

# BODI PROJECT

CULTURAL DIVERSITY, BODY,  
GENDER, AND HEALTH IN EARLY  
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



## 104 – TEACHER HANDBOOK

ACTIVITIES TO FOSTER DIVERSITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



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## About the BODI Project partners

### **ELAN INTERCULTUREL (France)**

It is an association created by a group of professionals interested in the challenges of intercultural encounters and coexistence. The aim of the association is to contribute to intercultural dialogue for a better experience of cultural diversity. As a laboratory of intercultural methodologies, Élan Interculturel's mission is to promote a holistic view of culture (psychological and socio-anthropological) and propose innovative pedagogies to open up the reflection and the development of skills and competences for intercultural dialogue. As a training organization, Elan uses interactive teaching methods and non-formal pedagogies (applying literature, theatre, improvisation, art) that offer creative, accessible and motivational learning experiences.

### **CESIE (Italy)**

CESIE is a non-profit European NGO established in 2001, based on the experiences of sociologist Danilo Dolci. CESIE advocates for the promotion of a non-violent and equal society, and deems education and training as the main instruments to achieve this goal. The organization works to promote cultural, educational, scientific and economic development at a local and international level using innovative and participatory approaches. The main objective of CESIE is to promote intercultural dialogue, responsible and sustainable development, international cooperation and entrepreneurial spirit.

### **PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTE - (Cyprus)**

The Pedagogical Institute was founded in 1972 by a decision of the Council of Ministers and started operating in 1973. The mission of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI) is to cater for the continuous training of teachers at all levels and to assist them in their efforts for professional and personal development. Its work covers all levels of education operating towards various directions. It offers in-service training to teachers of all levels through several compulsory programmes and optional seminars; it plans and executes education research and evaluation studies; from this, current trends of pedagogy are detached and adapted; it promotes the use of new technologies in education and it is responsible for the writing and publication of teaching books, curriculum design and the production of teaching materials.

### **KINDERVILLA (Austria)**

It is a private independent educational centre for children aged 1-6 years. Kindervilla was established in 1999 and since then has been offering attractive and tailor-made child care. For several years it has successfully implemented a multilingual education concept. Kindervilla has developed a training course "Intercultural Education", which provides a comprehensive training of nursery assistants in intercultural education.

### **LA XIXA TEATRE (Spain)**

La Xixa Teatre Association is a non-profit organisation that aims to research, develop and multiply theatrical and popular education tools as a means of social transformation. We are a multidisciplinary and multicultural group of collaborators trained in the field of social sciences, pedagogy and art. We carry out workshops for various groups, training of trainers and artistic actions at local and international level around four main axes:

- Interculturalism, Racism, Xenophobia, Social Inclusion and Integration;
- Education, School Abandonment, risk prevention among young people;
- Gender, Equality Policies and Sexual Diversity;
- Coexistence, Active Citizenship, Citizen Participation and Local Development.

The mission of the La Xixa Teatre Association is to facilitate the creation of spaces for empowerment through Participatory Methodologies, Process Oriented Psychology and the Theatre of the Oppressed to generate individual and collective transformation processes.



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# **Introduction: the BODI Project**



## Introduction: the BODI Project

Do cultural differences have an impact on the life of pre-primary schools? Or are these the happy years where cultural practices and prejudice do not interfere yet? Does diversity appear in the life of children, teachers and parents? And if so, what are its signs? To answer these questions we have launched the BODI Project: a two year research and practice-based project which studied discrimination in early childhood education in order to develop adequate pedagogical material to address diversity during these initial school years.

The BODI Project is a pilot of educational innovation in Europe that focuses on the development of skills to ensure inclusiveness and non-discrimination from an early age. The project has focused on the interaction of possible early childhood discrimination in relation to children's cultural diversity, gender, body and sexuality. In order to do so we have undertaken both research and pilot workshops with teachers, parents, and children aged 3 to 6 years in Spain, Italy, France, Cyprus and Austria. The project, developed with the support of the Erasmus+ Programme, has been implemented by five partner organizations across Europe: Elan Interculturel (France), Cesie (Italy), Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (Cyprus), Kindervilla (Austria), and La Xixa (Spain).

The BODI Project has had multiple objectives in relation to the development of educational policies and practices inside and outside of the school environment to foster diversity. Specifically with this handbook we hope to provide resources for early childhood teachers and educators to encourage learning from an inclusive perspective, where children feel free to be themselves, to speak up, and to care for themselves and for others.

This handbook contains two introductory texts that will be of help in carrying out the 15 suggested activities. The first text outlines what we mean when we talk about diversity. The second text addresses practical tips and suggestions on how to use this handbook. The 15 activities detailed have been carefully created, chosen and tested by the different partner institutions to specifically to address diversity and non-discrimination during early childhood education. The activities are categorized according to four main themes:

- intergroup relations
- communication, non verbal behaviour
- gender, sexuality, family structure
- health and body.

Some activities touch more than one topic at a time. Some of the activities are illustrated with photos and how-to-videos that we hope you find useful.

We encourage all early childhood teachers and educators to try this handbook out. Feel free to experiment with the activities, take advantage of all the diversity you will find within the classroom if you look close enough, and let it be a source of richness, creativity and learning. And of course, we hope you have as much fun trying this handbook out as we have had putting it together.



**Our approach  
to diversity**



## Our approach to diversity

“Diversity” is a tricky concept. Some fear using it, because they are afraid it will create rigid boundaries between themselves and others deemed to represent diversity. For them, acknowledging diversity inevitably leads to exaggerating difference and will trigger the stigmatisation of the others. As such, talking about diversity is a threat to equality. This position is very much close to a colour- or “culture-blind” position. While it benevolently tries to put the emphasis on what is common, what brings us together it denies real existing cultural differences and will fail to respond to the necessities that come from it. In a similar vein some fear the concept of diversity because they feel it will put too much emphasis on some factors (ethnicity, religion, nationality..) hiding other factors equally important. We agree, it would be a mistake to “culturalise” behaviour having more to do with economic situation, status or clinical issues. But again, denying the relevance of difference is not a good answer. One better answer is to consider diversity in an intersectional perspective, that places attention also to power relations, and also the body, to gender, cultural diversity (tautology , sexuality, health, socioeconomic and family situation amongst other factors.

Diversity is also tricky because it is never static. The lines delimiting what is similar and what is different are always contextual and quite subjective. A minority culture in one context may be the majority in another. The ever-increasing trend of globalisation and international mobility adds to the complexity of the picture. On an individual level “difference” is never in the other, it is always between the other and myself. To explore the concept of diversity, both in theory and in practice, we needed and approach that assumed this situational and relational character of diversity. So we turned to the Method of Critical Incidents developed by French anthropologist social psychologist Margalit Cohen-Emerique. Her approach invites us to consider experiences of “culture shock” (or “critical incident”) as an entry point to exploring diversity. These experiences, set in a concrete time and space happen when we encounter people (more rarely objects) of different cultural backgrounds, and when we do not possess the keys to understand them. Misunderstandings, tensions or conflict can arise where we share the same values, but we express them differently, or when our values and norms are different. Such experiences provoke emotional reaction, but also thoughts and behaviours.

Culture shock can incite prejudice: in some situations cultural clashes can come from witnessing a behaviour that breaks a valuable rule (e.g. someone finishes his/her meal with a noisy burp). The interpretation of this situation is almost automatic, (“How rude!”). In other situations, we can make mistakes which break cultural rules and we feel ashamed and guilty (“we should have known better”). In most of these situations it is very easy to end up with a negative judgment toward others or toward ourselves. One reason is because these situations are often unpleasant, and rather than stopping to understand them, we try to end them as quickly as we can. Judging is a good way to do it, so that we do not investigate or try to understand each other because to our understanding they just happen to be rude, sexist, authoritarian, etc.

Cultural clashes can reinforce stereotypes, but also have the ability to become a powerful source of learning; provided we do not obey our needs to end the situation and quickly forget it, but rather reflect on what are the elements behind it.



The critical incident methodology proposes not to zap over the occasionally unpleasant experience, but make a small stop, to explore what is actually happening. It invites us to assume our emotional reaction (but not to acting upon it) and to get curious to explore why we feel those emotions. The emotional turmoil bordering the intercultural encounter helps us realize something important has been touched, questioned, and it opens a door to explore different frameworks of cultural references in a more objective manner to open a margin for negotiation where prejudice has a lower role.

For researchers, exploring the most frequent subjects of culture shocks - or critical incidents - helps to reveal sensitive areas, important cultural domains most susceptible to becoming a source of tension in intercultural contact.

To make sure the encounter with diversity becomes a source of learning rather than a threat and a reason to ignore it or exaggerate it we propose some thoughts:

1. It is OK to be surprised. Do not force yourself to be colour-blind or culture-blind. The fear of not being politically correct or culturally sensitive can have an adverse effect. When there are real cultural differences, fear does not allow us to be able to learn the real meaning of what we have seen, and thus we continue to be ignorant and unprepared for the following situations. Dare to be curious!
2. Take the wide view of anthropological 'culture' to encompass a variety of aspects of human actions, thoughts and identifications. Often, cultural groups are connected with the nationality or ethnicity, but this can take many forms: social class, gender, age, sexual orientation, subcultures related to sports, music and culture professionals, among others.
3. Be aware that no culture is homogeneous nor static but are constantly changing. There have always been exchanges between different cultures. For example, we can compare current images of a city two hundred years ago and see radical changes that affect the subjective experience and the value system of the people, creating totally different worlds in the same place.
4. Imagine that just like you, everyone is made up of a great diversity of cultures and that each individual acquires and integrates these cultures through their own life paths.
5. Remember that culture is not the only factor that determines our behaviour, but it is only one factor that interacts with situational factors (e.g. fatigue) and personality (for example, personal susceptibility to be more introverted or more extroverted) and many other factors such as power relations, socioeconomic status etc.
6. Remember that "difference" is not an inherent characteristic of another person or another group, it only comes to existence in the comparison of two or more sides. To observe, discuss the differences, both sides are needed. A world without "difference" would be a boring world. Let's be grateful for diversity.



# How to use this handbook



## How to use this handbook

### Who is this handbook for?

This handbook is mainly for teachers. However, we hope it also useful for educators, facilitators, caretakers and in general any person involved in early childhood education. Anyone can use these handbook, get inspired from it to create new activities, as well as adapt the activities that are here presented to fit their educational context.

### What are the basic themes and contents of the activities?

In the handbook we focus on three main themes:

I'm still not comfortable with this categorisation, most of all because it can give the wrong impression that health and gender and sexuality are outside of interculturality. I propose to get more specific.

- Intergroup relations, stereotypes, prejudice, diversity
- Communication, non verbal behaviour
- Gender, sexuality, family structure
- Health, body

Although these three themes are closely interlinked, the activities have usually one specific focus. However, it is important to take into account that even if the activity puts the focus on one theme, it is closely related to the other themes. This means that this thematic categorization is merely instrumental: it is a way we have found to guide children in learning about themselves, about others and about their surroundings in an inclusive manner where all voices in class are equally valued, and where social inequalities are neither silenced nor taken for granted.

Concretely, the activities focus on the themes as follows:

	Intergroup relations	Stereotypes and prejudice	Gender and sexuality	Family structure	Non-verbal behavior	Health and body
1. Greetings and Gestures						
2. Colours						
3. The Journey						
4. There is more to Africa						
5. Compare Parts of the Body						
6. Family Builders						
7. Boys and Girls the Same						
8. Drawing Our Bodies						
9. Strong Children						



	Intergroup relations	Stereotypes and prejudice	Gender and sexuality	Family structure	Non-verbal behavior	Health and body
10. Safety Empathy						
11. Washing hands						
12. Healthy Snacks						
13. Bathing						
14. There are Places Where...						
15. Private Parts						

Under the indicated theme of each activity you will find an overview, where the content and main objectives of the activities are detailed.

### What skills will children learn when doing the activities suggested by this handbook?

The activities are set up so that children work simultaneously the acquisition of concepts and thoughts but also on the development of skills and attitudes. on content and skill learning. Each activity focuses on a specific content in relation to the three basic themes of the handbook: interculturality, gender and sexuality and health from a diversity perspective. In terms of skills, all activities involve in one way or another the following skill development:

- Active listening
- Imagination and creativity
- Question posing
- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Abstract thinking
- Role playing
- Self-recognition, self-awareness and self-esteem
- Intercultural competence: openness to other, acceptance of diverse points of view..
- Relational and conversational skills based on curiosity, empathy, care for oneself and others, and cooperation
- Assertiveness
- Autonomy and initiative

### How much time does each activity need?

The activities were tested in different countries, schools and contexts, and we realized that class periods vary greatly from school to school from 40 20 minutes to an hour. We recommend adapting the activities to the rhythm the children are used to. You can cut activities into separate sessions. You can also follow your intuition in giving more time to different steps of the activity: if the children are enjoying themselves, let them explore and have fun! Feel free to "skip the script"!



### **Can the activities be implemented with all class sizes?**

Yes. All activities are designed so that they can be implemented in very diverse class configurations. When necessary, optimum group sizes are indicated. However, feel free to make the necessary adaptations so that the activity is adequate both for your class and for the resources available.

### **Do we need to purchase material to carry out the activities?**

In some activities, the purchasing of specific pedagogical material is recommended (i.e. children's books and the anatomically correct multiracial dolls). However, whenever possible, we provide alternative open access substitutes. Again, feel free to be creative and adapt the necessary material to your class needs.

### **Are all activities age appropriate for children 3 to 6 years old?**

Yes. All activities are age appropriate for early childhood education. Where necessary, you will find "Age Adaptation Notes" that we found to be useful when trying the activities out. But again, feel free to be creative and adapt the activities to your class needs.

### **What other adaptations should I take into account when implementing the activity?**

Before implementing the activities it is important to take into account the diversity present among the children in the classroom in terms of languages spoken, origins, family structures, functional diversity, etc. This will allow you to prepare and adapt the activity to make the most of the diversity present in the class. Also, take into account school rhythms and language barriers. Make activities simpler in terms of self-expression if necessary. Feel free to break up the activities into more than one lesson plan, change small group activities to big groups activities and the way around, and so on. Each child and each class has their own very special way of flowing. Adapt the activities to them, and not the other way around.

### **Do I have to follow a specific order of activities?**

No. You can develop the activities in any order. We have organized the activities by theme so that the first four activities work interculturality, the next two work both interculturality and gender and sexuality, the next two work only gender and sexuality, the next two work only health, the next three work health and interculturality, and the final two activities are transversal and work the three themes simultaneously. A cambiar si se acepta mi propuesta de categorisacion..

### **Porque no proponer un path?**

However, if we could recommend an order, we would suggest starting with "9. Strong Children" and then continue with the suggested order starting with "1. Greetings and Gestures" until reaching the last activity "15. Private Parts".

### **How are activities structured?**

All activities are structured as follows:

- Title of the activity
- Themes addressed
- Overview of the activity which serves a summary of the contents addressed
- Objectives of the activity
- Preparation tasks for the teacher
- Materials needed to carry out the activity



- Instructions with step by step detail of how to carry out the activity

In addition to the general content detailed above, some activities will have:

- **Extra tips:** practical suggestions that might be useful when carrying out the activity
- **Notes for the teacher:** additional background information and/or suggestions to take into account
- **Age adaptation notes:** tips which might be useful to make the activity adequate for the different age groups
- **Follow-up activities:** ideas for activities in subsequent class periods that might be useful to further explore the given contents.
- **Extra activity:** ideas for additional activities that can be carried out during that same lesson, or which can be used as follow-up activities.
- **Templates and flashcards:** some activities are accompanied by templates and flashcards to facilitate the work in preparing the materials needed to carry out the activity.
- **Pictures:** some activities include images taken by the project Partners during the piloting phase of this handbook.
- **How to videos:** some activities include a “How to” video. These videos were made during the piloting phase of this handbook to help teachers carry out these activities.
- **Quotes:** some activities have quotes which were said by the children and or teachers during the piloting phase, and which we feel illustrate the process.

