



Colorful star

The Right Stuff

Resources to Help Realize the Promise of Each Vermont Child



Topic: Exploring Similarities and Differences

Issue No. 28 February 2019

Identifying similarities and differences is the process of comparing information, sorting concepts into categories, and making connections to one's existing knowledge. Simply put, identifying similarities and differences helps us make sense of the world. The Vermont Guiding Principles remind us that children vary tremendously by culture, language, ability, race, ethnicity, and religion. Likewise, families vary in these dimensions as well as configuration and life circumstances.

Supporting each young child's full and equitable participation requires early childhood professionals to build the capacity for children to recognize and talk about differences in ways that are honest and accurate, but also thoughtful and kind. This takes intentionality on the part of educators, and daily practice and modeling by children and adults.

This issue of **The Right Stuff** provides resources to support professionals and families to think about similarities and differences in new ways and to support children in doing the same.

Diversity: Contracting Perspectives (0-5)

<https://vimeo.com/127276780>

What is the best way to feed a young child? How should adults provide toilet teaching supports to young children? What are your beliefs about how to help a young child learn to draw or write? Watch this video to discover many similarities and differences in cultural views about the right or best way or the best to support development related to feeding, drawing, toilet teaching, and other skills. This is a great resource for promoting discussion about and consideration of the many ways in which to support each and every young child.

Children See Difference Differently (adults)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1MJrRvpjB1I>

Sometimes differences that may be obvious to adults are not obvious to children. This delightful video reminds us of this fact in a light-hearted way. This can be an interesting video to show to children to see what differences they notice. "What's similar? What's different?" can also be a fun activity to do live with children.

We Are Different, We Are the Same (3-6)

<http://bkc-od-media.vhost.psu.edu/documents/Activities1506.pdf>

This document offers five different activities that can be used to explore similarities and differences in a fun, thoughtful, and informative way. Children's books that could also be used to explore these topics are listed (e.g., *The Sneeches* by Dr. Seuss), along with additional resources for educators.

Individualizing Morning Greetings (4-6)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pum938T14Hs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DELjQpTiWZY>

Effective morning arrivals in an early childhood classroom can set the stage for a positive and productive day. These videos shows how thoughtful teachers have orchestrated that process to allow for individual differences. In one case, a new "greeter" is chosen each day and options for the other students are a hug, handshake, high five, or wave. And if you want to see what this might look like with slightly older children, check out

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3dhHfhdTOE>

Exploring Similarities (4-6)

<https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/autism/?activity=exploring-similarities>

This brief video and activity from Sesame Street provides a thoughtful introduction to helping young children process that although everyone is different, we all share important feelings. At this website, the video shows what some children with autism like to do, then text below the video provides prompts for discussing similarities and differences.

Starting Small: Teaching Tolerance in Preschool and the Early Grades (3-8, adults)

<https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/film-kits/starting-small>

The vision of community that the early childhood classroom provides can color children's expectations about equity, cooperation and citizenship for a lifetime. This training kit profiles seven innovative classrooms in which teachers are helping children practice fairness, respect, and tolerance. The Starting Small kit includes the 58-minute film on DVD and the Teacher's Guide, a 114-page set of additional information about each classroom as well as resources, activities, and reflections. In particular, the segments that were filmed in a preschool classroom in Denver show techniques for helping children to develop the vocabulary to thoughtfully describe differences. The kit is free and may be ordered from the URL above. The Teacher's Guide may also be downloaded at

http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/kits/Teachers_Study_Guide.pdf

Identifying Similarities and Differences (5-9)

<https://www.birdvilleschools.net/Page/36934>

Comparing and noticing similarities and differences is a skill that is essential for development of reading, writing, mathematics, and science. It involves comparing, classifying, and developing analogies or metaphors. This website has several examples of ways to help children to discover these skills.

The Right Stuff is a free, one-way listserv that is distributed monthly. Each issue features resources for supporting the learning and development of young children who are culturally, linguistically, and individually diverse, birth to Grade 3, and their families. All resources are readily available and free. **Highlighted resources are available in English and Spanish.** The age range to which each resource is most directly relevant is provided in parentheses (e.g., (3-8)). **The Right Stuff** may be freely shared or reproduced. Past issues are available at

<http://fpg.unc.edu/presentations/right-stuff>

The Right Stuff is compiled by Camille Catlett and supported by the Vermont Agency of Education. To receive your copy each month, send an email **with no message** to subscribe-the_right_stuff_listserv@listserv.unc.edu