

Makeover Minutes

Quick tips for your learning environment



Reflecting Our Diverse World

Whether your learning environment is mono-cultural or multi-cultural, it's important that it reflects diversity. You can do this via appropriate and accurate representation of various races, cultures, genders, ages, and abilities. Diverse representation in materials, displays, activities, and routines gives children both “windows” and “mirrors” into the world around them (Bishop, 1990). When children see themselves represented in their learning environment, it serves as a “mirror” to their own life, allowing them to relate and see themselves in their surroundings. When something unfamiliar is represented in the learning environment, it can serve as a “window,” exposing children to the wide variety of people in our world and promoting rich engagement. The tips below are a start, but we suggest you also ask for and follow the guidance of families.



Watch Video: [Reflecting Our Diverse World](#)

Environmental Tips

Art

- Display artwork that can inspire children. Include pieces created by artists of color, and from various backgrounds and identities.
- Provide markers and crayons that represent a variety of skin tones.



Dramatic Play

- Ask families to save empty boxes of the food they cook and add them to the play kitchen.
- Include take out menus from restaurants that serve different types of food.
- Put money from a variety of countries in the toy cash register.
- Add kitchen utensils used by various cultures.
- Include dolls of every skin tone, gender, and ability.
- Add dress-up clothing, colors, and fabrics from around the world.
- Print photos of meals and discuss how the food we eat is rooted in heritage and culture.



Display

- Provide labels for items in different languages, including those spoken by families in your group.
- Include artwork and photos of people and places from around the world.
- Include both familiar and unfamiliar images for the children in your group.
- Create a wall display of a hair salon that shows different hairstyles.



Blocks

- Include images of buildings and architectural photos from around the world.
- Provide block accessories, such as people that represent a variety of races, ages, abilities, genders, and cultures.
- Use tape or contact paper to secure cultural photos, images, words, and numbers onto blocks.



Music

- Incorporate musical instruments from around the world and talk about where they are from.
- Play music from different cultures and discuss how it often reflects the background and identity of the composer.
- Sing songs in a variety of languages.



Additional Resources

Visit the [Meaningful Makeover](#) website for full episodes and more great tips!

References

Bishop, R. S. (1990). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom*, 6(3), 9-11.

Harms, T., Cryer, D., Clifford, R. M., & Yazejian, N. (2019). *Family child care environment rating ccale, third edition (FCCERS-3)*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

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