



# FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE

*KC Ready 4s Multicultural Education Newsletter*

The KC Ready 4s Funds of Knowledge Newsletter is a new publication for the Early Childhood Education sector. The name is intentional: to honor the funds of knowledge each person contributes to the teaching and learning environment. We welcome your insights and encourage you to submit questions, future topics for consideration, and things you do to create inclusive and equitable learning spaces for all. Please submit to: [mpeake@kcready4s.org](mailto:mpeake@kcready4s.org)

## Cultural Encapsulation to Cultural Engagement



### Consider...

Each person is a culmination of lived experiences that influence and are influenced by their personal and social identities.

Cultural encapsulation refers to the "bubble" around us or exposure to which we initially learn about the world around us. For some, this consists of the family unit only and exposure to others first occurs when starting pre-K, which may be a first introduction to differences in expectations, values, people, and more.

Easing out of our cultural bubbles can elicit a range of feelings that can be supported with a growth mindset that extends space and grace for learning and inquiry, moving towards cultural engagement.



### Avoid...

Ignoring differences and disregarding questions from kids, sending a message that differences among people are something to avoid acknowledging and discussing.

Over-emphasizing differences among people ("othering"), especially if under-prepared to support identity development in kids. Kind and well intentioned adults can cause harm too.

Putting others on the spot and casting them as the spokesperson for a particular group.

Assuming "sameness" and "differentness" is determined by appearance only and that someone's journey is like or unlike one's own.



### Embrace...

Noticing differences and not placing judgement on them.

Understanding and reconciling one's own identities and culture, including historical and contemporary information about identities.

Opportunities to sincerely engage with others, especially in places and with people not within one's "bubble".

Creating opportunities for all children to identify and promote positive self-identities.

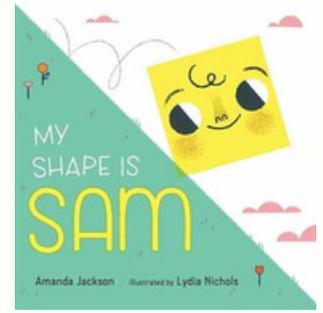
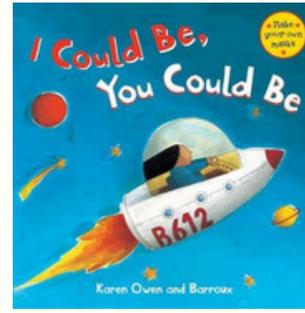
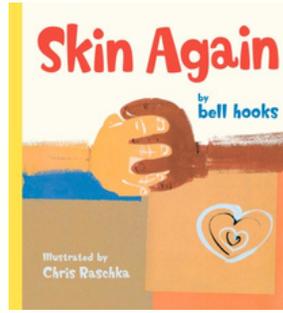
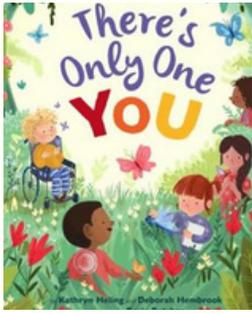
Extending space and grace for the learning and growth of self and others.

Acknowledging that long held beliefs may be inaccurate and can change if desired.



# Exploring Resources for Learning

## Books celebrating identity



## Self-Reflection Activity

1. Consider your original cultural bubble: Who was in and on the periphery of the bubble? Has much changed in your cultural bubble today? Do you seek cultural encapsulation or engagement?
2. Explore the origins of when you first noticed differences: What were you thinking? How did you feel? What did you do? What support, if any, did you have to navigate the differences you encountered?
3. Identify messages you received about yourself, your identities, appearance, language, culture, and more.
4. What messages were explicitly stated and what messages were communicated but not explicitly stated?
5. Reflect upon how these messages contributed to your thoughts and feelings about yourself.
6. Reflect upon how these messages contributed to your thoughts and feelings about others.
7. Engaging others: Talk with a colleague or friend about their cultural bubbles. Note that this can be a tender topic for some people for a variety of reasons so only engage with those willing and interested in having this conversation.

**Educator Scenario:** A child comments about another child's skin color being different.

**Helpful:** Acknowledge the difference in skin color among all children and adults in the classroom - do not single out the child that was referenced. Instead answer in a developmentally appropriate way.

**Consider:** Your ability to navigate conversations about identity and the ability of pre-school aged children to understand adult concepts. Develop an ongoing proactive approach that inspires self-worth and value in all children while encouraging inquiry and discussion.

**Growth framework:** "I have an opportunity to encourage developmentally appropriate conversations about differences among people and create opportunities to have authentic and supportive conversations about things children notice."

**Comment:** "Everyone in our classroom has individual skin, hair, and eye colors. If we were all them same, it sure would be tough to know who is who. I am glad that each of you is just the way you are!"

**Not helpful:** Hushing, shaming, or ignoring the child's comment or having an over-dramatic reaction with an adult concept response.

**Push back on considering:** "No one had supportive conversations with me as a child about differences and I figured it all out somehow."

**Fixed framework:** "Not my job to teach kids about differences and identities. I did not sign-up for this."

**No comment/too much comment:** Ignoring the opportunity to discuss the differences among all people, "othering" any one particular child, or commenting something like, "Mind your business and don't worry about what \_\_\_\_\_ looks like" = unhelpful identity development of self and others.

## Sesame Street Coming Together Resources:

<https://www.sesameworkshop.org/what-we-do/racial-justice>