

ELEMENTS OF A CULTURALLY VALIDATING ENVIRONMENT

By Ginlin Woo

Hear



- Positive enthusiasm for all the cultural heritage and memberships of the community
- Inclusive and respectful language
- Challenges and corrections to misinformation, stereotyping, name-calling, discrimination, omission, etc.
- Inclusion of different cultural histories, ways, values, traditions, and practices, etc. in the curriculum and programming
- Recognition of the range of in-group diversity that exist across all of the groups of the community
- Comfort, respect, and familiarity with the different cultures of the community in the vocalizations made by program staff and volunteers
- Norms and standards set and maintained regarding respect for all members and cultures of the community
- Commitment expressed by the program to grow in its cross-cultural awareness and understanding
- Respectful cultural sharing by all members of the program
- Music and sounds that reflects the backgrounds of the community
- Authentic stories from diverse cultural experiences
- Invitations to students to share their heritage with others, and praise and appreciation for students who are willing to do so
- Recognition of different significant events occurring in different cultural communities
- Awareness by adults of important diverse community issues
- Reverence and respect for different traditions and beliefs

See



- Art, literature, symbolism that reflects the cultures of the community
- Evidence of strong working relationships between the program and the diverse cultural groups within the community
- A standard of cross-cultural respect being held up by everyone associated with the program
- Different community resources being acknowledged and integrated in the program's day-to-day
- People and things from the different cultures of the community cherished and honored.

Feel/Experience



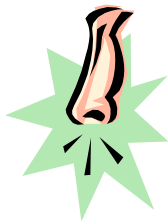
- Pride and acceptance for who students and families are and where they come from
- Safety to share home and community culture and cultural memberships
- High expectation for respectful conduct towards all cultures
- Welcome and inclusion
- Activities that validate the family and cultural backgrounds of all the children and youth
- Programming that showcases multicultural community resources
- Many gestures of welcome and validation
- Opportunities to learn about different cultural groups that goes beyond 'heroes and holidays'

Taste



- The different food traditions of the cultures of the community

Smell



- A variety of scents and aromas that reflect the cultures of the community

Growing Culturally Welcoming and Validating Programs

Organization Self-Assessment Tool

By Ginlin Woo

Complete	Component/Process	How is it (or Will it be) Culturally Welcoming?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical environment	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Imaging – language, print portfolio, community buzz	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mission, vision, strategic planning	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Activity and events calendars and schedules	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Program delivery and impact	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Internal operations and management	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Staffing	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource development – staff, volunteers, capacity building, investments	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Leadership and governance	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strategic relationships, partnerships, outreach, and engagement	

A COVENANT FOR HONORING CHILDREN

BY RAFFI

We find these joys to be self evident: That all children are created whole, endowed with innate intelligence, with dignity and wonder, worthy of respect. The embodiment of life, liberty and happiness, children are original blessings, here to learn their own song. Every girl and boy is entitled to love, to dream and belong to a loving “village.” And to pursue a life of purpose.

We affirm our duty to nourish and nurture the young, to honour their caring ideals as the heart of being human. To recognize the early years as the foundation of life, and to cherish the contribution of young children to human evolution.

We commit ourselves to peaceful ways and vow to keep from harm or neglect these, our most vulnerable citizens. As guardians of their prosperity we honour the bountiful Earth whose diversity sustains us. Thus we pledge our love for generations to come.

Inspiring child honoring

The words of A Covenant for Honoring Children suggest nine guiding principles for living. Taken together, they offer a holistic way of restoring natural and human communities, thus brightening the outlook for the world we share. They form the basis for a multi-faith consensus on societal renewal.

CHILD HONORING PRINCIPLES

- **Respectful Love**
is key. It speaks to the need to respect children as whole people and to encourage them to know their own voices. Children need the kind of love that sees them as legitimate beings, persons in their own right. Respectful love instills self-worth; it’s the prime nutrient in human development. Children need this not only from parents and caregivers, but from the whole community.
- **Diversity**
is about abundance: of human dreams, intelligences, cultures, and cosmologies; of earthly splendours and ecosystems. Introducing children to biodiversity and human diversity at an early age builds on their innate curiosity. There’s a world of natural wonders to discover, and a wealth of cultures, of ways to be human. Comforted by how much we share, we’re able to delight in our differences.
- **Caring Community**
refers to the “village” it takes to raise a child. The community can positively affect the lives of its children. Child-friendly shopkeepers, family resource centres, green schoolyards, bicycle lanes, and pesticide-free parks are some of the ways a community can support its young.
- **Conscious Parenting**
can be taught from an early age; it begins with empathy for newborns. Elementary and secondary schools could teach nurturant parenting (neither permissive nor oppressive)

and provide insight into the child-rearing process. Such knowledge helps to deter teen pregnancies and unwanted children. Emotionally aware parents are much less likely to perpetuate abuse or neglect.

