

Welcome diversity in your home by...

Reading: Choose books intentionally!

- Read books that feature diverse characters as well as unexpected friendships.
- Read some books with no human characters where children can see themselves reflected in those characters. An example from PJ Library might be books like *Beautiful Yetta*, *The Littlest Pair*, or *Baxter: The Pig Who Wanted to be Kosher*. For more great book lists, visit pjlibrary.org.
- Read books that deal head on with tough topics like intolerance or bullying.

Branching out beyond books...

Play with toys that represent diverse groups of people

One easy way to help your children accept and understand differences is to play with toys that represent various types of people.

Try new foods

Respecting and understanding diversity is also part of learning about *kavod* or respect, or respect. Cooking and tasting foods from different cultures is a great way to organically introduce children to diversity. Pick a type of food that your family likes to eat together: soup, bread, or dips, for example, and look at the ways different cultures and countries make and eat that food.

Be honest and direct

While reinforcing the message that we're all the same on the inside is beautiful, it's also important to encourage children to recognize and accept differences. The site, [Kiddie Matters](http://KiddieMatters.com) points out: "so many adults tell children things like "we don't see color" and "we are all the same on the inside." The truth is, people do come in different colors. It is more important that children learn to accept others for who they are instead of pretending that differences don't exist." While it may be tempting to shush a child if they point out that someone is different from them, go ahead and make it a teaching moment. If a child accidentally says something offensive, gently correct them and explain that what they said can hurt someone's feelings.

What is Jewish about respecting difference?

There are many values and concepts in Judaism that emphasize the importance of respecting and learning from others. *Adam yehidi nivra*, for example, means, "every person is a unique creation." This means appreciating the wonderful things that make each person an individual and celebrating differences. Another concept, *lomed mikol adam*, shows us how much each person has to offer. Because everyone has something they can teach us, we know that we can learn from each person's unique gifts. Finally, we give *kavod* or respect, because it is the right thing to do. By teaching children to celebrate differences, we help them view the world through multiple perspectives.