# Let’s Talk: Our Diverse World

## Learning About Culture & Diversity in the Early Years

## Supporting the Anti-racism Agenda

# Introduction

The DfE have provided guidance to support Early Years settings help young children begin to understand our diverse world. This not only supports inclusion in its broadest sense, benefiting all children, but it also helps support important agenda’s such as anti-racism.

In addition, in Essex we believe that early intervention to support lifelong emotional wellbeing and mental health for all children, young people, adults and families is vital. Therefore, this resource has been developed to offer and promote information, advice and guidance that is aimed at supporting Early Years settings create and enhance their learning environments to effectively promote and celebrate diversity, both implicitly and explicitly. This is one of the core foundations in developing a culture based upon the Trauma Perceptive Practice (TPP) values of compassion and kindness, hope, connection & belonging.

## What do we mean by Diversity & Why is it important?

The DfE guidance stated that Diversity describes differences in age, culture, family structures, disabilities, ethnicity, gender, religion and sexual orientation. Understanding of a diverse world also includes understanding technological and ecological diversity.

There’s diversity in all communities. The more experience children have of being out and about in their community the more they are able to understand their community and make a contribution.

Having an idea of who they are as a child, within a family, leads naturally to being curious about everyone else. Starting in a setting or belonging to a childminder’s family, children begin to sense other relationships outside their own family.

From an early age, children have formed attitudes towards children different from themselves. Support children to be curious about people around them, to see and understand similarities and differences. In this way children will be curious and respectful about others and become a positive member of a diverse world.

Children need to be able to form positive relationships, especially with other people who do things differently to themselves and their family. Children’s natural curiosity needs to be nurtured, nourished and extended to include their friends in the setting.

The diverse world should be integral to everyday practice, as well as the celebrations of religious days, visitors and visits. Make sure your setting reflects the diverse world. For example, you can look at musical instruments you have and find out where they originate from. In this way knowledge is built up that can be used incidentally with the children.

To find out more please go to the Government Website to access the full guidance: [Understanding the World: Diverse World](https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/understanding-the-world/diverse-world). They have also put together a video of an early year’s expert explains the [importance of the diverse world in the early years foundation stage framework](https://www.twinkl.co.uk/search?v=JQVWWjTFca8).

# Advice & Guidance for the Whole School Approach

* Why we need an anti-racist approach in early years education [Why we need an anti-racist approach in early years education | Nesta](https://www.crhut.co.uk/collections/multicultural)
* Anna Freud Working with Families from diverse communities in early years [Supporting families from diverse communities | Early Years in Mind | Anna Freud Centre](https://www.little-linguist.co.uk/multicultural-resources-for-children.html)
* Anna Freud Helping young children think about race in the early years [How to help young children think about race in the early years (annafreud.org)](http://cms-schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/social_emotional_mental_health_portal_for_schools/Documents/Multicultural%20Resources%20for%20Nurseries%20and%20Schools)
* An ethnicity allies guide to getting it right: for the entire organisation [Ally-Toolkit-2021-V2-3.pdf (investinginethnicity.org)](https://www.youtube.com/watch)
* Tapestry Education Conference (TEC): Reflecting on Anti-racism in the Early Years [TEC: Reflecting on Anti-racism in the Early Years | Tapestry UK](https://tapestry.info/tec/reflecting-on-anti-racism-in-the-early-years.html)
* The tiney guide to becoming an inclusive, anti-racist early educator [tiney Inclusive Education Guide.pdf - Google Drive](https://www.nesta.org.uk/blog/why-we-need-anti-racist-approach-early-years-education/)
* Famly provide some advice about [How to make your setting culturally inclusive](https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/cultural-diversity--338262622017867371/)
* Nursery World: [Multi-cultural resources on reflection](https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/news/article/multicultural-resources-on-reflection)
* Teach Early Years: [Diversity in Early Years – Why it’s so important](https://investinginethnicity.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Ally-Toolkit-2021-V2-3.pdf)
* Teach Early Years: [Understanding Cultural Diversity in the Early Years](https://www.teachearlyyears.com/positive-relationships/view/understanding-diversity)
* Cumbira.gov.uk: [Embedding Cultures and Diversity within an early years setting and Supporting children learning English as an additional language](https://www.annafreud.org/early-years/early-years-in-mind/working-with-families-facing-challenges/supporting-families-from-diverse-communities/?timestamp=42627367)

# Reflecting Questions

We all come with our own potential biases about the world around us. These come from a range of influencing factors including first-hand experiences (past and present), our family culture and other social influences, media and politics etc. We need to be aware of these when planning the curriculum and setting up healthy inclusive learning environments. To help you get started, we have put together some reflective questions to consider when planning the Early Years Curriculum Activities :

* Have you addressed sustainability?
* Have you shown a variety of families/gender roles?
* Have you included characters and perspective from a variety of backgrounds, especially those who are under-represented?
* Have you included stories that show a range of cultures for discussion?
* Have you included stories that show a range of emotions for discussion?
* Is there an opportunity for cultural capital to support babies/children and families have access to more opportunities e.g. knowledge, skills, education and resources?
* How are you promoting the learning about different cultural practices? Remember some things that might be seen as a norm in one culture is the opposite in another. Have you made space for this in your learning environment in age-appropriate ways?
* How do you promote and celebrate different cultures?