**What is the methodological focus of this handbook?** *Hmmm esta parte me parece mas importante que los detalles arriba tipo que tamaño de clase etc.. en relación me parece bastante importante para que la pongamos después de “our approach to diversity” tipo “our approach to pedagogy”. Que piensan?*

The handbook was developed following a learning-by-doing, experiential and question-posing focus. Concretely, it mostly follows the methodology of process drama called “pre-text” drama developed by Cecily O’Neil, and which was later adapted to the classroom as a pedagogical tool by Allan Owens and Keith Barber. A pre-text is a story in any form (poem, article, music, object, etc.) which is introduced to the class and serves as a “launching-pad” to stimulate creativity and situated-knowledge debates around a particular topic. A pre-text allows for stimulus to think about a topic, provides introduction to the topic in a creative form, suggests roles, tasks and actions that might be related to that topic, determines a location, atmosphere and different situations that might be useful in shaping or guiding the debate/creative process around that topic, and encourages the exploration and transformation of the topic at hand.

The benefits of “pre-text” pedagogy is that it allows children to relate to learning from a very personal, yet socially-engaging perspective, since they must constantly juggle concepts between how they feel and their personal experience with their context and with others around them. This handbook has been created so that children can learn based on Paulo Freire’s liberating pedagogy. This means that the main purpose of this handbook is to foster that all children, regardless of their age and their origin, gender, skin colour or any other form of diversity, can learn from others and at the same time teach others (including the teacher). All children are owners of some knowledge, and all children have the same right to speak and be heard, as well as propose options, contents, problems and solutions.



For more information on the “Pre-text” methodology please consult O’Neill, Cecily (1995). *Drama Worlds: A Framework for Process Drama* or visit <http://allanowens.com>.

For more information on Liberating Pedagogy please consult Paulo Freire (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* available in numerous languages, and the article by Lourdes Diaz Soto, Beth Blue Swadener (2002) “Toward Liberatory Early Childhood Theory, Research and Praxis: Decolonizing a Field.” *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, Vol 3, Issue 1, pp. 38 – 66. Available at: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.2304/ciec.2002.3.1.8>

### **How are the materials for the activities selected (images, stories, etc.)?**

Most of the material needed to carry out the activities (images, storylines, videos and books) are provided in the activity, and have been selected following the guidelines provided by the “Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves” (NAEYC, 2010) which is available here: <https://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/Publications/Ten%20Steps.pdf>.

We recommend that all material used to complete and complement this handbook, and in general any material used in early childhood education follow this guidelines.

In short, when selecting material (images, storylines, videos and books), we have to make sure we are looking out for the following:

- Avoid stereotypes and tokenism. All portrayed persons must be presented compassionately and as complex human beings; the same goes for groups of people and territories.
- Doer roles and passive roles are diverse and contemplate both individual and collective agents. This means that the main agents of change in a storyline are represented by a diverse range of actors (girls, boys, non-binary, all skin colors, all ages, all functionalities, etc.) both individually, but also cooperatively and in groups.
- Watch out for exceptionality requirements. Make sure that in order to gain acceptance diverse persons do not have to exhibit extraordinary qualities.
- All storylines should portray women as achievers due to their own initiative and abilities, and not due to their relationship to males or physical appearance.
- Make sure a wide range of life styles and family types are contemplated, not just the dominant lifestyle. This means, putting into value everyday practices of diverse income and cultural origins (not as a curiosity or from a historical perspective), and that diversity is depicted within racial/ethnic groups.
- Make sure there is a balance of power depicted among groups, so that all kinds of diversity is represented in central figures and roles.
- In hero-type storylines, make sure they are portrayed by a diversity of agents and that at least some stories address struggles for justice.
- Make sure all children in your class can see themselves and their families reflected regularly and positively in the material used. All children in class must feel represented by positive role models that belong to their identity groups (in terms of ethnicity, body functionalities, gender, etc.).
- Choose content created by a diverse range of authors, illustrators, creators, etc. in terms of origins, identities and life experiences.
- Choose content which is depicted accurately: historical events, characters, and facts are portrayed from an informed and situated perspective.



- Watch out for sexist language and loaded words. Be wary of terminology that describes children or families as “ordinary” or “normal”. Look out for the adjectives used to describe different groups, and use gender neutral alternatives (e.g. firefighters instead of firemen).
- Look for more recent copyright dates. This is helpful since the more recent the copyright might mean content has been updated to reflect diversity more accurately.
- Take into account that all content brought into class might have an effect on the way children feel about themselves and others.

### How to videos

Some activities are accompanied by “How to videos”. The videos are in Spanish or Catalan with subtitles in different languages. We recommend their viewing, since the videos will show you an example of how an activity could be implemented. The videos show children’s reactions to the activities which helps to prepare previously, as well as the learning impact the activity might have among the children explained from a teacher’s point of view.

The available videos are found in the following links:

- Greetings and Gestures: <https://youtu.be/thKq8A22mMg>
- Colours: <https://youtu.be/-UOUadazcwg>
- Compare Parts of the Body: [https://youtu.be/oRp\\_B6QMLmQ](https://youtu.be/oRp_B6QMLmQ)
- Family Builders: <https://youtu.be/i82iwQYWfqY>
- Boys and Girls the Same: <https://youtu.be/iPjIH5C5OGM>
- Drawing Our Bodies: <https://youtu.be/ZmTtQ7XhXsk>
- Bathing: <https://youtu.be/OAsuWmuAbKY>

### Recommended readings

We recommend that the use of the handbook is complemented with the reading of the other BODI Project results and materials which are available in the website: <http://www.bodi-project.eu/>.



# Activities



# Activities

## 1. Greetings and Gestures

*Theme(s): Communication, non verbal behaviour*

*Overview: Greetings are a basic relationship skill which is learnt at an early age, and which allows children to relate to their families, teachers and peers. Luckily, there are many different types of greetings we can teach children! Most likely, there will also be children in class who will teach both peers and teachers new ways to greet. In this activity, we welcome and experience many different ways in which we can greet each other.*



Link: <https://youtu.be/thKq8A22mMg>

### Objectives:

- Welcome and experience all forms of greetings present in the class.
- Learn new and different ways in which we can start a conversation and acknowledge the presence of our peers.
- Work on relational skills through the use of gestures.
- Learn how to use different parts of the body to greet and relate to others respectfully.
- Learn the difference between words and gestures.

### Preparation:

- To prepare, the teacher must become familiar with the different ways of greeting proposed in the activity. Feel free to include other ways to greet which are not mentioned here!
- The teacher must also become familiar with different ways of saying hello according to some of the different languages spoken in the school community and/or region.



### Materials needed:

- Masking tape

### Instructions:

1. Start off in a circle with all children sitting down.
2. The teacher says hello only with a hand gesture, and asks the class what she is doing.
3. She asks the children what languages they speak and/or know.
4. If there are children in class who speak different languages, the teacher asks them if they can show the class how to say hello in their language. The child says hello in their language and the rest of the class repeats after them. Repeat this step for every language which is different spoken by the children in class.
5. If the children in class are not familiar with other languages, then the teacher can teach them how to say hello in some of the different languages spoken in the school community or in the region.
6. The different words used to say hello in the different languages are repeated as much as necessary until the children are familiar enough to remember and use the greeting phrase or word.
7. Ask the children to stand up, remaining in a circle, and one by one ask them to show the class how they say hello to their family (using both the words and the gestures). The class repeats after each of them.
8. The teacher introduces the idea that just like the word "hello" is different in different languages, the gestures to say hello is also different according to the different cultures. The teacher explains that they will now learn and try out different gesture which mean hello. Below we present some gestures the teacher can use (in parenthesis are examples of places where this form of greeting is commonly used):

#### Greetings & Gestures Card

One kiss (Cuba, Mexico, Ecuador)  
Two kisses (Spain, some regions of France)  
Three kisses (Netherlands, some regions of France)  
Hugging (Germany, Sweden)  
Shaking hands (UK, United States)  
Bowing (China, Laos, Japan)  
Rubbing noses (Alaska, Vietnam, Cambodia)  
Touching another person's feet to show respect (India)  
Touch the others persons hands and then put your hand over your heart (Malaysia)

9. The teacher shows the gesture first and then the children repeat.





10. The children can then walk around the class trying out different ways to greet each other (both using the words and the gestures). They can do this for a while. The teacher can also go around the class helping them remember the different words and gestures.



11. To close up the activity, once the children have tried out the different greetings for a while, the teacher can ask them to sit in a circle. The teacher will mark up a square in the centre of the circle with masking tape. Each student needs to go inside the circle and greet the rest of the class in a way that she/he liked. They can also make up their own way of greeting.



## 2. Colours

*Theme(s): Intergroup relations, prejudice, stereotypes*

*Overview: Using the example of extra-terrestrial children we tackle the question of skin colour.*



Link: <https://youtu.be/-UOUadazcwg>

### Objectives:

- Expose children to people of all shades, preparing them for colour fairness as opposed to colour blindness (acknowledge differences at the same time as calling for equal treatment).
- Create stories changing stereotypical status hierarchies.
- Start to understand the idea of common origins.
- Break the association between "skin colours" or "colour nude" and light shades of beige/brown.

### Preparation:

- Read the "Racism, Prejudice, Stereotypes – Adult and Child Theories" background text provided at the end of this handbook.
- Get informed on what explanations and narratives children can have at specific ages in relation to skin colour in your country or city. You can find some general indications in the background text mentioned above, but local demographics and discourses determine how children will actually make sense of skin colour differences.
- For ages 3-4: Prepare pre-formatted body parts. Draw and cut out body parts (left leg, right leg, left foot, right foot, neck, head, hair, nose, etc.) to make up three full bodies. Bodies do not have to be "real-looking", they can have for example, three arms, or hands with more than 5 fingers, etc. Do not colour the body-parts. Make the cut-outs big (at least "real-sized"). Make enough body parts so that each child has at least one cut-out.



- Optional: The children's book *All the colors we are/Todos los colores de nuestra piel* written by Katie Kissinger.

### Materials needed:

- Big brown or white wrapping paper
- Material for drawing (or oil pastels). Make sure there are shades of red and orange, blue and purple, and green and yellow.
- Images of children with different skin colours (Please follow the "How are the materials for the activities selected?" text in the "How to use this Handbook" section).
- Have a camera to take picture of AI and his friends when the portraits are ready.
- White A4 sheets of paper.

### Instructions:

1. Sit with the children in a circle.
2. **Setting up the background story or pre-text (view "Note for the teacher" on methodology).** Ask the children: What's beyond this classroom? How far can we think?
3. Get a big piece of paper (white or brown wrapping paper will do) and draw in the middle of the paper a shape similar to the shape of the room where you are. Ask children to think what's beyond the classroom, and draw together what they say is beyond, step by step: the kindergarten, the garden, the district, the city, the country, the continent, the world, planetary system.
4. Chose a place outside of the planetary system where you can draw a spot to symbolize AI's planet. You can invite children to specify what the planet looks like, colour it.
5. Start the story of AI the Alien: "Once upon a time on a very distant planet lived a child called... What was the child called?" Give children the chance to specify a detail about AI (name, age, family structure, gender, things AI likes to do, etc.).
6. Continue with the story: "AI was a very curious child and so s/he managed to convince two of his/her best friends to embark on a journey far, far away to explore places they've never seen before. How are AI's two friends called? How are they?" Give the children time to describe AI's friends.
7. **Colouring AI and his/her friends.** Divide the class into three groups. Give each child in the group at least one body-part. Give enough body parts (left leg, right arm, feet, right hand, chest, neck, eyes, hair, ears, etc.) in each group so that the group is able to put a "full alien" together. One group will create AI, and the other two groups will create a friend each. Manipulate the colours: one group will have shades of red and orange, another shades of green and yellow and the third shades of blue and purple.

*Age adaptation note: for ages 3 and 4 use the material previously prepared as indicated in the preparation section of the activity for them to colour. For ages 5-6 you can give them big pieces of paper and assign each student a body part that they can draw, colour, and cut out themselves.*

8. **Put AI and his/her friends together.** When all groups are finished colouring the body parts, ask each group to create a portrait of their alien on the floor. Put the three aliens next to each other and talk about that they look like. "Does their name fit? What is their personality like? What do they like? What don't they like? Etc."



9. Address the colours. "Can we imagine that on that planet children are of such different colours? Do they do things differently, just because of their colour? Not necessarily. If there are differences it is probably unrelated to their colour. Do you think they can be treated differently because of their colour?" Give the children the chance to explain their narratives about skin colour in order to be able to address any concern, doubt or misconception they might have.
10. **Bring the topic "back home"**. Ask: "Are there different skin colours on our planet also?" Show the pictures of different children prepared beforehand, and address the question of colours. Again, address any concern, doubt or misconception they might have. Tell the children where skin colour comes from:
  - a. Parents: we inherit our parents' skin colours
  - b. Sun: exposure to the sun makes our skin colour change.
11. Ask the children to go back to their desks, and give each child a white piece of paper and ask them to place their hand on the paper and with a crayon or marker draw around the silhouette of their hand. Ask them to observe their hand carefully and to colour their hand as close as they can to the colour of the hand they see.
12. When the children finish, sit back in a circle and talk about the different drawings: the shapes of the hands and their colours. Address the children's notions of what shades they know as "skin colour" and highlight the fact that "skin colour" can be any shade of brown (not just the light shades of brown).

**Extra tip:** Teachers can complement this activity with the book *All the colors we are/Todos los colores de nuestra piel* written by Katie Kissinger.

**Note for the teacher:** Addressing skin colour in early childhood education is particularly important to avoid racism at an early stage and fight misconceptions around the reasons why skin colours are diverse. Unless explicitly addressed, children will create their own stories and ideas on why skin colours are different, many times based on stereotypes and prejudices that will negatively impact a favourable and healthy learning environment for all children in class. For this reason, in this activity the teacher must focus on two basic steps: first, knowing what the different views of the children in the class are in relation to skin colour, and second, making sure that at the end of the activity the children understand that skin colours depends on our parents skin colour (genetics) and our exposure to the sun.

**Teacher quote:** "When asked the children why they thought that skin colours were different, one of them said the reason was that our bones were different."



### 3. The Journey

Theme(s): Intergroup relations, migration

Overview: Migrations are part of human nature. People from all over the world are constantly moving from one place to the other, but the journey and the arrival to a new place is not always easy. This activity opens up the notion of migration. It allows children to think about and acknowledge both the diversity of origins present in the classroom and the importance of maintaining cultural identities as a source of richness.

#### Objectives:

- Introduce the notion of migration and human mobility as part of who we are.
- Make visible the diversity of origins present in the classroom.
- Reflect upon the difficulties and challenges of migrating.
- Acknowledge the maintenance of diverse cultural identities as a richness.
- Learn about the different continents in the world.

#### Preparation:

- Read the "Acculturation" background text provided at the end of this handbook.
- For homework in a previous lesson, invite the children to ask their parents about a family member or ancestor who was born in another place, different then where they live now. Let them bring information on where that relative came from, where s/he moved, etc.

