



## ***Diversity in People: Similarities and Differences in Child-Rearing Practices***

As the diversity of families served by Cooperative Extension and other youth-serving organizations continues to increase, an understanding of similarities and differences among child-rearing practices across cultures may support our programming and outreach efforts.

The following information is painted in broad-brush strokes. It is critical to remember that within any group factors such as level of education, economic status, degree of exposure to a Western way of life, and degree of religious faith, among others, all help to shape values, beliefs, and child-rearing practices. These factors must be considered when working with any family.



### **Native American Children**

Native American children are often raised in extended family settings. In many cases, extended family members rather than the biological parents hold primary responsibility for care of the children.

Primary caregivers may be the grandparents, whose advice and assistance are highly valued due to respect for age and life experiences. Aunts and uncles are also likely to assume important roles in the child's development, particularly if the family lives on the reservation. Families that live in urban areas, however, are more likely to live in nuclear family structures. If a meeting with the parents is planned, it may be appropriate to ask the parents if they would like to have other family members included in the meeting.

Early childhood is filled with celebrations that honor an infant's developmental milestones such as first smiles, first laugh, and first steps. Families feel little anxiety regarding the timing of these developments. There is acceptance of a child's own readiness. As they get older, however, Native American children are expected to assume greater responsibility for self at an earlier age than children in other groups are.

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For example, when compared with both European-American and African American children, Native American children are expected to dress themselves, do regular chores, and take care of younger siblings at earlier ages (Miller, 1979).

Additionally, children are given greater opportunities to make their own decisions and contribute opinions in important family matters. Along with these privileges, however, they are allowed to experience the natural consequences of their decisions. Those outside the culture may mistakenly interpret these practices as permissive and negligent behavior on the part of parents.

A strong emphasis is placed on group relationships; being a part of a group is valued over individualism. Therefore, Native American children may not want to draw attention to themselves as individuals. Instead, they may choose to emphasize performance of those skills that contribute to the betterment of the group. Avoid mistaking this lack of a competitive spirit for passivity.

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**Latino/Hispanic American Children**

The Latino/Hispanic culture is extremely diverse, making it difficult, if not impossible, to generalize characteristics to all Latino/Hispanic families. Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, South and Central Americans are all subgroups of the Latino/Hispanic American population. Further, being foreign born or native born, country of origin, degree of acculturation, outmarriage rates, and, in particular, socio-economic status all produce variation in values, styles, and preferences. These factors are all important in applying information about the culture to individual families.

One value that tends to persist across cultural differences is the sense of familism and loyalty to the family. Although many Latino families live in nuclear households today, a highly integrated extended kinship system of support still exists for many. Family members, godparents and close family friends (*compadrazo*) are often called upon to provide help with childcare. Most children are raised in two-parent families.



Children validate and cement the Latino marriage. It has been said that the parent-child relationship is more important than the husband-wife relationship (Lynch & Hanson, 1998; Gibbs & Haug, 1998). During the family's early years, the home

is usually child-centered. Both parents tend to be permissive and indulgent with young children. There is less anxiety related to the achievement of developmental milestones by young children. This is congruent with the emphasis on interdependence of family members rather than independence of individuals. As children grow older, they are expected to take on responsibilities related to the well being of the family.

Definite distinctions are made in child rearing practices for males and females in many Hispanic/Latino families. This is particularly true during adolescence. Females are raised in a more protective environment, while males are granted considerably more freedom. Activities away from home and family members are limited for females. While overnight stays and out-of-town trips may be viewed as valuable educational experiences by parents in other cultures, such activities may not be considered appropriate experiences for Hispanic/Latino females. Restrictions are due to the importance placed on female virginity and purity. These practices are reinforced by religious beliefs of the Catholic Church.

Other characteristics related to the child-rearing practices of many Hispanic/Latino families include respect for elders and importance of family unity. Hispanic/Latino children may be more likely to sit closer to one another than children of other cultures, be more in tune to nonverbal indicators of feelings, and prefer a collective style and cooperative mode of learning versus an individualistic style and competitive mode of learning.

