



Learning to Grow

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

Celebrating Culture

A child's home is where learning first takes place, with parents and other primary caregivers being the child's first teachers. From the earliest days of a child's life, they are experiencing and learning about their culture and the world around them. According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), culture is a group of people's beliefs, practices, and traditions. This can be seen through values, expectations, interactions, and responses to people and situations.

Researchers suggest that a strong cultural identity leads to higher self-esteem and healthier well-being. By actively participating in cultural learning, you help build a strong foundation for your child's future.

There are many ways you can teach your child about his own culture while exploring others:

- ♥ Teach the language – Language is the way people communicate with one another, build relationships, and create a sense of community. Teaching your child keywords in your native language provides a strong and important sense of self and cultural belonging.
- ♥ Celebrate holidays and traditions – Most cultures engage in some holidays and traditions. Creating experiences for children to celebrate traditions helps to create a bond with a family's culture. Cooking and eating traditional meals or snacks made with ingredients native to your culture helps your child develop a connection to their cultural identity.
- ♥ Share stories and family history – Photos are a way to provide visuals to introduce your family heritage and tell stories that have been passed down for generations.



This newsletter will share strategies to help your infant, toddler, or preschooler embrace their cultural identity and explore and appreciate other cultures.

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 your child's development by doing these activities together,
- ♥ **Resources:** for more information, and
- ♥ **Suggested Books:** a list of books to read with your child.

Infants

Your infant learns about who he is and his role in your family through the relationships that he's forming with the important adults in his life. Spending time with grandparents, other relatives, and close family friends will help him connect to his cultural heritage and build relationships with those close to him. Here are some ways you can help your infant learn about his culture and heritage.

- ♥ Teach the language - Incorporate cultural words into your everyday conversations. Teach words such as "Tūtū" and "'Ohana". You can also sing lullabies or simple songs to your infant (see activity below).
- ♥ Celebrate holidays and traditions – When your infant is ready to start solids, introduce cultural foods. For example, Hawaiian foods such as poi and sweet potato are great starter foods for infants and are featured in lū'au celebrations.
- ♥ Share stories and family history - Show your infant family photos and talk to him about who these people are and why they are important to your family. For example, "here's a picture of Tūtū, whom we see every Friday night. She loves to have everyone over for family dinners."



Activity for Infants: *Lullaby for Baby*

What to Do:

1. When it is time for your infant to sleep, softly sing him a lullaby. Use words and songs from your cultural heritage. Here is an example in Hawaiian.

Pūpū Hinuhinu
Pūpū hinuhinu (Shiny Shell)
Pūpū hinuhinu e (My shiny little shell)
O ke Kahakai Kahakai e (Found at the seashore)
Pūpū hinuhinu e (My shell, shiny shell)
Pūpū hinuhinu e (Shiny Shell)
Pūpū hinuhinu e (My shiny little shell)
E lohe kākou e (We all listen)
Pūpū hinuhinu e (My shell, shiny shell)
Pūpū hinuhinu e (Shiny Shell)
Pūpū hinuhinu e (My shiny little shell)
E moe, e moe (Go to sleep)
E moe-e (To sleep, to sleep)



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

Toddlers

Your toddler is starting to interact with more people and learn new things. He can recognize his reflection in a mirror and is curious about differences. You might notice him react strongly to a caregiver's change in appearance, such as a haircut or the shaving of a mustache or beard. As your child begins to see himself as a person, this is a crucial time to strengthen his cultural identity.

- ♥ Teach the language –Teach phrases such as “I love you” and “Thank you” in the child’s own language and different languages, such as *mahalo* in Hawaiian, *gracias* in Spanish, or *merci* in French.
- ♥ Celebrate holidays and traditions - Attend cultural events in your community, such as Chinese New Year or Lei Day celebrations. This is a great way to learn about different cultures by seeing people performing cultural traditions (e.g., lion dance) and tasting a variety of ethnic foods. Find events that have children’s activities or experiences. Look for postings on community social media pages or public libraries.
- ♥ Share stories and family history - Talk about the foods that are significant in your culture as you



eat them. For example, if rice is a staple in your culture, you can have your child help you wash the rice or make sushi rolls. Talk about how it’s made and the different ways that it is prepared. You can also talk about how other cultures make or eat rice.

Activity for Toddlers: Mealtime Help

What You Need:

Table setting objects such as cups, chopsticks, spoons, forks, and napkins

What to Do:

1. Let your toddler help set the table at mealtime. Give him safe things to do, like putting out napkins, spoons, or small unbreakable dishes.
2. Discuss the utensils being used. For example, “We need rice bowls and chopsticks for our rice.” Or “We need forks for our spaghetti.”
3. Count with him in your language, or different languages, as he puts the settings on the table. In Spanish, “Uno, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco.” Or Hawaiian “‘Ekahi, ‘elua, ‘ekolu ‘ehā ‘elima.”
4. Ask him to help you take the safe dishes to the kitchen when the meal is finished.
5. Use your home language to thank him for helping. Or you can say thank you in different languages e.g., “Mahalo” or “Gracias.”



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

Preschoolers

One of the best ways to connect your preschooler to his cultural heritage is by talking about it. At this age, your child can recognize differences between himself and those around him. You can help him understand that another family's practices may differ significantly from his own. Ensure your child sees that all people are welcomed, respected, and treated warmly, regardless of their differences.