#### Materials needed:

- Materials to create "suitcases" for the journey and objects/images/drawings to put inside the suitcase.
- A world map
- Coloured tape
- Context images for each continent (Africa, Antarctica, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, South America) such as typical plants, animals, monuments, etc. Picture should be printed.
- Context images for three cities chosen previously. Make sure each city is in a different continent. (For example: Mexico City, Nairobi and Beijing). Picture can be printed or projected.

#### Instructions:

1. **Our origins.** Ask the children to sit in a circle, and show them a world map. Introduce the topic by talking about how humans have moved around the different continents for thousands of years. Ask the students if they have ever travelled to other countries or places, and help them locate these places on the map. Ask them if they have family members or ancestors who were born in a different place and who later travelled to another place to live (you can ask them to do this for homework the previous lesson).
2. Ask the students to stand up, and using coloured tape, help them draw the continents and oceans on the floor (this can be done either with the whole class occupying a large space on the floor, or with smaller groups where each group makes their own map on the floor). They can use the world map as a guide. Once the continents are outlined with the tape on the floor, use images of animals, plants, cities, monuments, etc., so that they can decorate the different continents. You can place the pictures in its corresponding continent and ask the students if they



know what the picture is. Use the different pictures to show how each continent might be similar and/or different.

3. Invite the children to stand in the place where they live now, then invite them to move to the place where their ancestor or family member was born (help them find the place in the map if they do not know where it is).

**Extra tip:** You can mark all of the origins of the ancestors and family members of the children in the world map and hang it on the wall, to show the many places children in the class are from.

4. **I could be a migrant!** Ask them where they would be happy to live for a while, and where they would be happy to live for good?
5. Ask children to imagine what would happen if they were to change continent/location (to "migrate"). If the children cannot understand the term, you can imagine a story to simplify and illustrate the idea of migration. Offer them three different destinations (that you thought about previously) so they can choose one.
6. Invite them to prepare their suitcase: personalize a bag and/or a little cart or basket (for example, you can give them an A3 cardboard paper folded in half and stapled on the sides as a "suitcase" and tell them that and they have to decorate it as they wish).
7. Once they have finished personalizing their "suitcase", ask them to place six "things" that they most want to carry with them (the things can also be people, or abstract things, let the children be free to pick whatever they feel like "taking" with them). You can use small objects or drawings to symbolize these things which they can put in their "suitcase".
8. **The journey.** Tell them they are about to embark on a journey, where they will experience different adventures, and that maybe something they have taken with them can help them get to their final destination (which they have chosen previously among the three different options you gave them). Tell them that for their journey they will travel using different ways: by plane, by boat, by car or by foot. Choose four corners in the classroom, and each corner will represent one of these four different ways in which the migration journey can be done. Invite them to go one corner and ask them what adventures challenges they think they will find, and how they think they can overcome this challenges. Repeat this for each corner so that after the fourth corner they finally reach "their destination".
9. **The arrival.** We arrived! It's time to make an inventory of all the things that are new, to make it more concrete, you can show/project the "context pictures": food, the way we eat, the way houses look, climate, clothes, languages, nature, school, the way people greet each other, friends, etc. Ask them if in this new place these elements are very different than from the place they came from. Ask them if they think it would be easy or difficult to get used to this new place. What would be easy? What would be difficult?
10. **We are all descendants of migrants.** Ask the children: "What is it like to be a migrant?" Chat about the challenges of migrating and how resourceful migrants have to be to overcome all those adventures. Remind the children that we are all descendants of migrants, and show them





how their family members and/or ancestors which they talked about at the beginning of the activity made a journey like the one they just went through, and that is why they are here now.

11. Address the diversity of cultural origins present in the classroom, and invite the children to share different parts of their identities that come from far away, but that they still keep until today (for example: holidays, languages, greetings, types of food, ways in which they celebrate as a family, games and playing routines, etc.).

**Note for the teacher:**

- If the teacher/facilitator is a migrant s/he can use her own example to illustrate the theme, explaining why s/he came to where s/he lives now, what s/he is happy to change, what s/he is happy to keep, etc.
- The activity described above most probably will not fit in one session, in particular for the younger age group. You can cut up the process in consecutive bits, and return to the same activity two or three days in a row.



## 4. There is more to Africa

*Theme(s): Intergroup relations, prejudice, stereotypes*

*Overview: Africa is a diverse, rich and heterogeneous continent. Its peoples, cultures, natural riches and history go back to the first humans, who later migrated and populated the rest of the world's territories. Africa is the "cradle of humankind" and is currently home to more than one billion people. In this activity children will learn about the diversity of the vast African continent.*

### Objectives:

- Highlight that all humans, at some point or another, came from the same place: the African continent.
- Learn about the different territories in the African continent: major cities, traditional clothing, landscapes, monuments, natural wonders, animals, etc.
- Go beyond the stereotypical European representation of Africa as an exotic place populated by lions and elephants and covered by jungle and deserts. Yes, the jungles and deserts and the animals are there, but there is more to Africa. Presenting the cultural diversity within Africa can be a means to open to the idea of cultural diversity elsewhere.

### Preparation:

- Find and print at least 10 pictures of cities, monuments, nature, etc. that can be found in the different territories of the African continent. For example, you can print images of the cities of Nairobi, Johannesburg, Cairo, Abidjan, Maputo, Cape Town, Luanda, etc., where you can see the landscape of the city or different monuments found there. You can also use pictures of crowds of people to show the types of clothing they use, as well as pictures of foods. Also use pictures of the different natural reserves, including both inland and coast, found in the continent to show the diversity of natural landscapes, wildlife and plant life found in the continent ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_national\\_parks\\_in\\_Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_national_parks_in_Africa)).

Note to the teacher: We have created this activity in a kindergarten where 80% of the children had some family history connecting them to the African continent. If the demography of your class is different, you're more likely to benefit from opening to that geographic area / continent.

### Materials needed:

- At least 10 pictures representing different landscapes / cities / cultures in the African continent. Make sure the images are very diverse, include big cities, people of different colours, etc.
- A world map
- A map of Africa (big enough to be able to paste the pictures)

### Instructions:

1. Sit in a circle.
2. Introduce the idea of continents (only for children 5-6 years old; or previously having done the activity "The Journey"). Ask the children what they know about Africa, or what words or ideas come to mind in relation to the African continent. Maybe they have studied it already in school and are familiar with names of countries, foods, wildlife, kinds of landscapes, languages, etc. If there are any children in class either born in an African country or with



- parents or grandparents born in an African country, invite them, if they wish, to tell the class about any fact or memory they might have in relation to their place of birth/origin.
3. Show the children a world map, and indicate where Africa is in relation to where they are at the moment, and introduce the notion that at some point, we all come from some place in the African continent.
  4. Show the children one of the pictures. Let them describe what they see in the picture. Ask them where they think the picture comes from, whether or not it was taken in Africa. If they are familiar with the concept of a map, let them tell you or show you in the map. Ask them why they think that. Show them where the picture goes, and paste it in the map. Ask them why they think the picture goes there or not, in order to address any stereotypical idea or prejudice they might have.
  5. At the end of the class, you can put the map with all the pictures on the wall so the children can see the final result of the activity.



**Extra tip:** You can repeat this activity with each one of the continents, so that children learn about the diversity between the different continents, as well as within the different continents.



## 5. Compare Parts of the Body

Theme(s): Gender and Sexuality / Health Body

Overview: Children are aware of differences among them even if these differences are not explicitly addressed. Addressing the fact that all of our bodies are different, allows for children to learn to see, identify and value differences as a source of identity, creativity and self-worth. This activity allows them to question pre-established constructs in relation to race, gender and sexuality, and works on the children's freedom to recognize, acknowledge and love their own particular differences.



Link: <https://youtu.be/-UOUadazcwg>

### Objectives:

- Learn to see, identify and value differences in relation to our bodies.
- Make visible the diversity present in the classroom in relation to body types, genders and physical appearances.
- Address the idea that although we are all different, those differences are always valuable because they are part of the group; there is no difference which is better than the other.
- Question pre-established constructs in relation to race and gender, and how these affect the children's perception of their identity.
- Learn and reinforce vocabulary related to the parts of the body, as well as body part functionality (We use our noses to breath; we use our legs to walk, etc...).

**Note for the teacher:** This activity can be done in two versions: using faces (Face Version, FV) or using the whole body (Body Version, BV). We will mention adaptation notes throughout the activity to develop each version. We encourage teachers to try out both versions.

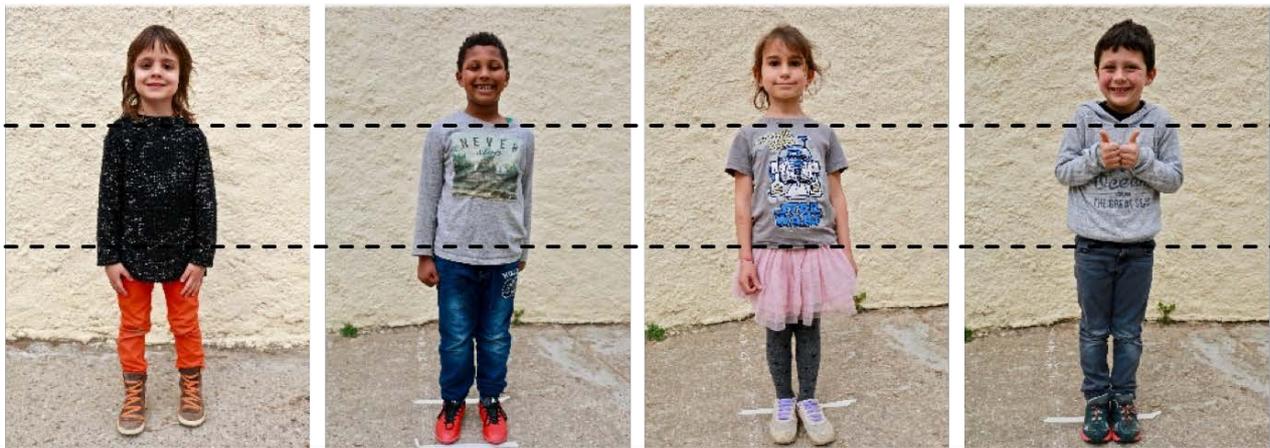


### Preparation:

- For the Face Version: in a previous class, you must take a close-up picture of the face of each child. Use the same background for all children. Print each picture in colour on a separate A3-sized piece of paper (you can also use A4 size), so that the photo takes up the entire space of the paper. Cut the photo in three parts like shown below:



- For the Body Version: in a previous class, you must take a full body picture of each child. Use the same background for all children. Print each picture in colour a separate A3-sized piece of paper, so that the photo takes up the entire space of the paper. Cut the photo in three parts like shown below:



### Materials needed:

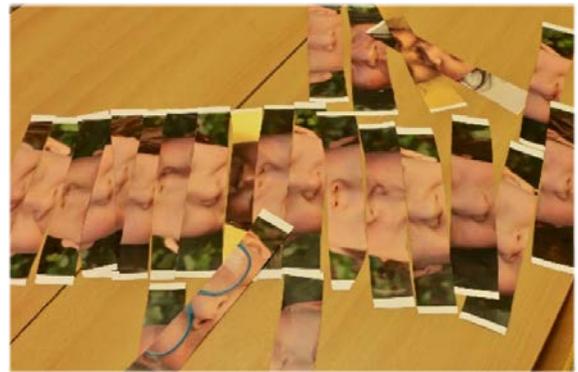
- The printed photos of the faces (FV) or bodies (BV) cut in three parts.
- White pieces of A3 cardboard paper (one for each child)
- Glue

### Instructions:

1. Sit in a circle with the children.
2. Give each child the cut out parts of the printed photograph of their face (for FV) or body (for BV) and ask them to put the three pieces together in front of them.



3. Ask them questions about what they see in the pictures. How are the pictures different? How are they the same? What are the different parts of the face/body which we can see in the pictures? How are these parts different and the same in the different pictures? Address sizes, colours, shapes, etc... You can also address clothing (for BV) and ornamentation (ie. ear piercings, hair styles, etc.).
4. Tell the children to put all pictures of the mouths on a table, all pictures of the noses on another table, and all pictures of the eyes on another, so that all mouths are mixed together, all noses are mixed together and all eyes are mixed together. (In the BV, do the same for legs, upper body and head.)



5. Ask each child to pick a picture of a mouth, a nose and eyes, and glue it on a white A3 piece of paper to create a new face. Each child will have the new face or body they have created made up of parts of the faces or bodies of their peers. In this part of the activity it is very important to address concerns the children might bring up in relation to "this is right/this is wrong". For example, some children might be reluctant to match darker skin tones with lighter ones in the Face Version, or to match lower body parts with a skirt with upper body parts of boys' heads. You can use questions such as: "Why can't a boy wear a skirt?" (BV) or questions such as "Why





can't this nose go with this mouth? Aren't all noses good for breathing? Aren't all mouths good for talking?" You can also use this moment to revise the part of the face and body, and their functionalities, emphasizing aspects such as "arms can be used for hugging" or "legs can be used for playing football". Take a picture of different legs and ask "Can these legs be used to play football?", "Can these arms be used for hugging?" You can use other actions such as saying hello, playing, yawning, seeing, hearing, talking, etc.

Note for the teacher: Make sure to take advantage of this moment to address any functional diversity that might be present in the classroom so that the class acknowledges these difference and can come up with ways to learn from it and include it in classroom and playground dynamics. Give voice to the children who present functional diversities (i.e. a child who uses a wheelchair, etc.) by asking them what they like to do, and how they like to perform these dynamics, and what makes it easy or hard for them to do these activities.

6. Once children have created their faces or bodies ask them to sit in a circle with their drawings. Let the children present their face/body collage. Address any concern they might bring up (for example, if they feel a collage might be "incorrect" because the parts "don't match"). Take advantage of the moment to talk about race and gender stereotypes, and to question them (for example, the need to assign gender to a collage: "Why do you say it's a girl? Can boys have long hair?" etc.).
7. Address identity. Talk about how we are all made up of little parts that can be put together like these collages. For example, we can be a little from different places, we can be a little like a boy in some aspects and a little like a girl in other aspects, we can speak a little of more than one language, we can like to play different types of games, etc. Explore with the children the "different little parts" of their identity by asking them questions about what they like, their cultural heritage, the places they visit, what they like to play, etc.
8. Once the activity has finished, hang the face/body collages on wall (in the classroom or in a place where the children can see the results of their work).





## 6. Family Builders

Theme(s): Gender, Sexuality, Family

Overview: Families are heterogeneous. In this activity we focus on the cultural diversity, gender diversity and sexual orientation diversity that can be found within the family unit.



Link: <https://youtu.be/i82iwQYWfqY>

### Objectives:

- To identify the different belief systems present in the class in relation to what conforms a family unit.
- To reflect on how diversity and homogeneity affects our perception of family.
- To recognize and put into value diversity among and within families, focusing on: families with members from different cultural background, same gender families, families with members with functional diversity, families with different structures (one mum, one dad, just grandparents, etc.).
- To make visible and put into value the diversity of families present in the class.

### Preparation:

- Be informed about the family structures of the children present in the classroom.
- Have examples of different types of families in mind (for example, you can think about the different families that can be found in the school community or neighbourhood).

