

Pointers For Parents

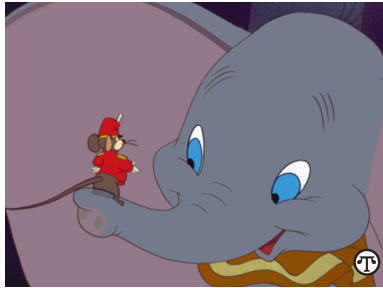
Simple Tips For Helping Kids Celebrate Differences—Their Own And Others

(NAPSA)—Helping youngsters understand themselves and the ways they react to others can be easier for many families when they begin with a fun activity that inspires productive conversation. With a little creative thinking, these informal discussions can go a long way toward helping children realize their strengths.

Even a low key activity such as watching a movie together at home can be constructive if followed by a discussion of the movie's themes and any lessons that can be learned from it.

For example, the simple and endearing story of Dumbo, the little elephant with big ears, can provide a good forum for some tough issues. Disney's beloved animated classic is available as a stunning Blu-ray + DVD Combo Pack, making it fresh for today's kids. Dumbo's experiences can be used to safely introduce and explore difficult topics that children may face, such as: jealousy, name-calling, gossiping, bullying, making friends and fitting in.

Any number of the scenes between Dumbo and his pal Timothy Q. Mouse can help foster discussion of how to be friends with others who are different from them, as well as how differences can become "assets." And who better than Timothy with his Magic Feather to inspire a conversation about the importance of trying



Finding opportunities to encourage acceptance of differences in fun ways can help your youngsters learn some valuable life lessons.

things that at first seem impossible as a way to overcome fear and build self-confidence.

Another beneficial activity to encourage a positive discussion of differences in kids might be an art project, such as the creation of a personal identity collage to help discover and celebrate what makes them unique: physical attributes, likes, dislikes, talents, fears and so on.

You'll need a table or other area where things can get a little messy, lots of old magazines to cut up, newspapers, colored paper, crayons, markers, glitter, stickers, tape, scissors, glue stick, large paper or cardboard sheets. Once the masterpiece is complete, discuss how the finished art project helps reveal each person's differences and celebrate the work by hanging it up for everyone to see.

Even time in the car can be used to engage in useful conversations with the family:

- Have each child take turns answering simple questions such as: "Would you rather travel by plane or train?" "Would you rather read a book or go to a movie?" "Would you rather be an elephant or a mouse?" Discuss the answers to show how each opinion is a valid one.

- Ask children to state what they love about themselves by completing the sentence "I love my..." and applaud those traits in each. Perhaps follow up with "I don't like my..." statements and then suggest ways those traits can be seen as advantages or assets.

Alternatively, you can celebrate differences by playing a game of "I Spy," where you can pick a subject for kids to find various examples of, such as looking for different types of hats on passers-by, varieties of places to eat or various styles of automobiles to inspire further understanding of how many choices there are in the world, all of which have value.

