

CDS Diversity & Inclusion Toolkit

Dear CDS Families,

The community at Children's Day School (CDS) is one of our greatest strengths. We intentionally foster our diverse and inclusive environment because this aligns with our values and mission and is critical to the education of the thoughtful leaders we are helping to create.

Our value statement at CDS states:

*"The Children's Day School community nourishes and **celebrates diversity, promotes justice and respect for all people**, and aspires to act always with integrity, compassion and generosity."*

Our mission is:

*"To develop each student's genius by providing an inspiring environment where challenging academics are inseparable from social, artistic, and physical experiences, and **where children of all backgrounds feel safe to be themselves, become avid learners, and strive to make a difference in the lives of others.**"*

One way we do this is by giving respect and dignity to the experience of others and fostering a community dialogue that empowers healthy communication.

The purpose of this handbook is to give our families a method for having conversations about social justice and diversity with our children at home that supports the work we are doing at school. Our CDS community consists of a wide range of families, and we want to celebrate and respect everyone.

Social Justice as a Focus

Just as people who identify as white may think less about race on a regular basis - or not at all - we recognize that for many people in the world there are a multitude of discriminating factors that can affect a person's daily life. People of color, different sexual orientation, physical disability or from various socio economic circumstances or political ideals all may face unavoidable considerations of bias throughout their day.

As we read in last year's all-school read, *Waking Up White* by Debbie Irving, recognizing every circumstance as a journey, and seeing how we each benefit from varying systemic advantages is important to creating a just society. This doesn't imply that white people, or anyone, enjoys a life free from struggle or hardship, but we want to teach our children about the biased privileges that exist, and help keep this top of mind when meeting others.

These conversations may be uncomfortable, and that is to be expected. We want to offer tools that will challenge everyone to engage in critical conversations outside their comfort zones.

The tools here offer practical suggestions for being considerate members of the community and use clear examples for answering common questions regarding diversity. This toolkit provides a basis for inviting difficult conversations at home. We hope it is helpful.

Goals of this Toolkit

1. Keep diversity and inclusion in mind
2. Make the considerations of social justice and empathy a lifelong practice
3. Give our community the tools to safely join the broader cultural dialogue
4. Provide a safe and open dialogue for discussing trigger words and phrases

Most importantly, we want to be clear that we honor and respect the cultures and beliefs you hold at home, and we make no assumptions about the conversations you may already be having with your children. We hope that these resources add another dimension to our home-school partnership.

Lastly, with the rapid pace of this evolving dialogue, rather than providing lists of books for further reading and specific vocabulary, we felt it would be more useful to offer websites with continually vetted and updated lists that can help our community critically examine the content. Below are a few:

- [Children's Literature & Reading Special Interest Group](#)
- [We Need Diverse Books](#)

Thank you to the many people who inspired, co-wrote, and edited this work.

We welcome your feedback! How are these addendums helpful? How can they be improved? Please write me at anthonyw@cds-sf.org or call (415) 660-7452.

Thank you for your time and interest in helping CDS become more inclusive!

We are CDS!

A Note of Thanks

We at CDS appreciate your openness and willingness to participate in creating such a warm, welcoming, and inclusive environment for our children. Our hope is that we all can learn, grow, and benefit from taking just a little time to learn something new about other people, or a moment each day to consider how others may walk through this world, and by teaching our children to demonstrate the love and respect we all deserve.

Many people contributed to the creation of this toolkit, which was the intent as we are wiser together. The following parents/guardians helped co-write sections and provided editorial feedback: Alan Vitolo, Amy Silverstein, Anna Sopko, Carl Schneebeck, Dee Hibbert-Jones, Lara Ezrin, Lindsay Woollerson, and Nomi Talisman. Special thanks to Stephen Goldmann, who took this project under his creative wing and brought it to a new level with care and wisdom. Several staff and administrators co-wrote chapters or provided editorial support, including: Alexsarah Collier, Amanda Richard, Andrei Ferrera, Antonette Greene, Diane Larrabee, Donnie Weaver, Ed Rhee, Jack Hamm, Lindsay Galligan, Molly Huffman, Rebecca Kroll, Rhonda Ross, and Trudy Hamm. Lastly, many faculty contributed by providing examples of how we practice social justice work in our classrooms every day. Our teachers are everyday heroes, fighting for liberty and justice for all.