### Materials needed:

- The game My Family Builders: <http://www.myfamilybuilders.com/myfamilybuilders/> (as an alternative to the set, you can use cut out images of people from magazines)



- The children's book *And Tango Makes Three* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/And\\_Tango\\_Makes\\_Three](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/And_Tango_Makes_Three) or you can also use the read out loud version in video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HlvYTgjs2QI>

### Instructions:

1. Sit in a circle. Present the activity to the children. Tell them that they will play building up families. Ask questions to warm them up: "What is a family? What types of families do you know? What do you think makes up a family? Etc." Tell them that they are going to learn about many different types of families.
2. Read (or play the video) of the story *And Tango Makes Three*. Ask them about their impressions of the story. What was the story about? How did Roy and Silo feel? Can they describe Roy and Silo's family? Do they know families like Roy and Silo's? Etc.



3. Divide the class in groups of four. Give each child a card from the game *My Family Builders*, and give each group different wooden pieces. Tell them that they each have to build a family according to their card using the wooden pieces. They must know this family and give all family members names. Tell them they must present their family to the class.





4. Once they have finished “building” their families, ask them to sit in a circle. One by one they must present the families they have built.
5. Ask them questions about what types of families they have seen, and how they feel about the different types of families. Address any discomfort or questions they might have about diversity as part of the family unit.



6. Reflect with them how families can be different:
  - a. Families can be formed by members of different cultural backgrounds, origins or religions.
  - b. Families can be formed by members of the same sex or with diverse gender identities.
  - c. Families can be formed by members with functional diversity.
  - d. Families can be formed following many different structures.
  - e. Different generations can live together: aunts, uncles with similar responsibilities than parents, children being responsible for smaller children, etc.
  - f. Etc.



7. Let them identify the different types of families using the ones they have built. Ask them about their families and let them relate their own families to the different families they have created using the wooden pieces. Ask them if they know families that are different than their own. In what ways are they different? In what ways are they the same?



8. Tell them that they will create new families by creating pairs and joining two of the families together. Ask them who is who in the family (they can include aunts, uncles, cousins, caretakers, etc.). Address any concern they might have in relation to which families they feel can go together and which ones cannot.



9. Invite them to sit in a circle again, and ask them what they have learnt about families. Repeat the questions from the beginning of the class: "What is a family? What types of families do you know? What do you think makes up a family? Etc."

**Extra tip:**

- You can introduce the notions of love, helping each other, looking out for each other, caring for each other, etc. as ways in which family members can relate to each other.
- It is important that children recognize that family conformation does not only happen through reproduction, but can also happen through choices of care (for example: adoptions, when parents are not the primary caretakers, when extended family members are also part of the household, etc.).



## 7. Boys and Girls the Same

Theme(s): Gender and Sexuality

Overview: In this activity the children will reflect about and question binary male/female gender stereotypes. They will be able to think about how these have an effect on their current everyday lives, and will be invited to think about how they feel in relation to their gender.



Link: <https://youtu.be/iPjIH5C5OGM>

### Objectives:

- To identify and question stereotypes related to gender roles.
- To reflect on the effect of these stereotypes on our everyday lives.
- To connect and recognize the diversity within ourselves in relation to our gender.
- To put gender diversity into value, and to encourage the freedom of being in relation to gender roles and gender identification.

### Preparation:

- Read the children's book "Candy Rose" by Adela Turin/Illustrated by Nella Bosnia.
- Before beginning the lesson, using a plastic net, set up a fence in a corner in the classroom and put plastic flowers inside it.

### Materials needed:

- A plastic net (to serve as a fence)
- Plastic flowers
- The book "Candy Rose" by Adela Turin/Illustrated by Nella Bosnia (the book is available in many different languages).



### Instructions:

1. Tell the children that they are going to be part of a very special story: Candy Pink. In order to be part of the story, they have to become elephants! "How do elephants move? What do elephants do?" Let them discover how it is like to be an elephant.
2. Ask them to sit down on the rug, but to not forget that they are elephants now. Begin reading the story of Candy Pink. When you reach the part of the story that reads: "Enclosed within, the little girl elephants played together and ate flowers" stop the story and ask the class to act out how these elephants live. "Who wants to be little pink elephants? Who wants to be the little grey elephants?" Let them freely decide if they want to be pink or grey elephants. Ask the children who have chosen to be pink elephants to go inside the fenced space. Tell the "pink elephants" that they can sit around and eat the flowers; tell the "grey elephants" that they can play around, rest, get dirty, and that they are free to move around. Keep on reading the story.



3. When you reach the part where Daisy is introduced in the story, ask the children who are inside the fence who would like to be like Daisy: so that no matter how many flowers she eats and pink objects she wears, her skin does not turn pink. If more than three children have chosen to be like Daisy, choose the first three that spoke up. Keep reading the story. Encourage them to act out the story as you read out loud.





4. After you reach the point in the story where Daisy has left the fence to go play around with the rest of the little grey elephants, allow only the children who are like Daisy to get out of the fence. Keep reading the story.
5. When you arrive in the story to "...the other little girl elephants watched. The first day they felt frightened... and the fourth day jealous." Stop the story and ask the class: "What is happening right now? Do we want to change the situation? What can we do?" Let all children, both fenced and free, to make proposals and let them act these proposals out (i.e. the fenced children can choose to leave the fence, the free children can choose to help them get out of the fence, they can open the fence, they can "destroy" the fence, some can decide to do nothing, etc.).
6. Finish the story and notice where the children have ended up. You can open up the debate directly, or you can ask them to sit back in a circle. Ask them what they thought of the story, how they felt when they were fenced and when they were free, what part they liked the best and why. Ask them if this happens to them: when they play, when they dress, in the way they look, in the types of activities they do, in the toys they are given, etc. Ask them in what way they feel like Daisy, and what they would like to change. Address any concerns they might have and encourage them to connect with what truly makes them happy, regardless of their gender identity.



## 8. Drawing Our Bodies

Theme(s): Health, Body / Gender, Sexuality

Overview: This activity allows for children to explore, make visible and value the diversity of gender identities and gender expressions found in the class.



Link: <https://youtu.be/ZmTtQ7XhXsk>

### Objectives:

- Question and reflect about our bodies in relation to gender stereotypes.
- Question and reflect about our tastes, our appearance and our gender expressions.
- Explore how we feel in relation to our gender expression and put diversity of tastes and different ways of expressing our genders into value.

### Preparation:

- For this activity we suggest that there is at least one male and one female teacher/facilitator. You can also ask an adult male or female to volunteer to help out during the lesson.

### Materials needed:

- Roll of paper so that all groups have one piece of paper 1 meter wide and 2 meters long.
- Enough markers so that each child has a marker.
- A suitcase with a lot of clothes and accessories (hats, necklaces, dresses, shirts, shorts, etc.)

### Instructions:

1. Divide the class in groups so that there are a minimum of 3 groups and no group has more than 5 children.
2. Give each group a piece of paper of at least 1 meter wide and 2 meters long.



3. Give each group 5 markers of different color, one color for each child. Tell them that they will follow-up each other's body with the marker. You can illustrate the instructions with an example: ask a child to lie on the piece of paper and follow around the shape of his/her body with the marker. In their groups, they take turns lying down while another child draws their silhouette.



4. Once all children have had the chance to lie down on the papers in their groups, gather all papers and taking a paper at a time ask them: "What do you think: is this the body of a girl or the body of a boy? Or is it not clear?" They will answer, boy, girl or not clear. Ask them why they think that. Notice their responses, to be able to address any misconception about what girl/boy bodies are like later in the lesson. Repeat this same procedure with all the papers. You should have at the end at least one of the papers as a "boy", one of the papers as "girl" and one of the papers as "not clear". Put the papers separately on the floor around the classroom so that all "girl" papers are piled on one side, all boys on another, and the ones that are not clear on another.



5. Ask them to sit in a semicircle around the suitcase. Open the suitcase so they see it is full of clothes and accessories! One by one, take the clothes/accessories out of the suitcase and ask them: "Is this for boys or for girls, or is it not clear?" Let them decide, and give the clothes to a child so that they put it on the "corresponding body".





6. Once they have given a place to all of the clothes and accessories in the suitcase, invite the children to take a look at the "girl" paper. Ask them what type of clothes they see that girls are wearing. Ask them if boys can wear a skirt or a dress: why or why not? The male facilitator/teacher/volunteer can put on a skirt or a dress and a female accessory (necklace, hat, etc.). Ask the children how he looks and what they think: can he wear a skirt? What happens if he wears this skirt/necklace? Etc.
7. Repeat the same with the "boy clothes". The female facilitator/teacher/volunteer can put on some "boy clothes and accessories" and repeat the questions.



8. This is also a good moment to address other physical aspects such as: long hair, painted nails, pierced ears, etc. Address any concerns, questions or contradictions they might express (for example: they might say its ok for boys to wear a skirt, but when they see a boy wearing a skirt they make fun of him).
9. Ask them to sit around in a circle. Open up the debate about the things we like to wear and do: "Can girls/boys do wear/this things? Why or why not?" Help them reflect and question concepts they might already have learnt (i.e. boys cannot have long hair, boys cannot wear necklaces, girls cannot wear baseball caps, etc.). Invite children in class who have a diverse gender expression/aesthetic to speak up and talk about what they like and how they feel (for example, if you have a boy in class who likes his hair long, if you have a girl in class who does not like to wear skirts, etc.).
10. Invite the class to reflect on how we react when we see a boy or a girl who is not wearing what is expected of them: "Should we make fun of them? Why not? How do we feel when people make fun of us? How do we feel when they make us wear/do something we don't like just because it's for boys/girls? Etc."
11. Invite the class to try on the different clothes! To have fun, reminding them that they are free to wear whatever they wish!
12. Once they have played for a while with the different clothes, it is time to pick up. They must carefully fold the clothes and in a neat manner put it back in the suitcase.



## 9. Strong Children

Theme(s): Health, body

Overview: This activity encourages children to identify and be in contact with the way they feel, putting feelings into value. It works on the children's social and emotional health. From this connection to our feelings, the children will be able to reflect about power and authority, identify and challenge behaviours that are hurtful, and speak up.

### Objectives:

- Learn to identify and talk about our feelings.
- Learn to identify how different situations of our everyday lives make us feel.
- Reflect about power and authority, and how this relation to authority makes us feel.
- Learn to speak up when we feel sad, angry, etc. in a respectful manner to ourselves and others.
- Learn to tell others and speak about when we feel happy, at ease, etc.
- Make visible and reflect on how the same situations may cause different feelings (we don't all like or feel the same about the same things or situations).

### Preparation:

- Make the Feelings Ball: using a plastic ball and permanent markers, draw different facial expressions on the ball (you can use the Feelings Template at the end of this activity for inspiration).
- Make the Feelings Cards: Make flash cards of different feelings (you can use the Feelings Template at the end of this activity for inspiration, and as the children learn more feelings you can add new flashcards to the pack).
- Make the Feelings Dice: draw a dice template on an A3 cardboard. Draw a facial expression on each one of the sides using the Feelings Template. Cut out and put the dice together.

### Materials needed:

- Feelings Ball
- Feelings Cards
- Feelings Dice
- One or two hats

### Instructions:

1. Sit in a circle. Tell the children that today they will learn about emotions and feelings. Holding the feelings ball, tell the class how you feel. Tell them that the ball will pass around, so that each of them can say how they feel. Pass the ball around the circle until all children have had the chance to say how they feel. Take note on the different feelings that come up. Ask them to remember and name all the different types of feelings that were mentioned.
2. Tell them that there are many different types of feelings, and bring out the Feelings Cards and spread them out in the centre of the circle. Ask them if they know the feelings on the cards, going through each card one by one. Introduce any new feelings they are not familiar with by using examples of situations they might encounter (i.e. when our mother or father reads us a story; when we go to the beach; when we take a bath; when our friend does not want to play with us; when they make us our favourite food, etc.). Allow them to say the different feelings they might have for these situations, highlighting that we can have different tastes (i.e. "going to the



beach makes me feel happy because its fun" or "going to the beach makes me feel angry because I do not like to get dirty in the sand"). Invite them to imitate the facial expressions on the different card (Can you act sad? Can you act happy? Can you act surprised? Etc.)

Age adaptation note: For children 5-6, you can introduce new feelings such as bored, anxious, silly, thankful, relaxed, curious, etc. For children 3-4, you might prefer to introduce the Feelings Cards first, and then pass around the Feelings Ball.

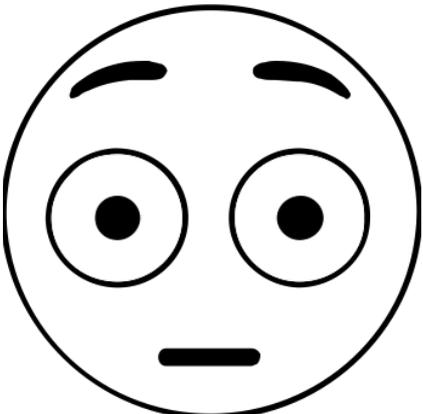
3. Ask them which feelings they think makes us smile/laugh and which feelings they think makes us want to frown/cry (maybe some feelings do not make us want to either laugh nor cry). They can name the different feelings and try out different facial/body expressions. You can propose a facial/body expression that they can imitate, but also invite them to propose their own if they wish.
4. Ask them about crying: When do we cry? Is it OK to cry? Can we think of moments when we feel like crying? Address any preconceived stereotypes they might have about crying if necessary (ie. only girls cry; it is not OK to cry; boys don't cry, etc.). Ask them about laughing: What makes us laugh? Can they think about things that are funny and make them laugh? Tell them that feelings are very important and that they help us talk to each other and be respectful to each other and to ourselves. Tell them that sometimes those feelings make us laugh, or maybe cry, and that this maybe gives us an idea of what we like and what we don't.
5. Bring out the Feelings Dice (you can make more than one and split the class into groups if necessary) and ask them to roll the dice. Whatever feeling the dice lands on they have to say moments or situations which they relate to that feeling (i.e. if the dice lands on "sad" they have to say "I am sad when..." and so on).
6. Tell them that now they will play a game called "An order is an order". Explain that one of them will wear a hat, and that meanwhile they are wearing the hat they can give the others instructions and that the others have to follow those instructions. Put on the hat and give an example: "Sit down (they all should sit down). Stand up (they all should stand up). Touch your head..." Ask for a volunteer or pick a child. You can do this with the entire group, or divide the group in two (using two hats). Let different children take turns at wearing the hat.
7. Sit back in a circle and ask them how they felt during the game (you can spread out the Feelings Cards on the floor to help them connect with the different feelings): "How does it feel to be in a position of power/authority?" Ask them why they felt that way: what they liked, what they did not like. Ask them about how it felt to wear the hat, and how it felt to follow the orders. Which orders were fun and which orders were not, etc...
8. Invite them to share different moments when they have to follow orders that they do not like: in the playground, in the class, in their homes, at the doctor's, etc... Ask them how they feel about following those orders, and reflect with them if it is important to follow these orders or not, and what happens if we do and if we don't. Help them reflect about how they can address, or how they can express their feelings respectfully in order to care for themselves and for others. Explain that we can tell others when we feel "good", and also when we feel "bad" (i.e. I feel happy when we play together... I feel hurt if you hit me..." etc.)



