

## SUPPORT AT HOME



Get your child involved with the local customs in your community, and those of different backgrounds. Attend different events and festivals that celebrate a particular ethnic group, holiday or personal accomplishment, like the Special Olympics, the Chinese New Year or Holi, the Hindu festival of colors. Encourage your child to also share the traditions that your family celebrates as well with classmates, friends, and neighbours. You might want to volunteer to lead a cooking activity in your child's class and prepare a dish that is important to your family's background. Children are innately fascinated by how other children around the world live - through the distinct foods they eat, the stories they listen to while growing up, and the art that they make with their own hands. Try new cuisines and celebrate traditions from around the world together. Understanding leads to respect, awareness, and acceptance.

Encourage your child to journal during your family travels. For a three year old, this may simply be using a camera to take photos while a four year old might draw pictures to document what he did, saw, tasted, found, touched, smelled, heard, and paste momentos (museum maps, leaves, zoo ticket stubs) into his journal, and a five year old may write simple sentences with words spelled phonetically. These travel journals are a fun way to get your child to tune in to new surroundings, people, and

their way of life. Making accurate observations is also a key element of later scientific work. Plus, it will end up being a wonderful keepsake to look at long after your vacation; children delight in reading their own creations!

Invite your child to care for plants and animals in your home. These are opportunities for him to absorb natural life cycles while learning the daily proper techniques of caring for other living organisms. To make it a sensory stimulating activity at the same time, allow them to get their hands messy during the work, and show them how to properly clean up after.

Borrow books from your school or local library that portray characters who are different in terms of race, family composition, belief systems, and abilities. Try to find non-fiction books with real photographs of people. Celebrate diversity and cultural sensitivity.

Bring your child to attend different visual art exhibits and music performances in your community. A calendar filled with opportunities is available at your local Leisure and Cultural Services Department. Look for interactive experiences for children where they can participate and get involved with the artist or performer's craft. Before visiting, show the Grace and Courtesy lessons of how to be a respectful audience member; you can even role play at home. Young children may not be able to sit through long performances, so keep your visits short but engaging.

Although the 3-6 child is focused mostly on the "What," model different ways to ask questions. Keep the conversation going by asking who, what, when, where, why, how questions when reading aloud or watching a film together. You are preparing the foundation for investigative thinking.

Foster your child's innate curiosity by giving accurate, realistic, and scientific answers to their questions. There is no need to avoid long words and proper terminology. Children of ages 3 to 6 soak up this information like a sponge! If you are not sure, do not be afraid to say so, and then suggest resources (try to expand beyond web engine searches eg. dictionary, encyclopedia, non-fiction reference books, library, science museum) where you can find the answer out together. Likewise, when spontaneous opportunities for scientific phenomena arise during daily living (cooking, gardening, and bathing are great examples), express your own curiosity aloud with sentences that begin with, "I wonder what would happen if..." Seeking evidence, testing predictions, and doing research, are all basic elements of later scientific reasoning.