With respect,
Anthony



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Race/Ethnicity

Introduction

At CDS, we encourage everyone to have regular conversations about race and ethnicity. We believe that keeping these topics top-of-mind for everyone is the key to creating a just society where everyone has equal opportunities and protections. On an individual level, our goal is to teach our children to see and celebrate each other for who they are, and to practice being allies to everyone so that all people are treated with the respect they deserve.

We believe that, through dialogue, our students can understand the multiple truths that govern individuals' lives and begin to create a world of compassion and understanding from a history of stereotypes and racism.



Race and Ethnicity in Our Community

It is often challenging for people to explain their background to others. Kids and adults both face such questions on a daily basis. At our school, nearly 14% of students identify as multiracial, so it is natural that people may be asked “What are you?” out of genuine curiosity. This fact emphasizes the importance of being able to respectfully ask and answer questions of race and ethnicity.

Conversations about race can be comfortable or uncomfortable, depending on the situation. It can feel invasive and awkward, or like a point of connection. The tools here are meant to help children relate to others in better, more respectful ways. Whether you are on the giving or receiving end of such personal curiosity, there are ways to speak about where we come from that can create understanding.

Videos for Further Introduction

- [Color Blind or Color Brave?](#) - Mellody Hobson talks about how we can broach the “conversational third rail” of race
- [How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Discussing Race](#) - Jay Smooth talks about how having difficult conversations, making mistakes, and still being a good person
- [Sometimes You're a Caterpillar](#) - A snail and a caterpillar talk about privilege and race in a very approachable way
- [A Look at Race Relations Through a Child's Eyes](#) - CNN study examining the perceptions and attitudes of children about race
- [Do White People Get Stressed Talking About Race?](#) - Two white people have a conversation about race with other white people and with people of color, with a surprise experiment
- [25 Mini-Films for Exploring Race, Bias and Identity with Students](#) - collection of 1-7 minute films from the New York Times with related readings and activities

Vocabulary

- Social justice - the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society. Under equitable conditions, all persons, irrespective of ethnic origin, race, sexual orientation, gender, religion, etc., are to be treated equally and without prejudice.
- Civil rights - Personal rights acquired by an individual by being a citizen or resident, or automatic entitlements to certain freedoms conferred by law or custom. Certain civil rights (such as the right to equality, freedom, good governance, justice, and due process of law) are inalienable human and natural rights, whereas others (such as the right to hold a public office) depend on one's conduct and can be lost. Also called civil liberties.
- Race vs Ethnicity -
 - **Race** refers to physical attributes and appearances such as skin color, hair color, and bone structure. This is what is being described when you hear about concepts like white, Asian, and African American. Even these descriptions are somewhat confusing when you consider them in terms of ethnicity.
 - **Ethnicity** refers to cultural factors such as nationality, lineage, language, and beliefs. So in this case someone could be considered ethnically American, or ethnically American and English-speaking. There is frequent overlap and intersectionality when you consider a race grouping like Asian, for example, which actually has hundreds of ethnic groups.
 - Usage of the two is commonly confused in public discourse and media, leading many to not clearly understand the distinctions. When you hear something in the media like "The American race," there is really no such thing. The best way to keep them straight is to remember that race is physical while ethnicity is, well...everything else.
- Racism/racist - Prejudiced thought and discriminatory actions based on perceptions and stereotypes about race

- Racism can manifest itself in many ways, including hiring practices, medical attention and diagnoses, access to housing and education, and physical violence
- Institutional racism - Whereas individual racism is usually expressed in open antagonism and prejudice, institutional racism often involves subtle or explicit structuring of organizations and systems in a tacit understanding to keep people of color down or out.
- Reverse racism -
 - Perceived prejudice against the members of a majority group in employment, education, promotion, or distribution of benefits.
 - An argument used by opponents of affirmative action that any policy of giving special favors to any group automatically discriminates against other groups.
 - While individuals or groups may discriminate against members of a racial majority, reverse racism is an inaccurate concept because such discrimination would lack the institutional power that can only come from a majority
- Post-racial - A theoretical environment in which the United States or any society is free from racial preference, discrimination, and prejudice.