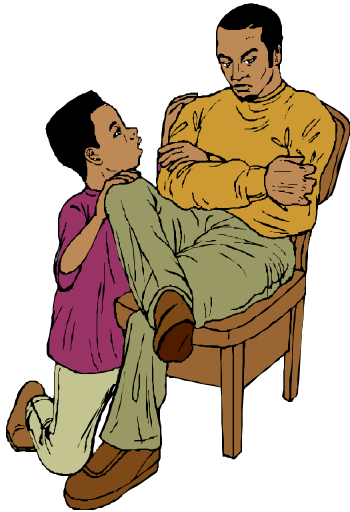
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## African American Children

Social class distinctions in the African American community result in very diverse values, lifestyles, and cultural preferences. A common thread, however, is the importance of family and kinship. For many, the extended family is still viable and is more prevalent than in mainstream communities. Extended families provide child rearing support for parents who are more likely to work outside the home and who are more likely to raise children in single-parent homes. Many children are raised completely by grandparents, aunts, or other more distant relatives. In fact, child raising is, to some extent, shared among the entire community where all responsible adults may act in *loco parentis*.

Setting limits and firm discipline is an important part of the socialization process of many African American children. The importance of obeying family rules is instilled in children at an early age. Child-rearing practices tend to be more authoritarian. Limited tolerance for permissiveness can be interpreted as a way of building in the toughness and self-sufficiency that African American children will need to deal effectively with the sometimes hostile “world” they will at times face.

In fact, the difference in child-rearing practices between African American parents and teachers or youth workers in mainstream society may result in undesired consequences. As stated by Hale-Benson (1982), “Consequently, when the child encounters a white teacher in school practicing all the techniques she learned in college, the children “run all over her” and are labeled discipline problems.” (p. 68).



One of the challenges of African American parents is to help their children learn to live both within and outside the African American community. This is particularly true for children in lower-income families. Acceptance in the African American community (similar to other minority groups) requires an ability to speak, act, and dress like one’s peers in “the neighborhood.” Yet, youth must also learn those behaviors required of one seeking upward mobility. Thus, “Black English” may be spoken among peers as a way of maintaining group unity and cohesion, yet the ability to master “standard English” must also be accomplished if one expects to succeed in mainstream America.

Other important aspects of child-rearing practices among African Americans include: early self-care and self-reliance on the part of the child; high level of importance placed on educational achievement; importance of cooperation and “looking out” for others; appropriate strategies for dealing with racism; respect for older adults; and the development of a positive self-identity.

*Sources: Gibbs, J. T. & Huag, L. N. (1998). Children of Color: Psychological Interventions with Culturally Diverse Youth. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.*

*Hale-Benson, J. E. (1982). Black Children: Their Roots, Culture, and Learning Styles. The Johns Hopkins University Press.*

*Lynch, E. W. & Hanson, M. J. (1998). Developing Cross-Cultural Competence (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Baltimore: Paul Brookes Publishing Company.*

*Miller, D. L. (1979). Mother’s perception of Indian child development. Unpublished research project. San Francisco: Institute for Scientific Analysis.*

*Please consult these sources for additional information on this topic. Other cultures will be addressed in future issues.*

# *Diversity Resource* Clip Art of Diverse Populations

Finding clip art that represented “people of color” was quite a task just a few years ago. Today, the task is less daunting. The following are two resources that may help to make your program announcements, brochures, and other printed materials more reflective of diverse audiences.

## **Clip Art with Color**

Add ethnic spice or multi-cultural variety to your newsletter, brochures, flyers, and other publication with Clip Art with Color from Gikuuri Software. These specialized collections contain color images, which are compatible with most Windows and Mac word processing, graphics, and desktop publishing software.

Included with the software packages are manuals containing all of the images and their names for quick reference. Volume 1 (\$39.99) contains 100 color images featuring people of color categories like business, computers, family, couples, performing arts, and much more. Volume 2 (\$49.99) contains over 150 religious images featuring people of color. Volume 3 (\$29.99) contains approximately 80 images. This package features mostly Christmas and Kwanzaa art but also contains a variety of family-oriented, winter-theme, and afrocentric images. Volume 4 (\$39.99) contains over 200 images in categories such as Children, Family, and Education. This collection also includes African-American fraternity, sorority, and multi-cultural images.