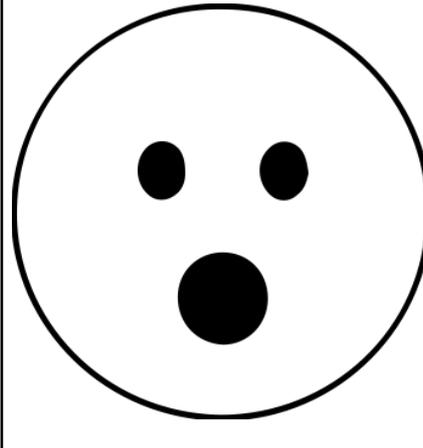
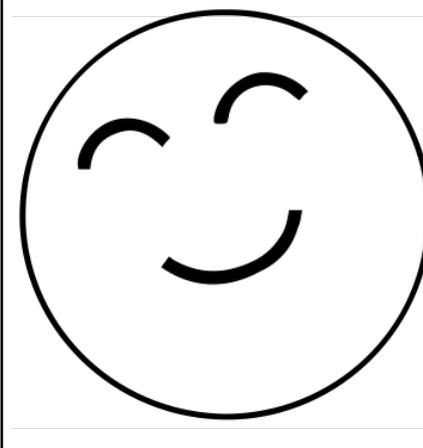
**Follow-up activities:**

- Make the “Feelings ball” a daily routine. Once a day, find a moment where children can say how they feel. As the time goes by, you can introduce new and more complex feelings.
- “Feel and tell”: You can use this activity any time and in many different ways. Invite the children to make a drawing of an emotion (an emotion they like or feel connected to at the moment, or just any emotion they feel like drawing). Tell them that they are free to draw a face, a landscape, an object or shape, a person or anything/anyone that they feel connects them with that emotion. Invite them to use as many colours as they feel like using. You can also invite them to use in their drawing any newly learnt content in class (i.e. Holidays, family, food, sports, etc.). After they finish, ask them to sit in a circle and talk about their drawing and how they feel.

**Note for teachers:** When conflict arises among children (for example, in relation to sharing or hitting, etc.) invite them to solve it out by telling each other how they feel. You can use the Feelings Cards to help them out and make conflict a learning experience.

Feelings Flashcards Template		
		
Worried	Sad	Angry
		
Embarrassed	Nervous	Ill



		
Tired	Scared	Surprised
		
Excited	Happy	Loved



## 10. Safety Empathy

Theme(s): Health, body

Overview: Empathy and learning how to care for ourselves and others is a basic skill to safeguard children's physical and emotional health.

### Objectives:

- Identify areas and objects of the classroom and the school we should be careful with.
- Experience working in groups to care for ourselves and others.
- Talk about and experience ways of caring for each group member's safety, taking into account the diversity in terms of abilities within the group.
- Foster a caring attitude for each group member's safety.
- Talking about feelings in relation to caring for ourselves and for others.

### Preparation:

- This activity does not require preparation.

### Materials needed:

- Images of people with minor injuries (to choose the pictures follow the instructions for choosing material describes in the "How to use this handbook section")
- Large pieces of paper (about 1x1 meters) for each group of 5 students.
- Music.

### Instructions:

1. Sit in a circle. Introduce the topic: how to take care of ourselves and of others. Tell them, that in order to take care of ourselves and of others the first step is to be aware of our surroundings. Show the kids some pictures of people with minor injuries (cuts, bruises, etc.) and together discuss about what you see and if they have ever experienced similar injuries (also in which circumstances). Commenting the images allows to introduce important safety issues (What can happen if we fall in the water? How do we protect ourselves from drowning? Etc.) Address any questions concerning functional diversity that might arise.
2. Ask them to stand up and invite them to look around the class for anything that they think might hurt them if they are not careful (they can trip and fall, if there is a sink in class and water drips they can slip, if they throw a ball in the classroom they might hurt someone, etc.). Take the children around school so that they can identify places they should be careful with and how they should act around these areas (e.g. steps, schoolyard railing, school yard drains and drain wells, etc.).
3. Go back to class and make groups of 5 children. Choose one child in each group, and explain to them that you will put music on. When the music starts, they all have to dance and move around class. When the music stops, the child that was chosen will yell "I am falling!" and the rest of the group has to prevent him/her from falling (e.g. by tending their hand for the child to hang onto, by forming a safety net with their hands, etc.). Ask them to take turns "falling". After finishing the game, sit in a circle and ask them what they have tried and how they felt.
4. Make new groups of 5. Ask each group to stand on a big piece of paper so that all children can fit on the piece of paper. Tell them that this is their raft, and that their objective is to get to the other side of the river without leaving anyone behind. They have to be careful not to fall. There



are crocodiles in the water! If anyone of the group falls from the raft (by stepping outside the paper) the entire group loses and has to sit down. Ask them to sit on the raft and put music on. When the music stops, tell them that a crocodile has bitten off a piece of the raft (and rip off a piece of the paper from each group). They must rearrange themselves to fit in this smaller size raft. Put the music on again, and repeat this procedure. Every time someone from the group steps out of the raft, ask the group to sit down until there is only one group left.

5. Repeat the game, but this time blind fold one person in a group, tie the hands of another child in another group, tie the feet from a child in another group, etc. so that each group has a member who is functionally diverse.
6. Invite the children to sit in a circle and ask them how they felt, what was easy and difficult, how they were able to help each other, how was the first raft game different than the second raft game, etc.



## 11. Washing hands

Theme(s): Health, body

Overview: Teaching hand washing hygiene to children is a global effort. Hand washing habits especially before eating, after using the toilet and after playing is a key preventive measure to avoid getting ill and spreading germs.

### Objectives:

- Teach and encourage hand washing habits among the children.
- Learn and experience how different cultures eat and use eating utensils.

### Preparation:

- Previously, ask the children to bring a prepared plate from home.

### Materials needed:

- Different eating utensils: forks, spoons, bread, chopsticks, etc. (bring enough so that all children can try using different utensils, or you can also previously ask them to bring them from home).
- The video "Do the global hand washing dance" by UNICEF <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=825gGELjB98>
- Pictures of people eating in different ways (using a fork, using their hands, etc...).

### Instructions:

- Sit in a circle and show the children different images of people eating in different ways. Ask them how they usually eat.
- Ask them: "What should be do before eating and why?" The teacher and children discuss about the importance of washing our hands before eating. Children pantomime the process of washing their hands. Remind them that if they are using running water, they should only leave the water running at the beginning to wet their hands and then at the end to rinse.
- Show the video "Do the global hand washing dance" to the children and encourage them to dance to the video following the hand washing instructions in the choreography.
- Invite the children to wash their hands remembering the steps: palms, nails, fingers and wrists.
- Ask them to take out the food they have brought from home and lay out the different utensils.
- Encourage them to try the different foods using different utensils: with bread, with their hands, etc.
- Invite them to wash their hands after they have finished.

Note for the teacher: Make sure you have informed yourself of any food allergy the children may have, or any diet preferences (vegetarian, vegan, etc.).

### Follow-up activity:

- In small groups of 2-3 the children create posters showing why/when/how to wash our hands. Display the posters around the class.



## 12. Healthy Snacks

Theme(s): Health, body

Overview: Eating is not just about the nutritional quality of the ingredients, but it also includes social, aesthetic, and psychological aspects which are closely related to culture.

### Objectives:

- Explore new flavours from different cultures and talk about them.
- Create snacks with ingredients from different cultures.
- Create their own recipes using ingredients from different cultures.
- Prepare a variety of healthy snacks including ingredients of different cultures.

### Preparation:

- In a previous lesson, ask the children what type of snacks they usually eat. For snacks that are different from the local cuisine, find out which ingredients are used in making them. If the child does not know, you can talk to the parents to find out about the ingredients needed and where these ingredients can be found in the city (supermarkets, markets, health shops, etc.). If there is little variety in the types of snacks, find out which ingredients of different cultural cuisines can be found in the local market.
- Ask parents and caretakers about any children in class who might follow a vegetarian or vegan diet, to make sure the children can be properly included in the activity.
- Ask parents and caretakers about any children in class who might have food allergies.
- Prepare a picnic basket for every group of 4 children with different ingredients in each basket.

### Materials needed:

- Ingredients from different cultures (e.g. soy sauce, coconut milk, pineapple, fajitas, pitta bread, feta cheese, Edam cheese, sea weed, corn bread, peanut butter, white loaf bread, raisins, chocolate...). Make sure you gather ingredients so that there are plenty bread and cereal, plenty fruit and vegetable, some protein (not all animal based), and very few fats and sugars.
- Picnic baskets with different ingredients.
- Cut outs, flashcards or dummies of different types of foods (get creative!)

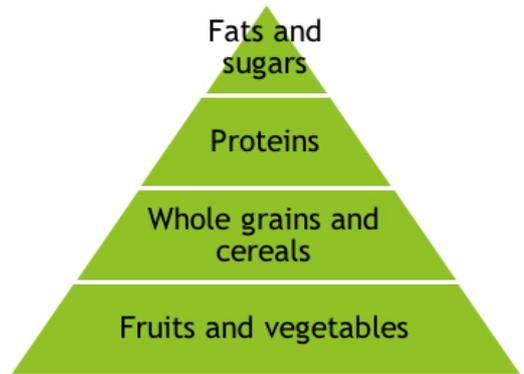


### Instructions:

1. Ask the children to wash their hands. The children sit in a circle. The teacher places different ingredients in the middle of the circle and asks the children to group the food in four groups: "Which ingredients do you think are cereals, fruits and vegetables, proteins, or fats and sugars?" Let them group freely, then discuss the way they have grouped the food and why they think that. Make any corrections necessary in the food grouping. Using the ingredients as well as the flashcards or dummies of foods, introduce the different types of foods that go in each group, why they are necessary and how often we should eat each type of food:
  - We need **plenty** of fruits and vegetables because they give us vitamins and minerals which helps us to not get ill (i.e. tomatoes, oranges, broccoli, etc.).



- We need **plenty** of whole grains and cereals because they give us energy and fibre for our digestive system (i.e. wheat, oats, rice, rye, barley, millet, corn, bread, pasta and noodles).
- We need **some** protein because they help our muscles and bones stay strong (i.e. animal-based products, beans and peas, eggs, processed soy products, nuts, and seeds).
- We need **a little** fat and sugar because they give us energy quickly and helps our body absorb important vitamins (i.e. oils and butters, chocolates and some sweets).



2. The teacher encourages the children to talk about the ingredients and name them. Discusses where these ingredients come from, where they can be found in the city, and encourages children who are familiar with these ingredients to talk about them and how they use them in their daily diet. The children are encouraged to try the different ingredients, and discuss which flavours they like and why.
3. Make groups of four children and give each group a picnic basket with different ingredients. Each group has to try the ingredients and create healthy snacks by mixing and matching their ingredients from the different countries. Special care is to be taken in the presentation of their snacks.
4. All snacks are presented and the teacher encourages the children to reflect on the experiences of the activity: What did you like best about the activity? Which ingredients did you discover today? Would you like to include any new ingredient in your daily diet? Which snack did you like best? Why? How did you feel when you presented your snacks? When creating a snack what is the most important thing concerning the choice of ingredients? Etc.
5. Invite the children to wash their hands if necessary.





## 13. Bathing

Theme(s): Health, body

Overview: In this activity children will learn about body parts, and keeping ourselves clean and about different ways in which we can bathe.



Link: <https://youtu.be/OAsuWmuAbKY>

### Objectives:

- Identify and name body parts.
- Suggest ways we keep our body clean.
- Discover ways people in different cultures bathe.
- Act out a bathing scene from different cultures.
- Take part in a group activity of bathing a doll.

### Preparation:

- Gather all necessary material.
- If necessary, inform parents that students will be using water during the lesson and ask for children to bring an additional set of clothes on the day of the lesson.

### Materials needed:

- The video: "This is how we take a bath" from Sesame Street (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9copegNCJ2I>)
- Sleeping glasses or eye covers (one per pair of students)





- Four dolls (use anatomically correct, multiracial, and functionally diverse dolls of at least 30 cm in length and suitable for bathing).
- Four sets of soaps, shampoos, sponges, towels, jugs with water, buckets to bathe the doll in.

### Instructions:

1. The children work in pairs: one child wears the sleeping glasses and the other extends a body part for the first child to identify and name through touching. The child with the sleeping glasses must carefully touch his/her partner and name the different parts. Help them with the vocabulary if necessary. Invite the children whose bodies are being recognized to clearly state which parts they do not want to have touched. Change roles.



2. Once they have finished recognizing the parts of the body, invite them to sit in a circle. Introduce the topic: bathing and cleaning our bodies. Ask them which body parts they recognized during the previous step, and if they know how we clean our different body parts (our feet, our hands, our face, etc.). Ask them about bathing: How often do you bathe? Why is bathing important? What do we use when we bathe (soap, shampoo, towels...)? Etc. Ask them how many ways of bathing they know. Ask them: "Do we all bathe in the same way?" Show them the video "This is how we take a bath". Ask them: How many different ways of bathing have you seen? Which ways of bathing have you tried? Where do you think these forms of bathing are common? Address the different preconceptions they might have about what they have seen in the video (for example: children might comment that outdoors bathing, like bathing in the river, is linked to lack of resources, rather than to climate and/or cultural traditions).



**Child quote:** "They are bathing using cups, but cups are for drinking."

3. Divide the class in four groups (maximum 6 children per group). Give each group a doll. They must name the doll. Address any concern within the group with the name.
4. Tell them that each group has to bathe their doll. They must distribute the tasks amongst them; each member of the group has a specific task to carry out. No member is allowed to overstep into the other's task unless they are asked to do so by the other child with the prior task. Give each group a bathing set and a working stand where there is a bucket to bathe the doll in, soap, shampoo, a sponge, a towel and a jug with water. Each member of the group is responsible for one task (if the groups have less than 6 children, some children will get more than one task):
- Undressing the doll
  - Holding the doll carefully in the bucket and rinsing with water



- Washing the doll using soap and sponge
- Shampooing the doll's hair/head
- Drying off the doll with a towel
- Dressing the doll



5. Once all groups are finished, ask them to leave their dolls on a chair, and sit back in a circle and talk with them about the experience.

**Note for the teacher:** During the closing of this activity it is a good opportunity to address the concept of behaviour in relation to our bodies. Ask them which doll behaved the best and why. Address the concept they might have concerning “proper behaviour” and question that “proper behaviour” is not necessarily linked to “doing as we are told”. Introduce the notion that proper behaviour is also speaking up when we do not feel comfortable with others touching us, or with touching others. Ask them in what situations they have to behave by doing what they are being told, and guide them in accordance to their comments.

**Extra activity:**

- Bathing pantomime game: You can use this game to reinforce concepts learnt during the lesson. Sit in a semicircle. Invite a child to go to the front and make a pantomime of a bathing procedure they have learnt (e.g. shampooing hair/ placing soap on sponge/ drying water off body). The other children try to guess the action.
- You can use this lesson as an introduction to activities related water conservation and environmentally friendly habits. You can use this story for inspiration or as a pretext: “Bathing in India compared to in USA” (<https://lauraschetter.com/2015/07/22/bathing-in-india-compared-to-in-usa-the-start-of-a-rural-water-inquiry/>), as well as videos and other resources found online such as “The Sesame Street Water Song” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwpHMPH-WbM>), Water Conservation for Kids (<http://www.thewaterpage.com/water-conservation-kids.htm>), and the Water Use it Wisely page (<http://wateruseitwisely.com/kids/>).

**Note for the teacher:** Liquid soap works better with small children because it is easier to use on a sponge than a bar of soap.