Race and Ethnicity in the CDS Classroom

Here are a few examples of how teachers are addressing issues of race and ethnicity in the classroom.

- Teach a series of lessons on the origin of racial categories and the words we use to describe race, ethnicity, and nationality (lower school)
- Discuss melanin in skin (preschool)
- Use charts to see everyone's difference and similarities. Examples: hair color, type of hair, eye color, etc. (preschool)
- Present role models of various races and ethnicities (whole school)
- Read literature and source material that highlights diverse experiences and multiple truths, both as a focus of the story and as incidental background to the characters (examples: scientists and inventors of different races/ethnicities; stories with Asian protagonists...)
- Use bilingual and Spanish books that represent many types of families, with vocabulary for all family members

Our hope is that people will have conversations about race/ethnicity to *normalize* it in conversation. At CDS, we do this through our various curricula and affinity group work. We encourage all our families to strive to be powerful anti-racist allies through dialogue and action. We need everyone at the table, taking small or large steps and helping in any way possible.

Conversation Starters at Home or with Other CDS Families

It can be uncomfortable to talk with other adults about race/ethnicity. What can help is accepting multiple truths that may differ from our experiences. People of color (PoC) likely think about race on a daily basis, because the world treats PoC differently. PoC constantly need to weigh the

cost of responding to everyday racism, and possibly appearing “overly sensitive” or “angry” as stereotypes indicate.

Understanding our adult feelings of race

- When do you feel singled out? What conversations or circumstances do you appreciate about race? What do you feel is important to teach your children about race?
- How was race discussed or avoided at home when you were a kid? What conversations are happening around race at home now, or about news related to race?
- How can we all feel pride about our ethnic backgrounds, and acknowledge and respect lived experiences of people from different backgrounds?
- How can we all be anti-racist in small or big ways? What’s one thing you can do to help end racism?
- How can we keep the issues facing others alive in our everyday conversations at home?
- How do we feel about movements that may not include us or may have methods we don’t understand? How can we acknowledge them and appreciate their voice even if they do not have a place for us?

Helping our children think about race

- What is the right response to comments or questions that don’t feel good?
- What situations might call for a response to bias, either intentional or not? What other responses might be called for in different situations?
- In what ways are we privileged? How might someone else not share the same privileges?
- How do we safely show appreciation of others? What might make someone feel unsafe or be unwelcome?
- How do we show our support for others when we think we perceive bias or careless actions?

Quick Responses

We want to provide examples of how you could respond to questions involving race, while also encouraging you to respond in a way that reflects your experiences and values. We hope you will engage in conversations that build language and understanding around this topic.

1. “Why do we need to keep talking about race?”
 - The more we talk about race, the more “normal” and less uncomfortable it becomes, and the better we get at being able to have conversations. Practice is key. It’s important that we all have conversations, because race affects people of color on a daily basis. If we aspire to a truly equitable society, we need to find ways to talk about our experiences and appreciate and accept multiple truths as reality.
2. “I’m white - I don’t have a race”
 - Not seeing whiteness as a race is usually the result of “white” being the dominant, default race in the U.S. As in the analogy of fish being unable to see

the water they swim in, it can be difficult because it “just is.” Images in movies, books, and organizations often show a majority of white “characters,” which implies it as the “norm.” As members of the racial norm, people perceived as white are usually treated differently than people of other races.