*Gikuuri Software may be ordered by calling 1-(888) 277-4400. The mailing address is P.O. Box 1267, Washington, D.C. 20013.*

## **Hispanic Heritage Clip Art**

Get your message across with charismatic images of Latinos at work, in school, and at play. This software contains easy to access original images depicting a diversity of cultural slices-of-life from the Caribbean to the Americas. The collection includes 190 color and 40 black & white fully manipulative vector images you can use to create striking web pages, publications, fliers, etc. Images include national flags, musicians, dancers, professionals, foods, students, teachers, occupations, daily life, artifacts, architecture, landmarks, and cultural icons.



The CD may be used with Windows 95/98. A Mac version is also available. The CD contains the ThumbsPlus viewer, which allows you to view thumbnails of all the images on the CD at a glance, making it easy to select and access the desired images.

*For pricing and ordering information call (717) 431-2100, fax (717) 431-1824, e-mail: [www2.expi.net/~escobar](http://www2.expi.net/~escobar), or write to Hispanic Heritage Clip Art, P.O. Box 8162, 21 North Mulberry Street, Lancaster, PA 17604-8162.*

**When you were born,  
you cried and the world rejoiced.  
Live your life in such a manner that  
when you die  
The world cries and you rejoice.**  
*An Indian Proverb*

## *Diversity Activity:* Culture Gallery

This activity can be used as an icebreaker and is especially useful in settings where participants do not know each other well.

### This activity requires:

- A blank sheet of paper and a marker for each participant.
- A room large enough to allow participants to circulate and with enough wall space to post descriptions.
- Time: 15-30 minutes (varies with group size and processing time).

### This activity will:

- Demonstrate that differences are sometimes only skin deep.
- Build camaraderie and understanding.
- Help group members learn more about each other.



### Here's how:

- Give participants a blank sheet of paper and ask them to make a list of one-word personality descriptors of themselves. Remind them not to write their names on the sheets.
- After each person has completed his or her list, collect the sheets and post them around the room.
- Ask participants to walk around and read each description.
- Ask them to identify as many people as possible.

### Follow up with these questions:

1. What led you to make your decisions?
2. Whose description was most surprising?
3. Do you think the descriptions are accurate?

Source: Created by Logan Hampton, Associate Dean of Students, University of Central Arkansas and was posted on PBSOnline.

<u>Upcoming Holidays and Celebrations</u>	
<b>August, 2000</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	<i>Emancipation Day</i> – Trinidad and Tobago
7 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Civic Holiday</i> – Canada
9 <sup>th</sup>	<i>World's Indigenous People Day</i> – U.N.
15 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Assumption Day</i> – a Christian observance <i>Liberation Day</i> – North and South Korea
22 <sup>nd</sup>	<i>Jammashami</i> – a new moon festival in honor of Lord Krishna - India
26 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Women's Equality Day</i> – U.S.
31 <sup>st</sup>	<i>Solidarity Day</i> – commemorates the first Polish labor union
<b>September, 2000</b> Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 – October 15)	
1 <sup>st</sup>	<i>Ganesh Chaturthi</i> – Hindu day of offering to Ganseha, god of wisdom and success
4 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Labor Day</i> – U.S. <i>Labour Day</i> – Canada
10 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Grandparents' Day</i> – U.S.
15 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Respect for the Aged Day</i> – Japan
16 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Octoberfest begins</i> – Germany, two week long harvest celebration
23 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>Autunnal Equinox Day</i> – Japan, celebrates autumn and honors family ancestry
24 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Mercedes Day</i> – Dominican Republic and Peru, religious holiday
28 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Confucius Birthday</i> – Taiwan and China, national holiday
<b><i>October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month</i></b>	

***Diversity in the Workplace*** Simple Ideas for Promoting Equity  
and Celebrating Diversity in the Workplace

<p>Hold a “diversity potluck” lunch. Invite co-workers to bring dishes that reflect their cultural heritage.</p>	<p><i>Arrange a “Box Lunch Forum” on topics of diverse cultural and social interest.</i></p>	<p><b>Cast a wide net when recruiting a new employee</b></p>	<p>Vary your lunch partners. Seek out co-workers of different departments and at different levels in the organization.</p>	<p><i>Value the input of every employee. Reward managers who do.</i></p>
<p>Give everyone a chance for that promotion. Post all job openings.</p>	<p><b>Fight against the “just like me” bias – the tendency to favor those who are similar to ourselves.</b></p>	<p><i>Examine the degree of diversity at all levels of your workplace. Are there barriers that make it harder for people of color and women to succeed? Suggest ways to overcome them.</i></p>	<p>Start a mentoring program that pairs veteran employees with newcomers</p>	<p>Ensure that your workplace complies with the accessibility requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act.</p>

