethnicities are represented, giving families plenty of wonderful opportunities to learn and appreciate how different cultures live without having to leave home to do so.

Our children are developmentally able to put cultural and racial differences into perspective. They can either learn to appreciate or devalue traits that make others different from themselves, including understanding and being accepting of others who have physical disabilities.

Tip #1: Examine Your Own Cultural Beliefs

The best way to teach your child about cultural diversity is to let them see you as accepting and tolerant. Our children imitate us, so in order to teach our children about cultural diversity, we as parents need to figure out what our beliefs are about this topic.

Ask yourself: How open are you to people from other cultures or races?

The goal is to introduce our children to the different ways people live. We do not want to cloud their judgment and give them biases, so if you do admittedly have any prejudices, you will need to resolve (or reserve) those so that your child will be open to new experiences and new people.

Tip #2: Purchase a Globe or a World Map

A great place to start is by having a globe or a world map available in your home. We have a large and colorful map which is framed and hanging in our family room. When something globally newsworthy happens, the kids can go right to the map and physically see that area of the world. This allows them opportunities to ask questions, engage in discussion, and creates teachable moments for the whole family.



Tip #3: Sample Cuisine From Other Countries

My family lives near a major university, so we have been very fortunate to meet families from all over the world, including China, India, Germany, and Spain. One year, our community organized an “Intercontinental Cuisine” dinner where everyone signed on to bring dishes from their country. Over 100 people dined on sushi, curries, Wiener Schnitzel, paella, and more. There was music playing from these different cultures as well. Some of us even got an instant foreign language lesson from some of the language professors who attended.

Thankfully, you don’t have to have access to a university to accomplish this. Simply reach out to folks in your town, or maybe one of your child’s friends comes from a different country, and have a pot luck. This is a delicious way to introduce kids to new cultures.

Tip #4: Encourage Questions

If your child has questions about differences in physical characteristics or cultural practices, discuss them openly. This teaches your child that it's okay to notice differences, and more importantly, it teaches him that it's good to talk about them. Learning to appreciate all kinds of differences—not just racial and cultural but differences in socioeconomic levels, gender, and even disabilities is an important skill in today's diverse society.

Tip #5: Recommended Books on Culture, Race, and Disability

Perfect for: Ages 2-5

What it's about: A mixed-race child celebrates the rich inclusiveness of her life in a joyful picture book. Mama's face is chestnut brown, Papa's face turns pink in the sun, the child's a little dark, a little light, and "Just right!"

[*Stinky the Bulldog*](#) by Jackie Valent

Perfect for: 3 and under

What it's about: Stinky is a lovable little bulldog who moves to a new neighborhood. The mama bulldog teaches Stinky a valuable lesson in not judging others in this colorful picture book..

[*Special People, Special Ways*](#) by Arlene Maguire

Perfect for: Grade 2 and up

Special People, Special Ways presents a positive image of persons with disabilities. It shares the message that even though each of us may have something different about us, we share many commonalities. Coupled with colorful illustrations, the book conveys the message that although painful at times, being different can also be wonderful.

[*My Sister is Special*](#) by Larry Jansen

Perfect for: 3 and up

What it's about: A little boy learns compassion and patience as he cares for his little sister, who has Down's Syndrome.

Tip #6: Use Various Cultures to Inspire Holiday Decorations

When you are decorating your home for the holidays, consider using various cultures as inspiration. For example, you could incorporate a piñata filled with Christmas candy in your celebration or let your kids paint chopsticks that you can use as colorful ornaments on your tree. Get your kids involved and see what ideas they can come up with. This also provides an opportunity to do some simple research on how other countries and cultures celebrate the holiday season.



Tip #7: Watch Movies That Introduce New Places

Watching movies that introduce new places to your children is a great way to raise their global awareness. Movies like *Jungle Book*, *Dumbo*,



Aladdin, and *Around the World in 80 Days*, are wonderful kid-friendly films that let them get a peek at other cultures.

Tip # 8: Take a Stand Against Cultural Insensitivity

If you want your children to grow up without prejudice and with cross-cultural understanding, you can't show tolerance for racism or cultural insensitivity yourself. If someone says a rude comment or inappropriate joke — speak up and let your child know that this isn't acceptable. Kids need to understand that no matter where we are, people really are essentially the same. They have the same emotions, the same desires, and the same concerns. Teaching this to your kids now can keep them from fostering prejudice and help them grow into thoughtful, open-minded adults.

Tip # 9: Visit Different Ethnic Neighborhoods in New York City

New York isn't known as a melting pot for nothing. It's one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world, boasting dozens of under the radar ethnic enclaves that go far beyond a basic Chinatown.

Little Guyana, Richmond Hill, Queens



New York is home to around 140,000 Guyanese, making them the fifth-largest group of immigrants in the city.

Korea town, West 32nd Street, Manhattan



K-Town, a highly concentrated strip along Manhattan's West 32nd street, between Broadway and 5th Avenue, is a slice of Seoul in the city, and officially known as "Korea Way." New York is home to over 140,000 Korean residents — the second largest Korean population in the US.

Little Odessa, Brighton Beach, Brooklyn



Brooklyn's southernmost spot, Little Odessa has one of the highest concentration of Russian immigrants this side of the globe, and New York as a whole is home to over 700,000 of them.

Chinatown, Manhattan



Sure, most US cities can boast Chinatowns, but New York's is one of the oldest in the country, as well as.

Little Italy, Manhattan



It's a vibrant and fun neighborhood with narrow, European-feeling cobblestone streets full of gelaterias and bakeries, and real foodie gems, like [Parm](#) and [Rubirosa](#).