- **Emotional Intelligence**
sums up what early life is about: a time for exploring emotions in a safe setting, learning about feelings and how to express them. Those who feel loved are most able to learn and to show compassion for others. Emotional management builds character and is more important to later success than IQ. Cooperation, play, and creativity all foster the “EQ” needed for a joyful life.
- **Nonviolence**
is central to emotional maturity, to family relations, to community values, and to the character of societies that aspire to live in peace. It means more than the absence of aggression; it means living with compassion. Regarding children, it means no corporal punishment, no humiliation, no coercion. “First do no harm,” the physicians’ oath, must now apply to all our relations; it can become a mantra for our times. A culture of peace begins in a nonviolent heart, and a loving home.
- **Safe Environments**
foster a child’s feeling of security and belonging. The very young need protection from the toxic influences that permeate modern life—from domestic neglect and maltreatment, to the corporate manipulations of their minds, to the poisonous chemicals entering their bodies. The first years are when children are most impressionable and vulnerable; they need safeguarding.
- **Sustainability**
refers not merely to conservation of resources, renewable energy development, and anti-pollution laws. To be sustainable, societies need to build social capacity by investing in their young citizens, harnessing the productive power of a contented heart. The loving potential of every young child is a potent source for good in the world.
- **Ethical Commerce**
is fundamental to a child-honoring world. It includes a revolution in the design, manufacture and sale of goods; corporate reform; “triple bottom line” business; full-cost accounting; tax and subsidy shifts; political and economic cycles that reward long-term thinking. Ethical commerce would enable a restorative economy devoted to the well being of the very young.

CHILD HONORING PRINCIPLES

©2004 Homeland Press

www.Raffinews.com

We encourage copying and distribution provided copyright notice is included. All rights reserved.

*TROUBADOUR FOUNDATION
inspiring child honoring*

*610 fernhill road, s-3, c-4, mayne island
british columbia, canada v0n 2j0
tel 250 539-3588 • fax 250 539-3589*

Resources for 'GROWING WELCOMING & CULTURALLY VALIDATING PROGRAMS' Webinar

Organizations

- Educators for Social Responsibility, <http://www.esrnational.org/>

Print Materials

- Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children, Louise Derman-Sparks and the A.B.C. Task Force, National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington D.C., 1998.
- Con Respeto: Bridging the Distances Between Culturally Diverse Families and Schools, Guadalupe Valdés, Teachers College Press, NY, 1996.
- Open Minds to Equality: A Sourcebook of Learning Activities to Affirm Diversity and Promote Equity, Nancy Schniedewind & Ellen Davidson, A Rethinking Schools Publication, 2006.
- Rethinking Our Classrooms: Teaching for Equity and Justice, Volume 1, A Rethinking Schools Publication, 2007.
- *Rethinking Schools Quarterly*, <http://www.rethinkingschools.org>

WebLinks

Teaching Tolerance, A Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center
<http://www.tolerance.org/>

Multicultural Pavilion
<http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/>

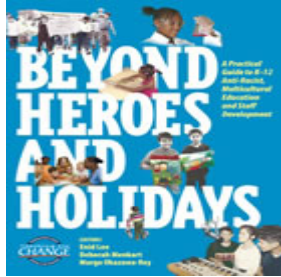
Empowering Multicultural Initiatives - Links & Resources
<http://hastings.ci.lexington.ma.us/EMI/resources.htm>

American Indians in Children's Literature
<http://www.americanindiansinchildrensliterature.com/>

Teaching for Change
<http://www.teachingforchange.org/>

<http://www.teachingforchange.org/publications/publications>

Books



- [Beyond Heroes and Holidays](#)
- [Caribbean Connections](#) series
- [Inside the Volcano](#)
- [Of Secret Wars and Roses](#)
- [Putting the Movement Back into Civil Rights Teaching](#)
- [Rediscovering America](#)
- [Wilfredo: A Boy from El Salvador](#)

DVDs and CDs

- [Equity in Early Childhood Literacy](#)
- [Montgomery Bus Boycott](#)
- [Rethinking Columbus Power Point](#)

Teaching for Change is also the lead distributor for:

- [Anti-Bias Curriculum DVD](#)
- [Get Real Comics](#)

<http://www.birchlane.davis.ca.us/library/10quick.htm>

<http://hastings.lexingtonma.org/Library/Yes/evaluate.htm>

<http://www.alibris.com/search/books/author/Council%20on%20Interracial%20Books%20for%20Children>