



Learning to Grow

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII ♥ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

I Am Who I Am Because of You



Okage sama de — “I am who I am because of you” — is a Japanese phrase that expresses the idea that every person accomplishes what she does only with the support of many others. This concept captures the essential role that the

family plays in supporting a child’s growth and development. A child’s home is where learning first takes place, with parents and other primary care providers being the child’s first teachers. Cultural and family values influence our expectations of what, how, and when children learn. For example, in some cultures children are expected to learn by observing, listening, and following. In others, they are expected to wait for and/or receive direct instruction, while in others, children are expected to ask questions and initiate discussions. You show your values and expectations of yourself and others in your everyday practices and in the ways you interact with your infant and other family members: the way you respond to people and situations, expressions of likes and dislikes, health care practices, and approaches to the way you handle everyday tasks.

Through this exposure, children learn values that help shape their self-identity and give them a sense of belonging. These values give children the confidence and freedom to develop their ability to explore and engage in increasingly complex

learning which is an essential element in their healthy development.

As children learn about their own cultural heritage, they begin to build an appreciation for their family history and an understanding of the culture in which they are raised. Then, as they are exposed to the cultural heritage of others, they begin to broaden their view of the world, which helps them gain a better understanding of people and communities close to home as well as in different parts of the world.

This newsletter will focus on suggested ways you can introduce and support your child’s learning about her cultural heritage. Activities that incorporate cultural traditions and practices that you can do with your infant, toddler, and preschooler are also included.

In This Newsletter:

To support you in fostering your child’s healthy development and school readiness, this newsletter includes:

- ♥ **Age-specific information and suggestions** about activities to do with your infant, toddler, or preschooler,
- ♥ **Featured activities** for each age group,
- ♥ **How This Helps:** a summary of how your child develops when you do these activities together,
- ♥ **Community Resources:** for more information about this topic, and
- ♥ **Suggested Books:** a list of books to read with your child.

Infants

Your infant learns much about who she is and her part in her family through the relationships that she's forming with the important people in her life. As she spends time and interacts with grandparents, other relatives, and close family friends, she is making connections to her cultural heritage and is also building relationships with those close to you. Create opportunities to encourage this relationship-building. The following are some ways to help your child learn about her culture and heritage.

- ♥ **Pictures of people and places** – Talk about the picture and why it is special. Encourage family members to tell stories about your family that relate to the pictures.
- ♥ **Songs and games** -Sing songs or play simple games that incorporate your culture. Ensure



that your child learns to speak in the home language of her grandparents if your family has immigrated from another country in the last two generations.

Activity for Infants: *Singing and Movement with Cultural Songs*

Adapted by Po Po Liu

Materials: None

What to Do:

1. During everyday activities like diapering, bathing, and feeding, sing to or play simple games with your baby.
2. Use words and songs that you remember from your own childhood. Here is a French movement song that you can do with your child before they go to bed.



Are You Sleeping (Frère Jacques)

Frère Jacques, frère Jacques

Dormez-vous? Dormez-vous? (place hand together like a sleeping motion from your left side of your face to your right side of your face)

Sonnez les matines Sonnez les matines (make a ringing the bell motion on both sides)

Din, dan, don. Din, dan, don (Clap hands together)

English:

Are you sleeping? Are you sleeping?
 Brother John, Brother John,
 Morning bells are ringing! Morning bells are ringing!
 Ding, dang, dong. Ding, dang, dong.

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)

Toddlers

As your toddler is becoming independent and adventurous in exploring, she is likely to be interacting with more people and trying new things. A great way to introduce your child to her cultural heritage is by talking about the foods that are significant to your culture as you eat them. For example, if rice is a main staple food in your culture you can talk about how rice grows, and introduce the different ways it's prepared (e.g. *musubi*, *sushi*, *jook*, *mochi*). You can also



talk about anything related to it (e.g., many Asian people use chopsticks to eat their rice and other foods). Use these opportunities to talk not only about her culture(s), but about others as well. Introducing foods from various cultures is just one of many ways to help your child learn and understand about the people and the world around her.

The following are additional ways that you can introduce your child to her cultural heritage:

- ♥ **Cultural events in your community** – Look for postings at the local chamber of commerce, newspapers, libraries, or museums. This is a great way to learn about different cultures. Have a discussion about what you experienced and learned together from the event.
- ♥ **Craft project** – Make a food collage, cutting out pictures of different ethnic foods from magazines or assemble a picture cookbook of foods from different cultures.

Activity for Toddlers: *Scavenger Hunt at the Grocery Store*

Materials:

- Downloaded photos
- Books

What to Do:

1. Together with your child, look through cultural books or the internet for various kinds of foods prior to going to the farmers market, grocery store, or local drug store.
2. At the market, have your child identify the different foods she saw in the books or internet web pages.
3. Have a small discussion about the culture those foods come from. For example, point out the rambutan and talk about what it looks like, how it tastes, and where it's from.

***Variation #1:** Together, create a checklist with photos of the foods you may be shopping for. Use the checklist with your child while browsing the store and finding the items on your list.