3. “Why can some people show pride and celebrate their race/ethnicity, but the same isn’t true for white people?”
 - There is an unfortunate history that links “white pride” with racist, oppressive groups. While numerous white allies have fought racist laws, institutions, and groups in the past, this doesn’t change historical reasons for drawing attention to white groups - to separate themselves from other groups and award privileges to whites. However, celebrating our Irish, German, Swedish, or other predominantly white ethnic heritages is highly encouraged.
4. “How can we all be allies for each other?”
 - We can start by accepting that society privileges certain groups in different ways. White people and people of color may receive different treatment in similar situations. If white people can be aware of these differences more often, we can take one step closer to being a just society where everyone has equal treatment. By checking in and working in collaboration with groups who are not like themselves, people can fight to make their privileges available to all. Here’s a great resource from Rosetta Eun Ryong Lee called, “[Growing as an Ally.](#)”

Resources / Media

Websites

[Black Lives Matter](#) - Advocates for dignity, justice and respect

[NPR - Truth Be Told](#) - Podcast on how to talk about race

[NPR - Code Switch](#) - Podcast on “race and identity remixed”

[Understanding Race](#) - Different ways of looking at race, games that examine stereotypes

[Talking Race](#) - Teaching Tolerance, great materials for educators and families

[Whiteness Project](#) - White millennials in Dallas, TX, talk about race



Socioeconomic Diversity

Introduction

At CDS, we strive to give our families an experience that reflects the wider community and helps people make connections across all kinds of social barriers. As part of this, we work hard to keep our school representative of San Francisco's population, and this includes having a broad socioeconomic group.

The issues of socioeconomic diversity are much deeper than just what someone earns. Socioeconomic rights are an important piece of human rights. They include the right to education, housing, adequate standards of living, health, science, and culture. At CDS, we talk about this because we teach that studying socioeconomic status often reveals inequities in access to resources, plus issues related to privilege, power, and control.

The term "Socioeconomic" refers to the interaction between the social and economic habits of a group of people. Socioeconomic status (SES) is commonly conceptualized as the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is measured as a combination of education, income and occupation.

Videos and Resources for Further Introduction

- [Understanding Social Mobility](#) - Brookings Institute, an exploration of inequality and opportunity using Legos
- [Cartoon](#) explains how socioeconomic status affects people's life chances
- [Social Class in the Lower School Classroom](#) - NAIS article talks about relative deprivation and relative privilege

Socioeconomic Diversity in Our Community

At CDS, we believe socioeconomic diversity benefits the entire community. We set aside nearly 20% of our operating budget toward sliding scale tuition, and about 30% of CDS families receive some form of assistance.

Vocabulary

- Socioeconomic mobility
 - Social mobility and status as related to an individual's or family's economic situation, background, and sense of financial security
- Low / medium / high SES
 - The vocabulary used to describe comparative levels of economic security and the accompanying social mobility
- Human rights vs civil rights

- Human rights arise simply by being a person. Civil rights, on the other hand, arise only by virtue of a legal grant of that right, such as the rights imparted on American citizens by the U.S. Constitution.
- Collective rights
 - Rights that are held by a group rather than by any one individual
- Access to resources
 - This is a topic that is important to social rights. It describes any actual or potential barriers that might prevent some people from equitable participation in society, whether that be socially, educationally, or physically.
- Achievement gap vs. opportunity gap (in education)
 - The term achievement gap is used to refer to the observed, persistent disparity of educational measures between the performance of groups of students, especially groups defined by socioeconomic status (SES), race/ethnicity, and gender.
 - The opportunity gap is the greatest crisis facing America's schools. The opportunity gap is the disparity in access to quality schools and the resources needed for all children to be academically successful.

Socioeconomic Diversity in the CDS Classroom

Here are a few examples of how teachers are addressing issues of socioeconomic diversity in the classroom. These are meant to give insight into the kinds of conversations that may be happening at CDS so that you can be prepared for what may come up at home. We hope to work in partnership with families while also respecting the cultural beliefs and traditions of each household.

- Share our own experiences and history around SES, have conversations about how it affects everyone and especially people of color
- Acknowledge yet de-emphasize *where* people went on vacations while encouraging people to share local experiences, *what* people did, and *who* they spent time with
- Highlight scientists who faced socioeconomic challenges and still achieved success and notoriety
- Challenge stereotypes around SES and homelessness
- Identify who may be homeless in our city, opening eyes that people can experience homelessness despite background or upbringing
- Talk about how SES impacts access to playing sports and games
- Point out similarities and differences among various immigrant groups and those who have lived here longer

Conversation Starters at Home or with Other CDS Families

Understanding our adult feelings of Socioeconomic Diversity

It can be uncomfortable to talk with other adults about income and social status, and we are often hesitant to begin these conversations with new acquaintances. Consider how you might talk about the following topics with other CDS families. How can you begin to talk about it with your children?

