

# Resources from the Field: Building Programs that Reflect Families' Cultural Diversity



QSLA has gathered activities and practices that you and/or your fellow early educators use related to **Building Programs that Reflect Families' Cultural Diversity** into this resource document. Check out the great ideas below – you never know what may spark your interest! Thank you to all early educators who shared their wisdom and experience!



Activity/Practice Name	Overview of the Activity/Practice	Links/Materials
<p><b>Holiday Traditions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Discuss a wider variety of holidays in addition to Christian-based ones.</b> For example, “We discuss winter holidays, such as Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa, and the different foods that are consumed. I, also, make an effort to go to a bakery that carries Hanukkah donuts to share with my class.”</li> <li>• <b>Invite families/children to share their customs and traditions with our program.</b></li> <li>• NOTE: Representing holidays with respect and using an informed approach entails preparation and learning ahead of time, but is worth the effort.</li> <li>• Check in with families to ensure all are comfortable with celebrating holidays - ex. Halloween.</li> </ul>	<p>Traditional holiday food</p> <p>Phone/computer</p> <p>Calendars</p>
<p><b>Incorporating Home Language Use in Program Activities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Label items on the shelf in English and in the childrens' home languages</b> for families who speak other languages. Children can continue to learn and bridge the gap between these languages.</li> <li>• In addition to labeling, <b>communicate with the children in both languages.</b> Ex. If the child speaks in Spanish, the teachers reply in Spanish or vice versa.</li> <li>• <b>Read books or act out stories in other languages</b></li> <li>• <b>Sing songs in other languages.</b></li> <li>• <b>Have families or children teach the class a song in their home language</b></li> </ul>	<p>Pen, marker, or label maker</p> <p>Printer and/or paper, chart paper</p>
<p><b>Themed Cultural Days or Weeks</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Children &amp; family members can wear clothing representative of their culture</b> and discuss when particular clothing is worn.</li> <li>• <b>Have families involved with cultural events by sharing different musical instruments.</b></li> <li>• <b>Increase children's involvement by reading cultural books together.</b> For example, the book, “Too Many Tamales,” or “My Food, Your Food, Our Food (How Are We Alike and Different?)” explore different cultural foods.</li> </ul>	<p>Cultural clothing, musical instruments, and books</p> <p><a href="#">Too Many Tamales by Gary Soto (Read-Aloud)</a></p> <p><a href="#">My Food, Your Food, Our Food by Emma Carlson Berne (Read-Aloud)</a></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite families to bring in one of their cultural dishes as part of a larger celebration of families' diversity.</li> </ul>	
<b>Creative Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Use board games, puppets, drums, sewing for children to learn more about a particular culture.</b> For example, "I sew and take Indian fabric for children to sew. Also, I brought drums from India for class." Another example: Loteria - a Mexican game.</li> <li>• <b>"Implement diverse play food in the creative play center (dramatic play) so children are exposed to diversity through play."</b></li> <li>• <b>Perform cooking activities as a class to introduce a culture and expand flavor palettes. Ex. Making tortillas, crepes</b></li> </ul>	Board games, puppets, drums, fabric, diverse play food
<b>Family Game Night</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Invite families to bring their cultural games to a larger program gathering</b> where all families can try out each other's different games!</li> </ul>	Physical space or virtual meeting set up
<b>Mapping Our Families Activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Set up a world map where we can share what countries of origin families are from.</b> This is a great addition to story time, particularly if families share stories and bring pictures.</li> </ul>	World Map Family Pictures
<b>Displaying Diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>"Display images of children in cultural attire.</b> Children see other children their own age in different skin tones/attires. Also, have books that talk about other parts of the world."</li> <li>• <b>"Arrange diverse materials and books within the classroom environment for children's exposure."</b></li> <li>• <b>"Children bring a picture of their families. Then we display those pictures on a designated wall to see and discuss."</b></li> </ul>	Diverse images, materials, books, and family pictures
<b>"A Mirror is Our Best Friend" Activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Use a mirror to help children see themselves and their classmates, inviting them to find similarities and differences</b> with curiosity and excitement, "You see, even though we are different, we are also the same, we have 2 eyes, 1 nose, and 1 mouth."</li> </ul>	Mirror(s)
<b>Incorporating Family Customs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Make sure to incorporate families' customs outside of holidays as well.</b> For instance, celebrating a child's birthday with the customs and food the family traditionally implements!</li> </ul>	Traditional holiday food/customs
<b>All About Me Poster</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Offer an "All About Me" poster for a child and their family to complete together</b> - with key questions and areas to highlight their traditions, culture, foods, religion, background, language(s), etc.</li> </ul>	Poster materials - including questions/guidance for families