***Variation#2:** If you purchase any of the foods, go home and have your child feel, smell, and taste the food. Talk about what you can make with it and together make a dish that includes that ingredient.

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)



Preschoolers

One of the best ways that you can connect your preschooler to her cultural heritage is to talk about it. As she engages in conversations with the people she loves, your child will begin to understand what others are saying, express her thoughts, and begin to associate what she hears with actions, as well as through printed words. Use words and phrases that express values that are important to you, your family, and your culture, as you show these values in what you do and what you expect of your child each day. For example, as your child sees you living your values such as *mālama* (to care for), *lokomāika'i* (to share with others), *kōkua* (helpfulness), and as you discuss why these are important to you and your family, she is likely to start understanding and living them as well.

Here are other ways to introduce your child to her cultural heritage and those of others:

- ♡ **Read books about your own and other cultures.** This is a great way to help your child learn about different people, customs, activities, and places.

- ♡ **Create activities that illustrate a celebration or custom in your culture.** Doing a hands-on activity helps her understand what the custom is about.



Activities for Preschoolers: *Food Detective*

Adapted from HMSA Nutrition Lessons for Elementary Students K-3

Materials:

Construction paper
Markers/crayons

What to Do:

1. Tell your child she will be a food detective. Explain to her what the word “detective” means. A detective is someone who finds things out or investigates to get answers. Let her know that she will investigate what the family eats each day.
2. Together, create a poster with construction paper. Write out the alphabet letters (from A–Z) in a column along the left side of the page. Place it on the refrigerator or a bulletin board in your kitchen.
3. Every time the family eats a meal or your child thinks of a food, help her list the food next to the appropriate letter that the food starts with. Talk about the sounds that each letter makes and other possible foods that could be listed next to that letter.
4. Help your child write the words and/or draw a picture next to each letter. Be sure to list what culture the food came from. Example: A-*Adobo* (Filipino), S-*Sushi* (Japanese)

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)



How This Helps

The activities suggested in this newsletter help promote many different aspects of development:

Physical Development

- ♥ Use and strengthen small muscles
- ♥ Develop eye-hand coordination

Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ Develop her unique identity
- ♥ Develop a close bond with you

Language and Literacy Development

- ♥ Build verbal skills, vocabulary, and use of descriptive language
- ♥ Increase her observation, listening and understanding skills, and attention span

Cognitive Development

- ♥ Develop her creativity and imagination
- ♥ Understand cause and effect.

Kids in the Kitchen

Cooking teaches valuable lessons. As you do this recipe with your child, show her how to safely handle the items and allow her to do as much as she is capable of. Ask questions throughout the process to encourage her thinking and language skills. Make sure to wash your hands and your child's hands before preparing any food.

Indian Vegetable Samosas

Adapted by: Kung Kung Liu

Ingredients:

- 1 cup peeled, cubed potatoes (boiled)
- 2 Tbsp. canola oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup frozen peas and carrots
- pinch garam masala
(Asian or spice section in grocery stores)
- pinch curry powder
- kosher or Hawaiian salt to taste
- Won Ton Squares



Instructions:

1. In a large bowl, have your child mash the potatoes with a potato masher or fork.
2. Add a pinch of the spices and salt to the potatoes. Then, help your child mix the potatoes, onions, peas, and carrots together. Have her smell the different herbs. Discuss the smell and colors you see in the bowl with your child. Have her feel the texture of the mashed ingredients.
3. To create the samosas, have your child put a spoonful of the potato mixture onto the won ton square. Add drops of water on the edge of the won ton, fold in half diagonally, and press to seal. Talk about the shape that the samosas make.
4. Once sealed, fry the samosas in hot oil until golden brown (adult only).
5. Place the fried samosas on a paper towel so that excess oil is absorbed.
6. Discuss with your child how the samosas have changed in how it looks. Once cooled, enjoy!

Community Resources

Multicultural Children's Book Day

<http://multiculturalchildrensbookday.com/multicultural-reading-resources/diversity-book-lists-for-kids/>

This site shares a variety of children's books that you can read with your children.

The Culinary Institute of the Pacific Kapiolani Community College

<http://culinary.kapiolani.hawaii.edu/cooking-up-a-rainbow/manual-and-recipes/>

This site shares a variety of recipes. It also shares photos of local fruit, vegetables, and herbs.



Suggested Books

Recommended by **Hawaii State Public Library** www.librarieshawaii.org.

Infants and Toddlers

Colors by Julia Pimsleur Levine

This is a book that will expose your child to three different languages: English, Spanish, and French while learning colors at the same time.

Preschoolers

The Twins Blanket by Hyewon Yum

Two twin girls, who have always shared everything, sleep in separate beds for the first distinct fabrics that the girls chose for their blankets. There are many visual discoveries that distinguish each girl as special and unique.

All Kinds of Children by Norma Simon and Diane Paterson

Even though we come from different cultures and different origins, all children around the world have similar needs such as food, clothing, people to love, and the opportunity to play. This book will start the conversations about how children are different all around the world but we have common needs to survive.



Learning to Grow is a project of the University of Hawai'i, Windward Community College, with funding from the Hawai'i Department of Human Services. Visit our website at www.learningtogrowhawaii.org