

# TINY BITS (BETTER INFORMED TOGETHER) FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

DAUPHIN COUNTY MH/A/DP  
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## Celebrating Differences from the Start

In a child's early years, they are constantly learning new skills and ideas. From walking to talking to learning to share with others, there is always a new skill to support their development. We do not often think of the fact that our children are learning the foundation for more complex ideas. Toddlers and young children begin to learn about diversity and differences in others. They are also learning about the difference between right and wrong as well as justice and injustice. Learning these complex ideas are the foundation for future beliefs and actions. In this month's addition of Tiny BITS, we explore how young children begin to understand differences. Additionally, we provide tips on how to parent a child to have an inclusive worldview and resources to continue to teach children about differences.

### How Children Understand and Learn About Differences

- **All children notice differences:** Children start observing differences as young as 3 months old. They notice differences in skin color, voice, facial features, and even use of assistive equipment such as a wheelchair.
- **Be a Role Model:** Our children learn from us even when we think they are not watching. We all have ideas that we pass down to our children. Parents attitudes about differences are reflected in their child's attitudes about differences beginning in early childhood.
- **Diversity makes a difference:** Encouraging children to interact with children who are different than them increases the likelihood that they will continue to interact and form friendships with children with diverse backgrounds when they start elementary school.

### Tips to Develop Inclusive World View

- **Choose diverse books, toys, and media-**For children under 3, look for stories and media that show other children having fun together regardless of their differences. When reading the book make connections between the story and your child's life and explore the differences. For example: "This little boy in the story eats with chopsticks. We eat with a fork, but we both eat dinner with our family." You can go to <https://diversebookfinder.org/> to find books about diversity. A resource for diverse television programming is [www.common sense media.org/lists/tv-shows-with-diverse-characters](http://www.common sense media.org/lists/tv-shows-with-diverse-characters).
- **For Preschoolers, select books and media that address social injustice:** By the age of 3.5-4.5, children are ready to imagine the perspective of others through age-appropriate books and media. A resource for finding books about social justice for this age group is <https://socialjusticebooks.org/reviews-by-reading-level>.
- **Remember that discussions about diversity are not "one and done."** Starting conversations about differences early builds a foundation of trust and openness. They will continue to come to you again and again with questions regarding differences.

In addition to the above information, the following are also helpful online materials which can help get young children talking about inclusion and celebrating differences.

Sesame Workshop: <https://www.sesameworkshop.org/what-we-do/racial-justice>

National Museum of African American History and Culture: <https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/audiences/parent-caregiver>

Excerpted from: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/4123-parenting-for-social-justice-what-you-can-do-starting-from-birth>

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3920-celebrating-differences-antiracist-parenting-right-from-the-start>

