

WEEK 1: April 1-5

Understanding Acceptance

During our first week of Acceptance Celebration Month we will be focusing on communicating to the students the importance of this school-wide event and how we will be celebrating Acceptance in many different ways. We will provide an overview of what is “Acceptance” and how we can “Celebrate Our Differences.” Please review the materials and information below to assist you in continuing these lessons in the classroom throughout the week with discussion points and activities. This toolkit is designed to help aid in discussions and help you answer questions from your students.

What is Acceptance? Follow up Discussion from Morning News-April 1

- Kids notice the slightest details about others. From the way a person looks, walks, talks and acts, they observe and learn the differences that separate us.
- But rather than see differences as divisions, kids can celebrate them, both in others and in themselves.
- How should we respond when kids ask about other people’s differences? Answer with the truth, speaking with kind and appropriate language, to their level.
- Kids mention the obvious, even those socially inappropriate. So when a child notices her classmate’s different-colored skin or disability, don’t shush her or change the subject. (That will make it seem like it’s a bad thing, a taboo.) Instead, say, “I know, isn’t she pretty?” or “I know, isn’t that cool?”

Acceptance Begins in the Home:

Acceptance is not a one off sit down lesson in class or just a topic you discuss every now and then. Acceptance is a fundamental core value that is learned and becomes an important characteristic of who you are. Teaching your children about the acceptance of all others starts with you in the home. As a parent, you are the best model and the most influential human being in your child’s life.

What language you use and how you react in situations has a major impact. That roll of the eyes and the times you think they can’t hear you filters into a child’s mind so very quickly, and in an instance an opinion whether it is good or bad is formed. Just like that. The influence we have as parents in shaping our children’s acceptance of others is nothing short of miraculous. It can supersede peer pressure, if we place a strong enough value on acceptance of another human being whatever their unique differences are. Educating children on acceptance of others and of themselves creates a sense of justice, when you have a sense of justice you create a better and kinder world.

Teaching Acceptance in the Classroom:

We can continue this very important life lesson in the classroom. Some great concepts to use with students are:

- Think before you speak. Is this kind?
- Remind kids, we are more alike than we are different.
- Don’t use mean or nasty word to describe a person. Imagine that person is you.
- People First Language: We call people by their name, not by their ability or disability.
- Role model acceptance everyday
- Read books that have a variety of different characters and cover different cultures
- Explain that differences may not be physical; Differences show up in many ways. The important factor is we are all human.
- Teach children compassion and empathy.
- Teach young children that everyone is unique.
- Teach young children differences by showing them how varied everything is in nature.
- Explain to children that everyone even thinks differently.