## 14. There are Places Where...

Theme(s): Health, body

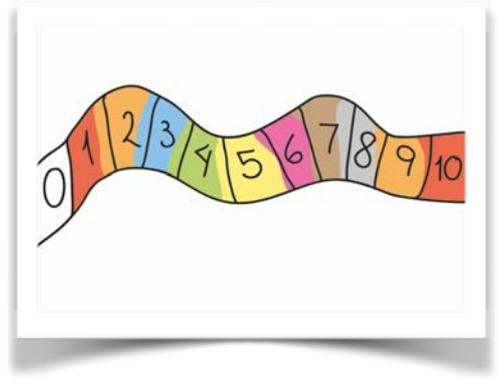
Overview: This board game introduces different hygiene habits that are common across the globe. It's a fun way for children to learn about the importance of personal hygiene taking diversity into account. This game can be adapted to many other topics as well!

### Objectives:

- Introduce and reinforce personal hygiene habits.
- Learn about different ways of keeping ourselves clean which are common across the globe.
- Address gender stereotypes concerning personal hygiene.

### Preparation:

- Print out in colour, cut and laminate the flashcards from the "Hygiene Flashcards Template". Make as many sets as needed so that each group of maximum 4 students has a set.
- On an A3 size cardboard draw a board game like shown in the picture. Make as many boards as needed so that each group of maximum 4 students has a set.



**Age adaptation note:** For children 3-4 you can use less flashcards and in the board only boxes from 1-10. For children 5-6 you can use the whole set of flashcards and use two cardboards put together to make a longer board with the numbers 1-20.

### Materials needed:

- The Hygiene flashcards (one for each group)
- A board game (one for each group)
- A dice (one for each group)
- A counter for each child in class

### Instructions:

1. Sit in a circle. Tell the children that you will play a game called "There are Places Where". Show them a flashcard (or you can also project the images on the screen so that they can see them better). Ask them: "What do you see in the image? What do you think this is for? Have you ever used this? When? How do you feel when you see this image? Etc..." Answer any questions they might have about the hygiene habit, or the different ways in which it can be done. Ask them about their hygiene habits, and if they would like to try out new ways of keeping clean (for example: maybe bathing in the river, or using a miswak, etc.). Go through all the cards until the children are familiar with the different personal hygiene habits: brushing our teeth, using the toilet, cleaning ourselves after using the toilet, washing our hands, bathing, washing our clothes and combing and/or styling our hair.
2. Remind the children that there are many ways of keeping our bodies clean, and that in many places in the world there are different ways of taking care of ourselves and of others. Remind



them there is no way which is better than the other, as long as we have proper habits (learn how to use the hygiene objects properly, do it regularly, etc.).

3. Ask the children about their personal hygiene habits: "Do you brush your teeth every day? How many times? Do you wash your hands every day? How many times? Who combs their hair? Does someone help you? Who washes your cloth? Etc." Address any gender stereotypes they might have in terms of hygiene (i.e. if they say girls need to brush their hair more than boys, ask them about boys with long hair and girls with short hair; etc.). Ask them what hygiene habits they like the most and which they like the least.

**Age adaptation note:** For children 3-4 use you might want to use less flashcards.

4. Divide the class in groups of maximum 4 children per group. Give each group a set of Hygiene flashcards, a dice, a board and counters. Show them how to play the game:
  - Place all counters in the box 0.
  - Shuffle the cards.
  - Throw the dice to see who goes first. The person who throws the highest number starts.
  - Version 1: Put the stack of cards facing down next to the board game. The first player throws the dice, and walks his/her counter to the given number. The player has to pick a card from the stack without having the others see the card. They have to describe their card to the other players (they can use words or only gestures). The other players have to guess what the card is. Once they guess the card the player can show the card to the rest of the children for them to see. The next player throws the dice (whomever is sitting on the left of the first player).
  - Version 2: Put one card facing down on all even numbers. The first player throws the dice, and walks his/her counter to the given number. If there is a card in that number, they have to describe their card to the other players (they can use words or only gestures). The other players have to guess what the card is. Once they guess the card the player can show the card to the rest of the children for them to see. The next player throws the dice (whomever is sitting on the left of the first player).
  - Version 3 (only for 5-6 year olds): Put the stack of cards facing down next to the board game. The first player throws the dice, and walks his/her counter to the given number. The player has to pick a card from the stack without having the others see the card. They have to describe their card to the other players (they can use words or only gestures). The other players have to guess what the card is. If they guess the card, all players advance one step. If they don't guess the card, all players go back one step. The player can show the card to the rest of the children for them to see. The next player throws the dice (whomever is sitting on the left of the first player).
  - The player who reaches to the last box first wins the game.
5. Once they have finished playing, invite them to sit back in a circle and ask them what they have learnt, how they have felt, etc.



**Extra activities:**

- You can use the Hygiene Flashcards to play memory. Place all cards facing down. The child must turn around two cards. If the two cards match (for example: it shows two ways of brushing your teeth) then the player keeps the pair and gets another turn. When the player misses (the two cards do not match) it's the next person's turn.
- You can play the "There are Places Where..." board game with many different topics. Make flashcard set for clothes, foods, sports, etc., so that the children can learn traditions from all over the globe with an intercultural and gender perspective.

Hygiene Flashcards Template	
	
<p>There are places where we use a miswak stick from the Arak tree to <b>brush our teeth</b>, and which naturally has fluoride and other elements which keep our mouths fresh and clean.</p>	<p>There are places where we use a toothbrush and toothpaste to <b>brush our teeth</b>.</p>

	
<p>There are places where we <b>sit to use the toilet</b>.</p>	<p>There are places where we <b>squat to use the toilet</b>.</p>



### Hygiene Flashcards Template



There are places where we use the toilet **outdoors in the open.**



There are places where we use the toilet **indoors in a bathroom.**



There are places we use **toilet paper to keep ourselves clean** after using the toilet.



There are places we use **water to keep ourselves clean** after using the toilet.



In some places we can **wash our hands using running water** and soap to rub, rub rub!



In some places we **wash our hands using water kept in buckets** with some soap to rub, rub, rub!



### Hygiene Flashcards Template



In some places we **wash our clothes in the river**.



In some places we **wash our clothes in a laundry**.



In some places we **bathe indoors**, for example, taking a shower.



In some places we **bathe outdoors**, for example, in the river.



We can **comb our hair**.



We can **style our hair**.



## 15. Private parts

Theme(s): Gender and Sexuality / Health, body

Overview: According to EU statistics, one out of every five children in Europe are victims of some sort of sexual violence. Learning about private parts from a gender and culturally diverse focus is essential for our children's wellbeing.

### Objectives:

- Introduce the concept of "private parts" as to the genitals and their real names in order to make kids feel comfortable talking about their bodies.
- Encourage children to disclose when something worrisome or uncomfortable is happening to them concerning their "private parts".
- Make children aware that what is considered acceptable/unacceptable in relation to how we cover our private parts varies amongst cultures (what it is considered obvious for one person might not be the same for another person).

### Preparation:

- Read and prepare the pre-text presented in this activity.
- We recommend revising the material provided by The Underwear Rule project ([www.theunderwearrule.org](http://www.theunderwearrule.org))
- We recommend the reading of the article by Helen Noh Ahn and Neil Gilbert, "Cultural Diversity and Sexual Abuse Prevention," *Social Service Review* 66, no. 3 (Sep., 1992): 410-427.

### Materials needed:

- Images of people wearing different outfits: choose pictures which show diversity regarding how private parts are covered (please follow the "How are the materials for the activities selected?" text in the "How to use this Handbook" section).
- Genitalia template printed in an A3 format or drawn in a big cardboard (provided at the end of the activity)
- Private part flashcards
- "Child with vulva" and "Child with penis" template (provided at the end of the activity) – print out enough so that about half the children in class have one type and half of the class the other.

### Instructions:

1. Ask the children to sit in a circle. Start telling the story of "A and Z the Aliens":

*Once upon a time on a very distant planet lived two small children called A and Z. One evening, A was looking at the stars with Z, when a very bright light flashed in the sky.*

*They closed their eyes because the light was so bright, and in a second all became dark.*

*A and Z opened their eyes. They looked around and realized they were in a very different and strange place. A and Z had arrived on the Earth, and they were standing in Jo's room.*

*They were very confused.*

*They heard a voice. They looked around to see where the voice was coming from. They saw someone approaching.*

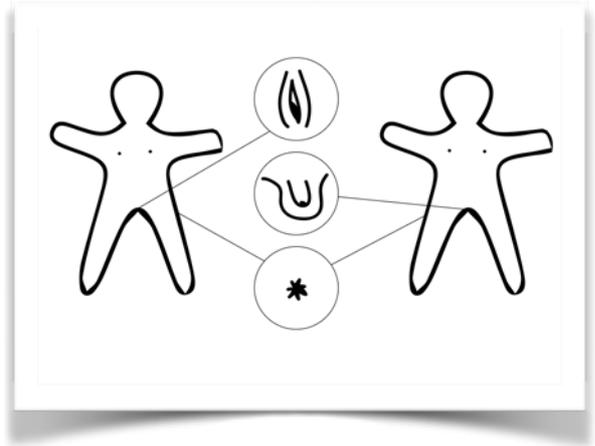
*"Who are you?" said Jo.*

*"Our names are A and Z, and I think we are lost", replied Z.*



*Suddenly, Jo realized that A and Z were naked!  
"Oh, no!" she said, "Why don't you have clothes on?"  
A and Z looked very confused. "What do you mean?" they said.  
"You know..." said Jo, "something to cover your private parts."  
"What are our private parts?" said A.*

2. Ask the children: "What are our private parts? How can we help A and Z who are now on Earth?" Let the children comment on what private parts are and on how they can cover up. After the children have commented, take out the Genital Template and show the children about our private parts: "Some girls (but not all girls) are born with a vulva. Some boys (but not all boys) are born with a penis. All of us have an anus. These are our private parts. In some places, our breasts and other parts of our body are also private parts. What does it mean that some parts are private?"



Address any question or concern they might bring up and help them complete the answer:

- Private parts need to be covered
  - We cannot touch them unless we are by ourselves
  - We cannot touch other people's private parts, child or adult
  - Others cannot touch our private parts (except in some cases like the doctor or our caretakers, but always as long as we feel comfortable)
3. Tell the children that they will see pictures to see how different people cover their private parts differently depending on where they are, their religions, their traditions, etc. Show them the different images and ask them to describe what they see, where the people are (on the beach, in the street, etc.), and what private parts they are covering (for example: the head, the breasts, the vulva, etc.). Address any question or concern they might have.
  4. Ask them about how they like to dress and cover their private parts. Tell them that now they will get the chance to dress A and Z so that they can cover up their private parts. Go back to the story about A and Z.

*Now A and Z know that in order to leave Jo's room to meet her family and friends and discover more about the Earth they need to cover their private parts.*

*"Jo, can you help us?"*

*"Yes, of course! I can lend you my clothes so that you can cover up! You can choose anything you like from the closet," replied Jo.*

*A and Z opened the closet and there were all kinds of clothes! Bikinis, scarfs, coats and hats, socks, and boot and shirts, and dresses and skirts, and pants and tennis shoes and all the kinds of clothes you can think of.*

*Z picked a shiny dress and was about to put it on when Jo tells him, "What are you doing! You cannot wear a dress! Dresses are for girls, and you have a penis, so you are a boy."*

*Z was very confused. "What do you mean?" Z asked Jo. "In the planet where we come from it does not matter if you have a penis or a vulva, you can still choose to be a boy or a girl, and wear anything that makes you happy."*



5. Tell the children we are going to help A and Z put on some clothes to cover up. Give each child a "Child" template so that about half the class has a "child with vulva" template and the other half "child with penis" template. Tell them that A is the child with a vulva, and Z is the child with the penis, but that they can be both a boy or a girl, and off course, they can wear any clothes they want. Ask them to draw and color clothes on their child and also to draw where they are (at the beach, at the house, etc.).
6. When they are finished, ask them to sit in a circle and present their alien child to the rest of the group explaining what they are wearing and where they are.

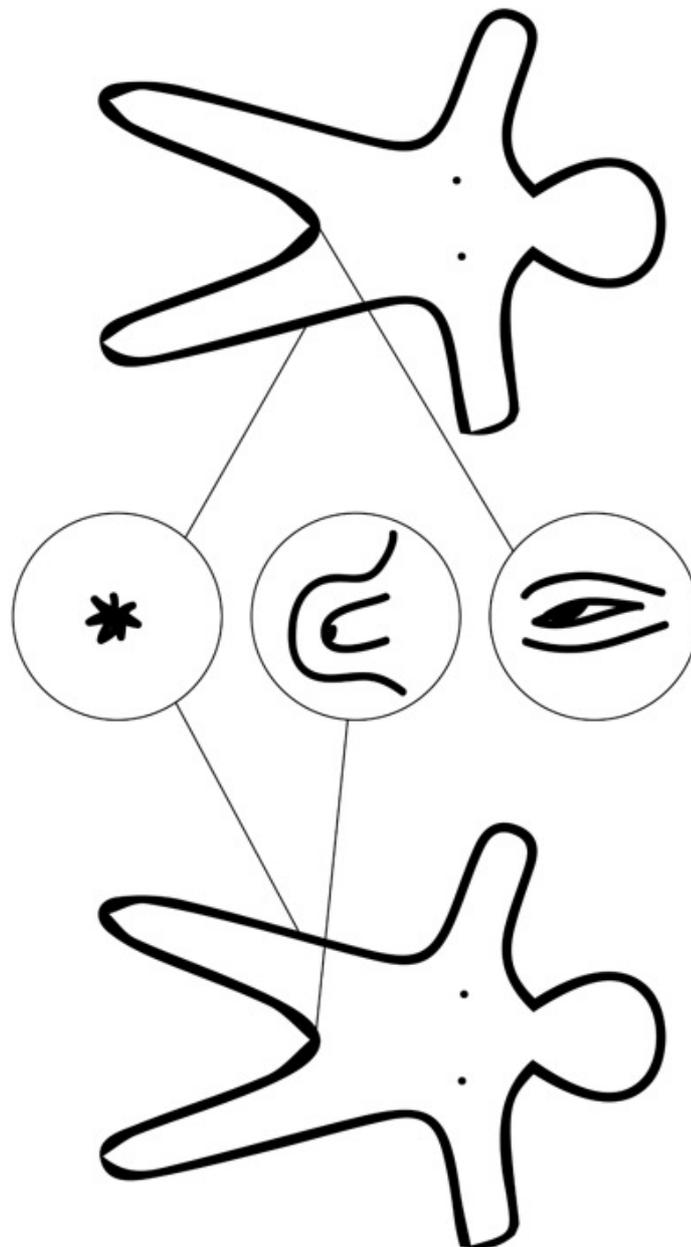
**Note for teacher:**

"Available data suggest that about 1 in 5 children in Europe are victims of some form of sexual violence. It is estimated that in 70% to 85% of cases, the abuser is somebody the child knows and trusts. Child sexual violence can take many forms: sexual abuse within the family circle, child pornography and prostitution, corruption, solicitation via Internet and sexual assault by peers" (**ONE in FIVE**, The Council of Europe Campaign to stop sexual violence against children). The Council of Europe has developed a program under the **ONE in FIVE** campaign called The Underwear Rule: "The Underwear Rule is a simple guide to help parents explain to children where others should not try to touch them, how to react and where to seek help. What is The Underwear Rule? It's simple: a child should not be touched by others on parts of the body usually covered by their underwear. And they should not touch others in those areas. It also helps explain to children that their body belongs to them, that there are good and bad secrets and good and bad touches." We recommend that teachers, parents and families become familiar with this method which includes a book and an animated video for children, downloadable material such as posters, and a guide for parents. All material is available in a broad range of languages and is available here: <http://www.underwearrule.org>.