# Books for Practitioners

* [Creating an Anti-Racist Culture in the Early Years: An Essential Guide for Practitioners](https://www.amazon.co.uk/s?crid=166QJI64Q79H8&keywords=creating+an+anti-racist+culture+in+the+early+years&qid=1678436746&sprefix=creating+an+anti-racist+culture+in+the+early+years,aps,108&sr=8-1) Sandra Smidt

Drawing on both personal research and established theory, Smidt includes examples of anti-racist practice from real life and in literature, looks at how racism is acquired and cites examples of people who have spoken or acted against racism through the centuries. She emphasises how and why it is essential to develop multicultural education into anti-racist education and why it’s so important to go beyond the mere celebration of differences in cultures.

* [Creating a Culture of Reflective Practice: The Role of Pedagogical Leadership in Early Child Programs](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Creating-Culture-Reflective-Practice-Pedagogical/dp/1605547409/ref=sr_1_fkmr3_1?crid=166QJI64Q79H8&keywords=creating+an+anti-racist+culture+in+the+early+years&qid=1678436746&sprefix=creating+an+anti-racist+culture+in+the+early+years%2Caps%2C108&sr=8-1-fkmr3)by Lorrie Baird (author) (Author), Anne Marie Coughlin (author) & Deb Curtis (Foreword by) (Author) 2021

This book is a comprehensive practical look at creating systems, structures and protocols for supporting people educators into a thinking and learning process about their work. It offers readers ideas to support develop their skills and mindsets to enhance their performance and effect organizational change.

# Research

* The annual [CLPE survey of Ethnic Representation within UK Children’s Literature 2017-2022](https://drive.google.com/file/d/16dX9uYy3i-4U8VJShBUrWyESgkznqoUp/view?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIxtKrtfnQ_QIVVeDtCh0tjwEJEAAYASAAEgLLB_D_BwE), which is funded by Arts Council England, launched in 2017 with the key focus of determining the extent and quality of ethnic minority characters featured within Picturebooks, Fiction and Non-Fiction for ages 3–11 published in the UK. The five years of reporting provide benchmark statistics which have seen a sustained increase in the number and percentage of books that contain characters from racially minoritised backgrounds; a standard which is vital in ensuring all young readers have the opportunity to encounter books in which they can see themselves, their experience and the wider world reflected.

# Children’s Books

Here are links to pages that provide titles and descriptions of bestselling multi-cultural books:

* [The 100 best multi-cultural picture books is 2021](https://www.famly.co/blog/making-your-early-years-setting-culturally-inclusive)
* Book Trust provide a range of [Multicultural book titles](https://www.annafreud.org/early-years/early-years-in-mind/resources/helping-young-children-to-think-about-race-in-the-early-years/)
* [multicultural children's books - Google Search](https://www.teachearlyyears.com/enabling-environments/view/why-its-important-to-bring-diversity-into-early-years-settings?q=multi-cultural+childrens+books&sourceid=ie7&rls=com.microsoft:en-GB:%7breferrer:source%7d&ie=UTF-8&oe=&safe=active&ssui=on)
* [Amazon.co.uk Best Sellers: The most popular items in Children's Books on Multiculturalism](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Best-Sellers-Children%27s-Books-on-Multiculturalism/zgbs/books/15512156031)

# Multi-cultural resources

* EYR Early Years Resources: [Multicultural Resources](https://clpe.org.uk/research/clpe-survey-ethnic-representation-within-uk-childrens-literature-2017-2022-november-2022)
* Little-Linguist specialises in [Multicultural Resources](https://coloursofus.com/the-100-best-multicultural-picture-books-of-2021/) for children that are suitable for use in early years settings and primary schools
* Millwood Education provide [multicultural Resources](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Creating-Anti-Racist-Culture-Early-Years-ebook/dp/B07Z6RSD2V/ref=sr_1_1) for Nurseries and Schools
* Twinkl [top 257 curated multicultural teaching resources](https://www.earlyyearsresources.co.uk/multicultural-resources-t126?q=multicultural)
* EY Resources: The Childminder Resource Hut [Multi-cultural resources](https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/537/3953/4202/7088/42563164148.pdf)
* Pinterest: [Cultural diversity](https://www.booktrust.org.uk/booklists/bookstart/multicultural/)
* Amazon: [Multicultural posters early years](https://www.google.co.uk/search?k=multicultural+posters+early+years&crid=2483AKZBB2TR1&sprefix=early+years+multicultural+,aps,147&ref=nb_sb_ss_ts-doa-p_2_26)
* Amazon: [Multicultural resources early years](https://www.amazon.co.uk/s?k=multicultural+early+years+resources&crid=20OLU184KGM10&sprefix=multicultural+early+years+resources%2Caps%2C180&ref=nb_sb_noss_2)

This Resource has been put together by the ESSEX Council Education

SEMH Strategy Team

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If you have found this helpful to if you find anything else that you can share on this topic

Please email to let us know

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