- How do we discuss public vs. independent schools? What was important to you in choosing CDS? What might be important to other families?
- How can we teach our children to be sensitive to others' feelings by not over-emphasizing material things or vacations, knowing some families have extremely limited budgets?
- Are socioeconomic issues about charity or social justice? How can we build the notion of "exchange" or "peer-to-peer" into our students' lives?

Helping our children think about Socioeconomic Diversity

The most important message is that we rely on all our families to help make CDS what it is, and we recognize that people give in many important ways: financially, with their time, or with skills that can help the school. The important starting point is that all CDS families are equally important and valued.

The following are some results from seminal studies in the field that can spur good conversations

- First-grade children from higher SES groups know about twice as many words as lower SES children (Graves, Brunetti, & Slater, 1982; Graves & Slater, 1987).
- High school seniors near the top of their class know about four times as many words as their lower-performing classmates (Smith, 1941).
- High-performing third graders had vocabularies about equal to the lowest-performing twelfth graders (Smith, 1941).

Quick Responses

The following conversations have come up during school, mostly from students. We want to provide examples of how you could respond, while also encouraging you to respond in a way that reflects your experiences and values. Most of all, we encourage you to engage in conversations to build vocabulary and understanding around this topic.

1. Everybody is going to Tahoe for break. Why aren't we going?
 - Some families spend more money on trips than others. We have a limited budget for trips, but can plan all kinds of fun things here at home.
 - We have other plans to do ____ (event). If you really want to go, we can start saving for a trip in the future.
 - We just don't have money for trips right now. Maybe in the future.
 - What is exciting to you about going to Tahoe? Let's see if there are some ways that we can do that closer to home that don't cost as much money.
2. Rich people should pay more so poor people can go to good schools
 - At CDS, about 30% of families receive sliding scale tuition. This is an important part of creating a diverse community with different perspectives. The school believes it is important to have children from different backgrounds and perspectives learning together.

- What does it mean to say “good” schools? A number of public schools are excellent - and free. Our government believes that every child has the right to be in a good school where she/he/they can be safe and learn. We chose to go to an independent school where we pay tuition because [insert your reasons here].
3. Poor people are lucky because they get things for free
- CDS believes it is important to include all children in activities, and hopes to ensure money is not a reason for anyone to not participate. While some may say “poor people are lucky...”, luck doesn’t usually describe why families receive sliding scale tuition. Children and adults may still feel a stigma attached to receiving financial assistance. We can help end this stigma by understanding that people can be successful in many ways that aren’t related to money. Some jobs provide a meaningful service to society but don’t necessarily pay as well as others.

Resources / Media

Websites

- [Inequality.org](http://inequality.org) - data and analysis about income inequality
- [Playspent.org](http://playspent.org) - game that has people make financial choices millions of Americans make on a daily basis
- CNN/Money cost of living [calculator](#) - compares groceries, housing, utilities, transport, and health care of two cities

Footnotes/Articles

1. [Closing the Opportunity Gap](#), Arne Duncan, former U.S. Secretary of Education
2. [Why We Need to Stop Calling It the ‘Achievement Gap’](#), Kayla Patrick, Education Post
3. [Unequal Opportunities: Race and Education](#), Brookings Institute
4. [The Education System Is Rigged Against Low-Income Students. Even in Kindergarten](#), Huffington Post



Sexual Orientation

Introduction

CDS has a strong tradition of being openly supportive of diverse family structures, including families with two moms, two dads, a mom and a dad, a single parent or guardian, and all of the shapes and sizes families take. As we printed on our CDS Pride Parade T-shirts, “Love is love.” This sums up our belief that love chooses us, not the other way around.

In addition to supporting LGBTQ families, we also sometimes encounter children who are aligning as LGBTQ in elementary or middle school. For these children, understanding their sexual orientation is a process that can be confusing and scary at times. There are a lot of real and perceived risks for these children, including fears of being ostracized by their peers, not being accepted by their families, and not understanding what ramifications these feelings may have in their lives. Our goal is to create an open and supportive environment to have these conversations at home.