- ♥ Teach the language – Introduce books with dual or multiple languages. Examples of books are: *Como me siento?* - How do I feel? (Spanish-English) by Pamela Cote, *Am I small? Li'ilī'i wau?* (English-Hawaiian) or *The Fearless Shark: Explore Animals and Opposites in English, Spanish, Chinese & Korean* (Multilingual Learning in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Korean) by David Ming.
- ♥ Celebrate holidays and traditions - In addition to celebrating your family's cultural traditions, introduce other cultural traditions by inviting family friends to share about a cultural tradition



they celebrate. Have them bring clothing, music, or food to share as they talk about the celebration.

- ♥ Share stories and family history – Invite other family members to your home to share stories from when they were your child's age. This helps your child connect with the family members and the stories they are telling. This also gives him a sense of self-identity, which increases self-esteem.

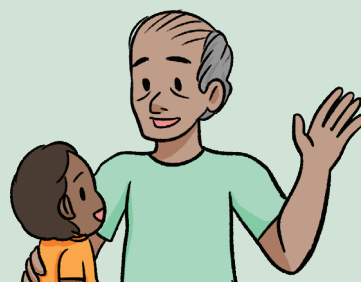
Activity for Preschoolers: *Tell Me a Story*

What You Need:

None

What to Do:

1. When your child's grandparents or other family members get together, encourage them to share some old-time stories with your child.
2. The storyteller could share a folktale from her culture, something that she remembers about when she was your child's age, or some memories of her childhood. For example, Grandma might share a story about *Hinamatsuri*, Girls' Day – the third day of the third month- and the doll she received when she was a young child.
3. Encourage the storyteller to describe to your child some places or things that are no longer present today. If the story took place overseas, ask her to provide the words from her home language to best describe what she is talking about.
4. Share your memories when she is finished.
5. Review the story with your child at another time. Continue to tell the story to reinforce connections.
6. Encourage him to tell stories from his own experiences. Pay close attention when he is telling his story



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

How This Helps

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

Physical Development

- ♥ Learn to use his body with intention
- ♥ Develop eye-hand coordination

Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ Learn to interact with others
- ♥ Develop a close bond with you

Language and Literacy Development

- ♥ Build verbal skills, vocabulary, and use of descriptive language
- ♥ Learn to ask and answer questions

Cognitive Development

- ♥ Increase his observation, listening, and understanding skills
- ♥ Develop his thinking and problem-solving skills



Kids in the Kitchen

Cooking teaches valuable lessons such as math (quantity, size), science (texture, appearance), fine motor skills (cutting, peeling), and literacy (print awareness). As you make this recipe with the child, talk about kitchen safety. Show him how to handle items safely and allow him to do as much as he is capable of. Praise his efforts, and ask questions throughout the process to encourage his thinking skills. Most of all, have fun!

Kim Chee Dip

Adapted from: <https://www.hawaii.edu/recipes/snack/kimcheedip.html>

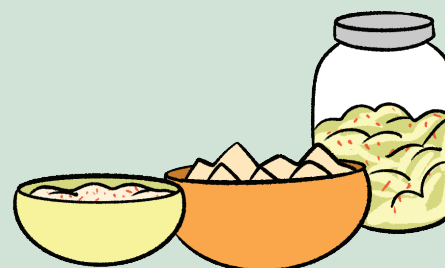
Submitted by: Hawaiian Electric Company, Residential Services Division

Ingredients:

- ½ C Kim Chee, chopped
- 1 T Kim Chee juice
- 1 pkg (8-oz) cream cheese, quartered

Directions:

1. Help your child combine all ingredients into a blender
2. Cover and blend for 1 minute
3. Chill and serve with crisp vegetables or chips (makes 1 cup)



Resources

Sesame Workshop

Together, watch children showcase their families and loved ones, notice how each family is different but special.

<https://sesameworkshop.org/resources/f-is-for-family/>

USDA Food and Nutrition Services

40 recipes in this Team Nutrition collection will give you ideas from different cultures to create delicious foods with your child.

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/multicultural-recipes>



Suggested Books

Discover these books and more at the **Hawai'i State Public Library**
www.librarieshawaii.org.

Infants and Toddlers

Baby's Book of Firsts in Hawai'i by BeachHouse Publishing

This book chronicles and celebrates the important milestones in a baby's first year in Hawai'i.

Bee-bim Bop! by Linda Sue Park

Shopping, preparing ingredients, setting the table, and finally eating the child's favorite meal, Bee-bim Bop. This book highlights the Korean dish through a child's eyes.

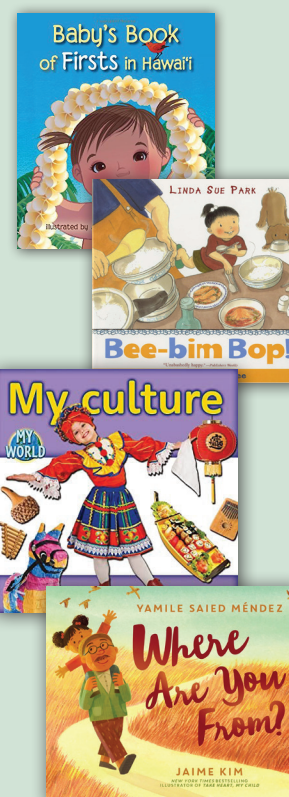
Preschoolers

My Culture by Bobbie Kalman

Culture is expressed through our language, clothing, food, music, dance, and so many other exciting experiences that we celebrate. This book has brilliant real pictures of children embracing their cultures.

Where are you from? by Yamilé Saied Méndez

"Where are you from?" is a question that a small girl is asked and not sure how to answer, so she asks her Abuelo the same question. The answer she receives is not what you would expect.



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 or visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/learningtogrowhawaii and Instagram @uhlearningtogrow