



## Early Explorations

### ***Learning about cultural diversity***

As children grow up and develop their own identities, it is essential for them to also have an awareness of those around them. The societies in which we live in are becoming more and more culturally diverse, so developing attitudes of tolerance and respect at an early age becomes essentially fundamental. This also forms part of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (Development Matters), and that by the age of 5 children need to be able '*know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions*'.

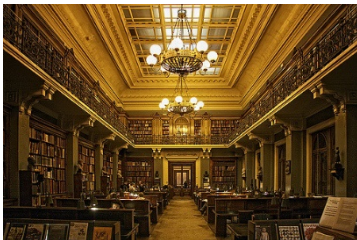
#### ***Attend local festivities***

- often towns and cities will put on special celebrations to mark particular festivals that are open for all in the community to get involved in for example, Diwali Fireworks.



#### ***Places of interest:***

Annual Eid and Diwali celebrations in Trafalgar Square, Chinese New Year Parade's in China Town, London.



***Visiting a local library*** – most libraries tend to have collections of child-friendly books about different communities around the world. Some of these books may also be written in different languages and prints and are another great way for children to explore cultural diversity.

The following suggestions will give you some ideas about how you can explore cultural diversity with your child in and around London as well as in your local areas:

***Visiting different places of worship*** - most towns and cities will have different places of worship e.g. a Church, a Temple or a Synagogue which are usually free and open for the public to look around in. Some may offer tours and different workshops that you can take part in. Visiting such places can provide children with a great opportunity to explore the different ways in which people pray and worship, as well as to see the differences in the different buildings.

*Places of interest: Neasden Temple, Regent's Park Mosque and St Paul's Cathedral.*

***Exploring different food*** – Food and eating forms a big part of most cultures. By taking your child to explore foods from different restaurants, they can start to develop an understanding of the similarities and differences in the foods that they eat at home compared to that eaten in communities different to theirs.



### ***Early Childhood Education & Development***





## Encouraging social Development

Social development involves learning the values, knowledge and skills that enable children to relate to others effectively and to contribute in positive ways to family, school and the community. We pass this on to children through social relationships within the family or with friends, and through children's participation in the culture around them. Through their relationships with others and their growing awareness of social values and expectations, children build a sense of who they are and of the social roles available to them. As children develop socially, they both respond to the influences around them and play an active part in shaping their relationships.

We can support positive social development by modelling respect and consideration and encourage children to be similarly respectful in all their relationships.

Here's some other ideas to explore...

### Explain your reasons for limits and requests.

"When you pass me spoons I can finish cleaning up quicker and then we can read an extra story."  
"When you share toys, it means that everybody gets a chance to play."

**Talk about rules and limits in language that your child can understand.** *You may not hit. Hitting hurts. When you are mad, you can jump up and down or come to me for a hug.*



**Show your child the benefits involved in cooperating.** Natural consequences help children understand the cause and effect involved in a rule, request or limit. For example, the natural consequence of throwing a toy truck is having it put away for a little while. But natural consequences can be positive too! Remind your child,

"If you cooperate with getting your shirt on, then we'll have more time at the park."  
Strategies like this help children learn the rules and to make good choices over time.



**Practicing social overtures:** Teach kids the proper way to start a conversation, get someone's attention, or join a group of kids who are already playing together. These are all situations that can be discussed and brainstormed at the dinner table, or in the car on the way to school or activities.

**Go over taking turns:** Sit with your child for at least an hour a day and play with him to explain what it means to wait, take turns, and share.





## Reinforcing Specific Social Skills

Activities and games can provide additional help in developing specific skills, and you can reinforce your child's social development and interaction by playing The Name Game and Follow the Leader. Researchers Sandra Sandy and Kathleen Cochran developed The Name Game to help young children learn the importance of getting someone's attention before speaking. Have kids sit in a circle and give one kid a ball. Ask him to name another child in the circle, and roll the ball to that child. The recipient then takes his turn, naming another child and rolling the ball, and so on.

The classic Follow the Leader game teaches kids about taking turns and practicing patience. Designate either yourself or your child as the leader, and have the follower(s) mimic the leader's actions.

There are plenty of good apps available that reinforce social skills. "Model Me Going Places" allows kids to look at photos of other children modelling appropriate behaviour in certain situations (the hairdresser, doctor, playground), "Responding Social Skills" teaches kids how to respond to others and how to understand others' feelings, and "Small Talk" presents conversation fillers for awkward social moments. But if your child still seems to have difficulty keeping up with the skills s/he should be developing for their age group, it may be time to give them a little help. Different children may have different issues ranging from impulse control and self-regulation to difficulty in processing information. Awkward interactions are one repercussion of these problems, especially with peers. So, if social issues cause your child fear or make him feel isolated, it is advisable to seek help from a paediatrician or another child expert, say a therapist.



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