*Adapted From: National Campaign for Tolerance  
A Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center  
E-mail your ideas to [campaign@tolerance.org](mailto:campaign@tolerance.org)*

***“All races need to communicate with each other and a good way to start is with a smile and a prayer.”***

Princess Pale Moon  
Cherokee Nation

## ***Diversity Around the State* Congratulations!!!**

### **Dauphin County – State Diversity Award Winners**

The Dauphin County Cooperative Extension staff are well-deserving recipients of the 2000 Outreach and Cooperative Extension Vice President's Award for Diversity and Public Service: "Marybeth Reese Award." The award went to the entire staff because the diversity initiatives in this county were indeed a total staff effort. This is the record they share.



#### ◆ **Active Participation and Leadership in Public Service**

Dauphin County is a racially and socio-economically diverse county. Twenty percent of the population are people of color and the population is comprised of rural poor, urban ghettos, middle-class suburbs, and other affluent communities. Additionally, there is a mountain range that divides the county into a rural county, including a large Amish population, and an urban county. The challenges are to meet the needs of this diverse county.

The staff has developed urban gardening programs to reach urban youth in school, church, and community programs. Summer programs also reach migrant children. The 4-H/Youth Development program reached 2,237 4-H youth with 39% being children of color. An ag agent spent time last summer working with inner city youth in a community beautification program. The staff provided exhibits for community activities, such as The Harrisburg Area Grange Fair, Building Strong Families Conference, and the breakfast meeting of County Commissioner Candidates. These exhibits promote educational programs and their impacts.

As a team, the staff of Dauphin County has been committed to reaching the diverse audience that the county provides. Collaborations with other agencies and organizations have been the means for providing education to youth and adults in a proactive manner.

#### ◆ **Volunteer Activities Beyond Job Duties**

The majority of the staff are involved in church related activities that outreach into the community. These include volunteering at the South Central PA Food Bank; providing animals for live nativity programs in the city during the holiday season; drama presentations; parent committees through the school system; as well as, membership on other organizational boards.

#### ◆ **Positive Impact on Public Welfare**

Urban children are learning how to garden, where their food comes from, and how to be in control when they're alone. Teens are learning effective leadership techniques and how to set goals and attain them. Migrant children learn space science theories through a summer rocketry program, while others are learning community-building and teamwork skills through the project, "Wild Over Work." Adults are learning better child-care alternatives and practices, serving food safely, saving money and reducing debt, building strong families, better nutrition practices, managing farms better, and growing better crops on the farm and in the greenhouse.

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◆ **Leadership in Promoting a Diverse Work Environment/Advocacy for Diversity Programs and Services**

Although the staff is 1% minority, the staff has worked together to build their Board of Directors, advisory committees, and Master Gardener volunteers to be representative of the county population, which have in turn, become outreach members of the staff. The active board consists of 52% male, 48% female, 74% white, 22% black, and 4% Hispanic, representing urban and rural geographic areas and various community organizations and businesses.

The Board of Directors has worked with the staff to increase support from the County Commissioners to add additional support staff and provide for office space improvements and equipment. The advisory committees in family living and 4-H/Youth Development that have a similar make-up as the board, promote and get involved in needs assessments, program delivery, and program evaluations. Agricultural advisory committees are comprised of men and women and provide direction to that program. The board and staff worked together to recruit underrepresented adults for the Master Gardener program and were able to add two minorities to the new class. Classes were held in a city location to provide access for city clientele. Master Gardeners become volunteer staff members during the summer month.

*Thanks to the Dauphin County staff for sharing their success story.*

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**This file may be accessed electronically at:**  
**<http://AgExtEd.cas.psu.edu/FCS/pi/pimenu.html>**

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