However, it is important to take into account that family interactions vary and are particularly dependant on cultural norms. Physical contact among family members, sleeping arrangements and co-bathing, for example, are practices that might vary among ethnic groups (i.e. for a Korean couple it might be a sign of affection and care to co-bed with their child until he/she is about 4 or 5 years of age, but consider absolutely inappropriate to kiss in front of their children; for a Caucasian family it might be absolutely inappropriate to co-bed with children that age, but it is OK to display affection such as kissing in front of their child). It is important that sexual abuse prevention focuses on assertiveness training, but not necessarily on training that emphasizes autonomy or independence for children, since this might have side consequences in relation respect for diverse family patterns and interactions (For more information consult: Helen Noh Ahn and Neil Gilbert, "Cultural Diversity and Sexual Abuse Prevention," *Social Service Review* 66, no. 3 (Sep., 1992): 410-427.)

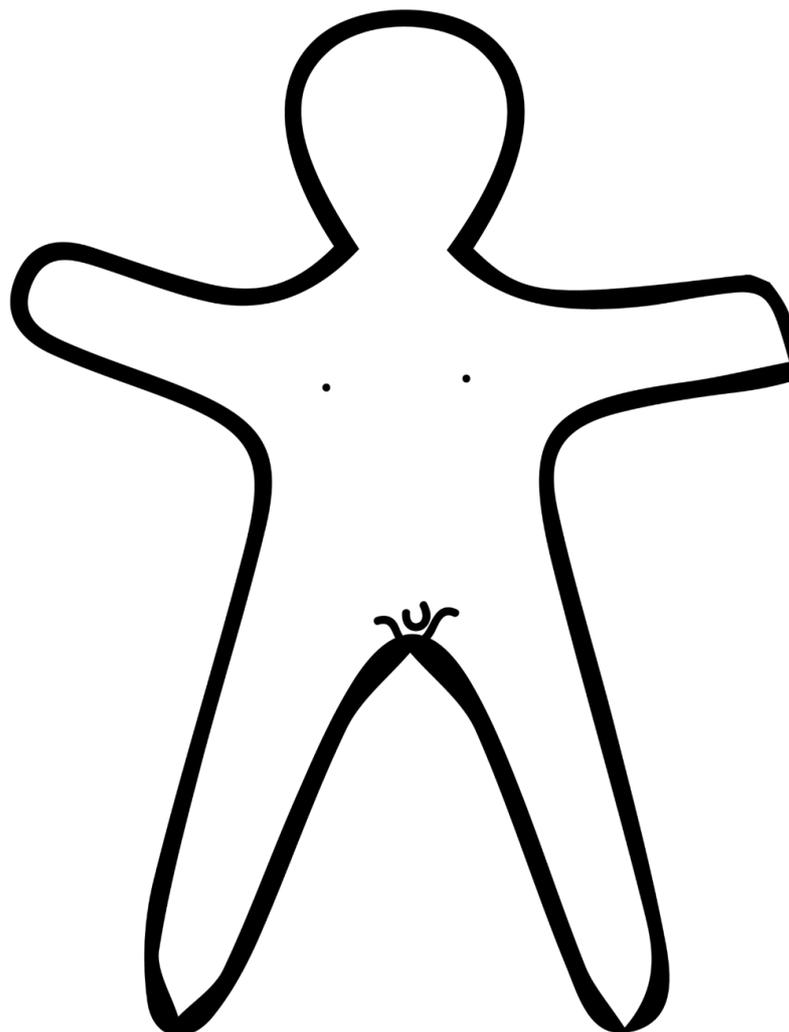


## Genitalia Template



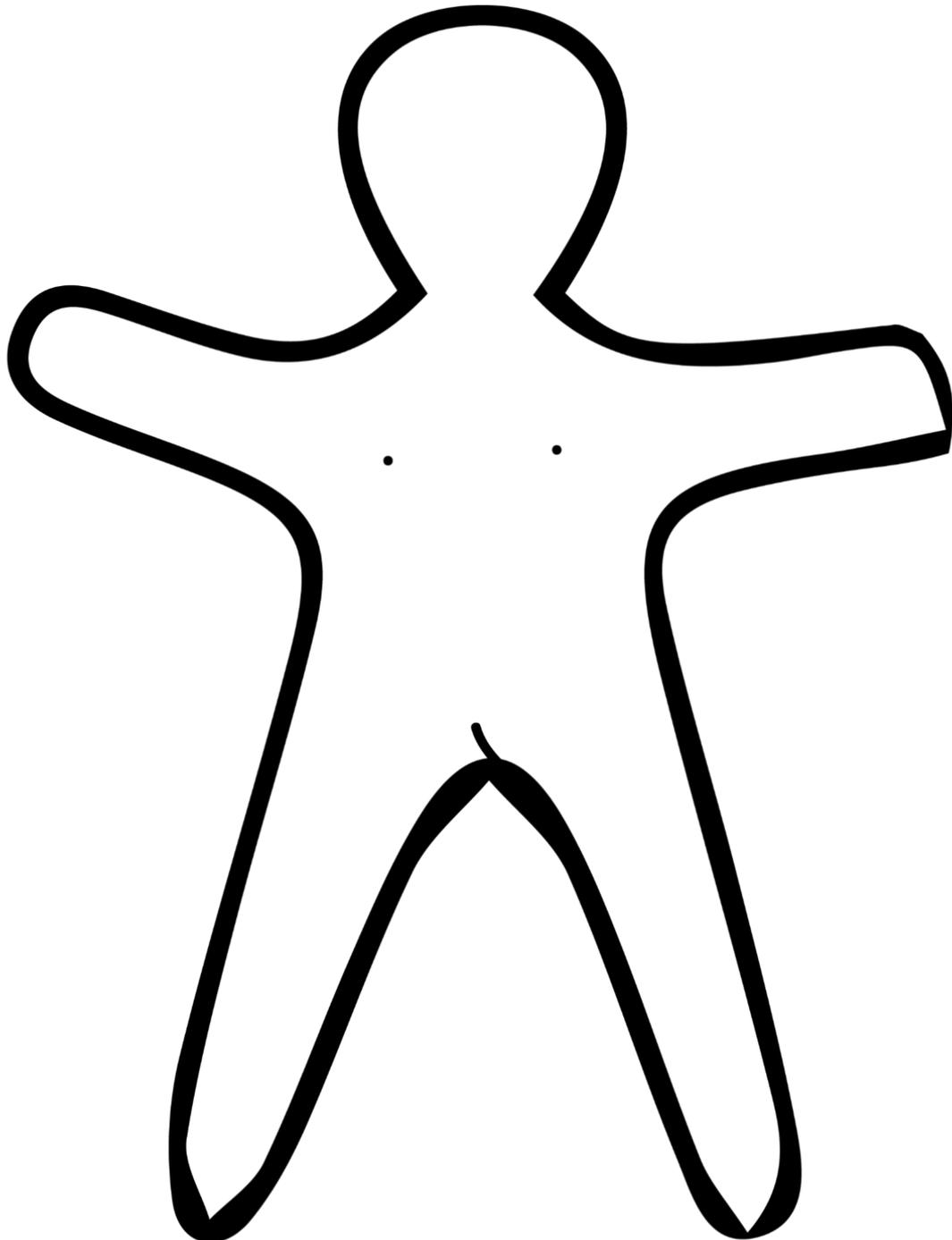


## Child with penis template





## Child with vulva template





### Private Parts Flashcards





## Background Text: Racism, Prejudice, Stereotypes – Adult and Child Theories

Most of the critical incidents we collected are related to some form of biases, preconceptions towards people of other groups – religious groups, nationalities, or even with a different gender identity. In this section we'll focus more specifically on those that are connected to stereotyping, racism, or prejudice, while the incidents dealing with a specific issue (religion, gender etc.) can be found in a dedicated chapter. Before we start, let us pin down one of the most important messages: the phenomenon of stereotypes, prejudice, concerns everybody, not just particularly closed-minded people. Such intergroup biases, distortions in our perceptions are a consequence of being human. But this is not a reason to let things happen: stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination have a serious impact on others, influence not only the way adults or children treat each other, but also how successful children will be in school.

**Stereotypes:** refer to the application of one's own **ideas**, associations, and expectations towards a group or an individual member of that group. There is a judgment on the person based on his/her group membership, which can be either positive or negative. Stereotypes are a form of scheme, naïve theory which make the complexity of the world easier to cope with. Fiske (2010)

**Prejudice:** is present when our **emotional reaction** to a person is solely based on our feelings towards the social / cultural group of that person. An individual behaves in a prejudicial manner when he or she has an emotional reaction to another individual or group of individuals based on **preconceived** ideas about the individual or group (Fiske, 2010).

“**Racism**<sup>1</sup> is a form of intergroup reaction (including thoughts, feelings and behaviours) that systematically advantages one's own group and/or disadvantages another group defined by racial difference. (Dovidio et al 2013). The ideology underlying racist practices often includes the thought that humans can be subdivided into distinct groups that are different in their social behavior or skills, capacities and that these differences can be traced back to genetics (they are inherited characteristics). Based on these differentiations the groups can then be ranked as inferior or superior.

**Discrimination:** Discrimination is the denial of equal rights based on prejudices and stereotypes (Fiske, 2010). Discrimination differs from prejudice and stereotyping, in that it is not a belief, but rather the application of beliefs (Fiske, 2010), an unequal distribution of rights and privileges.

### Some definitions

#### Where do stereotypes and prejudice come from?

Interestingly, conceptions and attitudes that will lead to a negative bias towards other people, do not require any bad intention to form, instead they are consequences of automatisms in our perception and thinking processes, and of the basic social motives of belonging, and self-enhancement.

<sup>1</sup> See the chapter on “Academic Consequences” in Spears Brown 2015



Stereotypes are schemes related to our capacity of generalization and classification, both important skills in our cognitive development (e.g. being able to differentiate good fruit from poison). Furthermore, belonging to social groups is a crucial need for all humans, and we're also motivated to have a good positive image of our groups<sup>2</sup>. This implies that not only do we look for the company of people similar to us, merely because we enjoy the comfort zone, but we are also motivated to occasionally positively discriminate our group. Negative attitudes do not merely emerge based on visual markers of difference, nationality or religion, but basically along any line of differentiation. People may feel some groups can pose a symbolic threat to their sense of morality (e.g. the "deviant", those with different sexual orientation or family arrangement can threaten their preferred version of sexual behavior or family) Belief in the justice of the system can be threatened by the sight of innocent people who suffer<sup>3</sup>. Developing negative attitudes and stereotypes can act as a protection against these symbolic threats. Accordingly poor people, unemployed or homeless are labels that attract substantial negative stereotypes and prejudice, leading to the observation that social class or poverty may generate more cultural distance than divisions of nationality<sup>4</sup>. At the same time, some (not all!) social groups that had a very negative judgment 60 years ago (eg. Black people in the US) seem to be better evaluated in the present. The reality, however, is not that racism has disappeared but rather the cultural norm of not expressing such attitudes has gained some ground. Underneath the neutral or positive discourse, the negative attitudes can persist. This indirect modern type of racism is well illustrated by the Implicit Attitude Tests: even people who do not have explicit racist attitudes will display bias towards the other: in the US approximately 70-80% of the white population is characterized by implicit modern racism (Fiske 2004). These non-conscious beliefs can influence our actions, potentially leading to discrimination.

### **What counts as racism or xenophobia?**

*We played with the children a game called "Who's afraid of the black man". When Joana, a black girl told about it happily at home, the parents were outraged and complained with the director.*

*When a class-mate told David that red was ugly and his red pants were ugly, following his mother's advice to defend himself talking about another color, he retorted that red was nice but black was ugly. The parents of the little girl took it as a racist remark.*

Blatant manifestations of racism and xenophobia are easy to screen out and the majority has learnt to censor them, but there is a vast grey zone of comments such as "the Blacks are really good at sports" where people are more hesitant, as to whether or not these comments are acceptable. Indeed, a generalizing comment does not become less generalizing – or even less racist – merely because it is positive.

Sometimes the comments understood as racist do not refer to the group in question, but the mere juxtaposition of a negative word and the color triggers an attribution of racism.

<sup>2</sup> Luckily this does not imply that we are blind to all critique. We can maintain a slightly negative stereotype about our group (« we Spanish tend to be lazy ») but mitigating it with comparison (« but at least we're kinder and more generous than the diligent Germans. »)

<sup>3</sup> This is one of the psychological motivations for an avoidant strategy towards the reception of asylum seekers. It is easier to think that they are potentially criminals and terrorists

<sup>4</sup> For a deeper exploration of this issue see the concept of intersectionality [https://web.archive.org/web/20120223222021/http://www.caen.iufm.fr/colloque\\_iartem/pdf/knudsen.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20120223222021/http://www.caen.iufm.fr/colloque_iartem/pdf/knudsen.pdf)



For instance children the age of David can distinguish people by markers of ethnicity, but do not have yet a conception of skin color as a permanent attribute of people (Hirschfeld 1995). In his world the black color on Janet's arm is just another color.

European popular culture, folk songs, games abound with references that today seem archaic, or even racist at times. The Dutch tradition of 'Black Peter' triggered a serious debate a couple of years ago for depicting an ambiguous black figure in the entourage of Saint Nicholas, black-faced Morris dancers are equally seen as problematic in the UK. If some of these traditions are indeed rooted in a colonialist paradigm, or are reminiscences of constructions of the figure of the other, many of them stem from historical contexts, which are totally different than what we would first think. The game "Who's afraid of the black man" refers to the period of the great plague, and is probably a game invented to make fun of, to trick the fatal illness. But this historic past is silent in the game, and if we ask random European residents what the name can refer to, they will more likely think of dark skinned men.

### Why do members of minorities seem oversensitive?

A mother told me that I was xenophobic and that's the reason why I let her child pee in his pants. I never expected this reaction and was really feeling bad and shocked.

Experiencing repeated episodes of racism or discrimination has a toll on the individual. Research has identified a number of psychological effects (e.g. Pascoe, 2009; Spears Brown, 2015) and some physiological consequences as well (e.g. Harrell et al 2003). Moreover, such experiences also have an impact on the attributions and interpretations that one would make in the future. Stigma consciousness – the extent to which people focus on the negative representation of their group – can induce disengagement from the domains or situations where they could disprove the negative stereotype. This is one of the explanations why women tend to engage less in disciplines where they are considered as inferior. Furthermore stigma consciousness makes people expect new situations of discrimination (Fiske, 2004; Pinel, 1999). In one of our incidents, a Muslim mother automatically supposes that the teacher did it on purpose to offer her son as toy a pig. Accordingly, attribution to discrimination or racism is not infrequent. What's more, it can become a type of self-defense strategy used in case of any negative feedback: in the situation above, the mother believes that it is not because the boy was careless that he peed in the pants, but because of the discriminatory intention of the teacher. At the same time the excessive use of the 'racist card' has a toll: responding negatively accusing others of xenophobia ultimately reinforces the negative stereotype.

### How to treat difference?

*In the situation "Shy or different", children don't want to hold the hand of the new classmate from Togo. The teachers don't interfere, in order not to "force" on children their interpretation of the event. Maybe they don't hold her hand because she's new and shy.*

*In another situation from Italy, "The Choir", a teacher wishes to give the lead role in a singing performance to a Romanian student to valorize her and display her integration. The colleague is concerned that the other parents would be jealous and gives the lead role to Italian children.*

How to deal with difference has been a key challenge for teachers ever since visible diversity started to appear in schools. In more homogeneous regions, where migrant or minority children are scarce,



the situations focus around one or two children, and the teachers are trying to figure out in which way they do less harm. The teachers in the two situations have taken opposite strategies. In “Choir”, one of the teachers wishes to compensate the lower status of the little girl by giving her a lead role. We don’t know whether or not this particular girl is good in singing, but we do know that the success of this enterprise precisely depends on it. If the girl sings well, the teacher will have succeeded and the little girl will be valorized both in her singing and her identity. However, if she does not sing so well the audience will think she’s been put in the lead role as compensation, not because she deserved it.

In “Shy or different”, the difference of skin color is not addressed explicitly by the teachers, nor do they try to change children’s habit of not holding Myriam’s hand. They think that any interference would highlight Myriam’s difference, and would create a forced dynamic in class. However, research (see below) has shown that in homogeneous environments children develop quite early the capacity to categorize according to physical markers and to make preference. Not interfering, we run the risk of allowing children to reinforce their already present stereotypes and attitudes.

### Should we talk about racism with children?

Adults often surround children with an aura of innocence, and in accordance we assume that they do not have the biases that adults have, they do not differentiate between children of different skin color, and are certainly not “racist” – only if they are taught so by adults. Partly as a safeguard of this assumed innocence, partly because these are indeed difficult issues to tackle, parents often adopt an avoidant attitude towards discussing prejudice or racism issues with the children, sometimes almost making a taboo of the subject. This is well illustrated by the a study in the United States where in reading together a book tackling race issues with their 4-5 years old children most (in particular white<sup>5</sup>) parents chose not to discuss race at all (Pahlke et al, 2012). However, recent research shows that children are not colorblind, that they do observe differences and intergroup dynamics. Research has also shown that when they are left without explanations, they make up their own: in a 2006 study in which American children were asked why all US presidents so far were white, 26% thought it was because it was illegal for black people to become president (Bigler, 2006). In one of our incidents, three-year-old Olivier thinks that his classmate’s skin is dirty (confusing skin color with dirt is a common misconception amongst white pre-schoolers - see Winkler, 2013)

Whether or not they will actively be taught, and quite independently from the parents, children learn to perceive differences, and make up their theories to explain what they see. If we want to influence the process, we cannot hide behind a myth of presumed innocence.

### Are children racist?

Hailey and Olson’s review collects evidence that, contrary to the popular belief of the color-blindness of children, infants learn to differentiate faces according to ethnicity already at 3 months: children raised in homogeneous environment will spend longer time looking at faces of people of their own ethnicity (the one they see more often). By 9 months of age, they become less sensitive to the features of other ethnicities to the point that they don’t seem to be able to distinguish them, only the faces they see more - a phenomenon called “perceptual narrowing”.

<sup>5</sup> There is a difference between Black and White parents in the likeliness to discuss ethnic identity: 48% of Black parents vs 12% of White parents chose to do so (Katz and Kofkin 1997)



These distinctions could be explained by gaining more or less expertise in the facial perception of different people, so the explanation is familiarity rather than preference, which is in line with the finding that 10-month olds accept toys equally from people of different ethnicities (they do make a distinction based on accents though).

Differentiation starts to appear in studies<sup>6</sup> of 4-5 year-old children, where they make choices or associations that favour their own group. However this ingroup-favouritism mostly appears with children who belong to higher status groups (e.g. Whites in the United States), while children of lower-status groups display no such preference or actually prefer the higher-status out-group: Black, Hispanic and Native-American children in the US have showed a preference for Whites to the expense of their own group and other groups.

This explicit differentiation seems to peak around 6-7 years and then starts to decrease as children acquire the cultural norms related to expressing biases: children of higher-status groups do not show in-group preference, and children of lower-status groups lose explicit out-group preference by the age of 10, to show no bias or to display a preference to their own group. This however does not imply that all differentiation or bias disappears, but rather that it is not said. From this age on, we can observe that explicit and implicit attitudes become different – just as in the case of adults: what we dare to say openly becomes different from our untold non-conscious beliefs. Implicit attitude tests that inquire into these non-conscious thoughts show that during this age, when explicit attitudes change a lot, implicit attitudes remain largely unchanged, attaining the adult levels as soon as they can make the categorization according to ethnicity.

In the end, children's orientation towards the other groups seems to be governed by the same tendencies as those of adults: a preference towards one's own group and sensitivity towards social status, leaving children of lower-status groups with conflicting tendencies.

### What strategies to adopt?

The research findings advocate a strong argument for quitting the avoidant strategy and addressing the issues even with young children. Remember, they will make their own explanation with the rudimentary tools at their disposal, so probably they will be better off with adult guidance. Researchers recommend engaging in "open, honest, frequent, and age-appropriate conversation about race, racial differences, and even racial inequity and racism" which is susceptible to reduce the levels of biases (Winkler, 2013).

How we address the question also matters: discussing discrimination as a past issue or as one, which is only perpetrated by a few closed-minded bad people, can have detrimental effects that lift responsibility from the majority and can help the scapegoating of the subjects of such behavior (Hirschfeld, 2008)

<sup>6</sup> The studies use either choice-based paradigm (asking children who they like more) or trait-attribution paradigm (asking children to associate characteristics to pictures of faces)



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- Winkler, E.N. 2009 Children Are Not Colorblind: How Young Children Learn Race In: PACE Vol. 3-No. 3

## Further readings

- Children's Intergroup Relations and Attitudes Chapter in Advances in child development and behavior 51 • June 2016 Rebecca S. Bigler, John M. Rohrbach, Kiara L. Sanchez Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and Racism? Risks and Benefits to Teaching Children About Intergroup Biases Rebecca



## Background Text: Acculturation

*"I was very surprised – in a positive way, of what an African mother was telling me...she was from another district, a neighbourhood with a high population of immigrants from African countries but she wanted to enrol her child into our school, so that the child is not always with other African kids but learns from the whites..."* told by a pre-primary teacher, Paris

Both the African mum and the teacher in the situation above seem to agree that the way to success of the African child in Paris goes through learning from the local French kids, an intuition resonating with the old wisdom "When in Rome, do as the Romans do", a saying attributed to Aurelius Ambrosius in the 4th century. All families who find themselves facing such a decision (whether or not to use non-parental care, what type of school they should find) will also make a choice of an "acculturation strategy" for their child and their family, even if – most probably – they have not heard of the word acculturation before. Several situations that we collected concern this issue, and questions such as what immigrants or members of minority groups should do, how they should adapt to the new country and what serves the interest of the children.

### Acculturation – a definition

"Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups". Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936: 149)

If this definition emphasizes that change goes both ways, usually there is more pressure or motivation to change for the newcomer or member of minority group. Learning or changing of behaviours is indeed necessary to communicate, work, establish relations in a new environment; what's more, ignoring behaviour adaptation would be really awkward, as it often happens automatically, effortlessly. Newcomers learn how to orient in the city, how to ask for help, buy bread, etc. Such changes in behaviour are also referred to as *sociocultural adaptation*. They include learning of the mastery of local artefacts, also learning language, eating habits and most importantly ways of relating to others. However acculturation is not a linear process consisting in changing all habits in accordance with the new environment. One of the most cited models explaining acculturation strategies is the one proposed by Berry in 1987. For its wide acceptance, Berry's model is reproduced below.

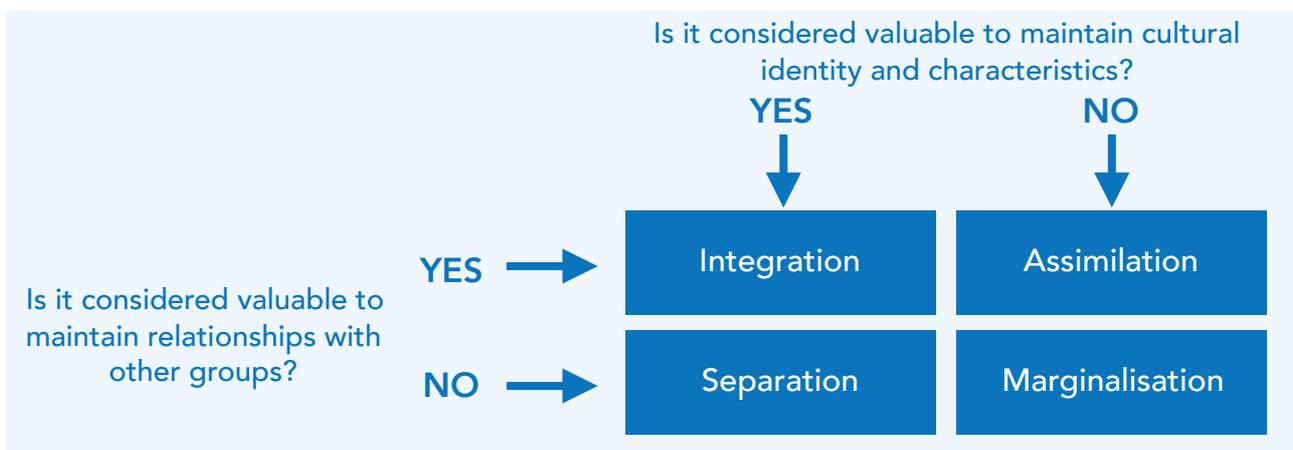


Figure 2. Forms of acculturation. Berry's model 1997.



The model classifies the acculturation strategies of migrants and minority members based on their answers to two questions: "Is it important to engage in relations with members of the new environment?" and "Is it valued to maintain relations with the original cultural environment?". From these two questions, a matrix of four acculturation strategies emerges: integration, segregation, assimilation and marginalisation.

### Are people free to choose their strategies?

The choice of acculturation strategy is not necessarily a conscious one, nor is it very autonomous. Updates of Berry's model show that the host society has a strong impact on what strategies are available for minority members. For instance France traditionally favours an assimilation path, facilitating learning the French language and cultural codes, but does not put emphasis on cultivating the "culture of origin". In fact the "separation" strategy is closely connected to what they call "communautarism" implying a closure of the minority community, thus a perceived threat to the openness and equality within society (this partly explains recent episodes of confrontation on French beaches where policemen ask women wearing 'burkinis' to take them off).

### Are there winning acculturation strategies?

**Marginalisation** –the rejection of or distancing from both the culture of origin and the host culture implies a loss of social connection and has often been associated with psychosomatic and adjustment disorders (Berry, 1997).

**Separation** implies a retreat in the original social cultural group to the expense of connections with members of other groups. In the short term the safety zone offers a necessary buffer in the new environment, on the long term it is an obstacle to learning from the new environment and functionally adapting to it. This strategy has been associated with neuroticism, anxiety and psychoticism, cardiovascular problems, as well as addiction to drugs and alcohol (Schmitz, 1992).

**Assimilation** occurs when individuals reject their minority culture and adopt the cultural norms of the dominant or host culture. People who assimilate seek daily interaction with the members of the dominant target culture, and their ambition is to become accepted as part of this outgroup. Among other things, assimilation has been associated with a weakening of the immune system (Schmitz 1992) and it is often reported to bring about higher levels of acculturation stress and dissatisfaction (e.g. LaFromboise 1993:397). According to LaFromboise (1993), assimilation can pose three types of dangers: being rejected by the host society despite the efforts made, being rejected by the members of the culture of origin for abandoning the common norms and practices, or being overwhelmed by the stress of learning cultural behaviours that are in contradiction with own existing set of norms and practices.

**Integration** happens when individuals are able to adopt the cultural norms of the dominant or host culture, while also maintaining their culture of origin. Integration leads to and is often synonymous with biculturalism. In this case, one identifies with both cultures in a positive way. This strategy is in line with an alternation model, an additive model of cultural acquisition based on the recognition that people can alternate their behavior in accordance with the cultural context (LaFromboise 1993). If integration is found to correlate with both a sense of change and development and more satisfaction with the mobility experience (MOMAP 2013), it is not a simple strategy. Camilleri's research (1998) on identity strategies shows a variety of tensions that can arise when there are



contradictions in the value systems, norms and practices of the original and target cultures. Many of these contradictions concern rules of social organization such as gender roles, hierarchy, conception of family, inducing long and repeated processes of identity negotiation of which the school is yet another terrain.

### What is good for the child – and society?

The opinions concerning acculturation that teachers tend to express are influenced by

- Naïve theories concerning what is good for the migrant child (probably informed by models of child development, but rarely by theories of cross-cultural adaptation);
- The dominant national paradigm concerning diversity management (e.g. multiculturalist or assimilationist paradigm) and the role teachers believe they have in connection with this paradigm;
- Level of perceived threat to national identity.

The three incidents we collected illustrate how these naive theories of adaptation may suggest that the quickest and fullest assimilation of the child will create the least difficulties in the long term. This is in line also with the sense of mission that many teachers have – implicitly or explicitly, which is to transfer the values of the cultures or nation-states (the values of the République, the French teachers will say).

#### *The burden of adaptation is only on the different?*

In the situation “Ham”, an Italian mother married to a Muslim man asks for the child not to eat ham, to make it possible for the girl to be in line with the Muslim religion. The teacher clearly expresses that it is the others who should adapt, not majority society or the school.

#### *Should the original culture / language be safeguarded?*

In the situation “Bilingualism”, the teacher tells the South-American mother to speak French with the child at home so his language skills improve. Implicitly, she thinks it is better for the child to be similar to the others, and that knowing his parents’ language is not as important as knowing the local language. However, “considerable evidence indicates that immigrant children are more likely to show steady academic progress and healthy psychosocial development if they are encouraged to continue using their native language”.

Furthermore, this advice does not only stand for language issues, but rather for the whole cultural baggage: “Acculturation that alienates the child from his or her own cultural heritage is not optimal and may be detrimental, because a healthy cultural identity enhances both educational development and a positive view of the self” (2000 Kurtz-Costes, Pongello).

Research has found that a bicultural identity, in which one feels connected to both the culture of origin and the adoptive culture, is associated with positive mental health outcomes (Phinney and Ong, 2007). Several studies stress that “immigrant children have many resources from their ethnic communities that enable them to adjust and achieve at high levels” (2000 Kurtz-Costes, Pongello).

#### *They don’t want to be that different?*

In our third incident, “Christmas tree”, the Muslim parents surprise the teacher at Christmas period when they don’t oppose the idea of making a Christmas tree in the classroom.



### *"We can't do anything"*

In the situation "The slap", when noticing that a father hits hard his son, a teacher turns to another to comment "we can't do anything, it's their religion", reflecting a preconception concerning the reason of the slap and a view that some behaviors cannot be changed, but at the same time allowing the juxtaposition of different cultural segments even when there seems to be some tension between them.

All these cases highlight different (even if not reflected) expectations and opinions concerning acculturation or the adaptation of migrants. While the concrete contexts matter significantly, research evidence produced so far indicates that purely assimilationist models or segregation cannot be the desired outcome – nor on the individual nor on the societal level. And if integration requires a meticulous negotiation process, and forces both sides to step out of their comfort zones and inquire about the meanings of the actions of the others, it is probably the only way ahead.

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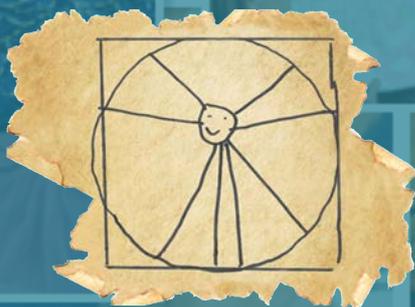
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**To read further:**

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