Gender and transgender issues are covered below in a section dedicated to this topic.

Videos for Further Introduction

- [LGBTQ](#): Understanding Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities - the film features several young adults who talk about their journeys and how we can all be allies
- [GLSEN](#) - creating safe spaces in schools
- [5 Tips For Being An Ally](#) - MTV Decoded video with practical ways to be an ally
- [Meet real dads who responded to their kids coming out in the best way](#) - Upworthy
- [Actress Tatiana Maslany on Why She's an LGBTQ Ally](#) - GLAAD: All Access

Sexual Orientation Diversity in Our Community

In general, San Francisco is an open and accepting place and our children are exposed to many different expressions just by living here. Our goal is for students to accept others that they meet and engage safely in conversations with people who may seem different.

Vocabulary

- There are a number of terms that may be unfamiliar to people, but there is a great resource available within the Welcoming Schools website. We recommend this link for a thorough list of definitions: [LGBTQ definitions](#)

What's Happening at CDS

Examples of how teachers are addressing issues of sexual orientation in the classroom include reading books with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer/questioning characters and a variety of family dynamics. As well, teachers are talking directly about these topics with their students using language sensitive to our diverse community:

- Explicitly discussing exceptions when normative culture is expressed in a book.
Example: "Not all families look that way..."
- Saying "grown ups" or "adults in your family" instead of assuming parents, mom or dad, or a two-adult household (e.g. a dad, a mom, a grandparent, a guardian)
- Inviting families to come in to share their family structure (preschool)
 - Example: 6th grade life science students learn about the hundreds of animal species with homosexual or transgender identities

Conversation Starters at Home or with Other CDS Families

Understanding our adult feelings about Sexual Orientation

Consider how you might talk about the following topics with other CDS families. How can you begin to talk about it with your children?

- How was sexual orientation discussed in your family growing up, if at all?
- What messages did you get about LGBTQ people from friends, at school, and in the media?
- Did you know any two mom/two dad or other LGBTQ families growing up?
- Did you ever question your own sexual orientation? What helped or didn't help you along your path of identity discovery and development?
- How can we be allies to queer or questioning youth?

Helping our children think about sexual orientation

- Why do people get married? What are the benefits of being married?
- How does it feel to be called "different" or "not normal?" Is it OK to say this about someone else? Why?
- Do people choose their feelings? What kinds of feelings might you have that you didn't choose?

Quick Responses

The following statements have come up during conversations among students, families, and the general public. We want to help parents respond, while also encouraging you to respond in a way that reflects your experiences and values and to engage in conversations that build fluency with this topic.

- “That’s so gay!”
 - We can all be allies by finding safe, age-appropriate ways to speak out against these and other comments. Direct, honest reactions can be very helpful, and questions can also help draw attention to such remarks.
 - “What do you mean by that? You may not have meant it, but what you said is hurtful. This kind of language is part of ‘hate speech’ which can be hurtful or isolating to others.”
 - “What can you say instead if you don’t like something?”
- “You can be my gay best friend!”
 - While the intention here is likely an attempt to connect or even signal solidarity, these kinds of comments can be confusing taken out of context and should be used with caution.
- “I’m wondering about my child’s physical appearance...could they be LGBTQ?”
 - It’s possible, but the two are not necessarily linked.
 - For many children, gender identity - the deep sense of how we feel we identify on the spectrum of gender - can be expressed in many ways, including physical appearance, hobbies, and interests. That said, clothes, hairstyle, and other elements of appearance may indicate that a child is questioning or “testing the waters.”
 - This is a critical time for children to connect with supportive adults, ideally members of their family. However, there are a number of faculty and staff members at CDS who are willing to serve as an additional resource. Feel free to reach out to Anthony Witte (anthonyw@cds-sf.org) for more information.

Resources / Media

- [Our Family Coalition](#) - Advancing equity for the LGBTQ families with children
- [SF LGBTQ Center](#) - Connecting our diverse community to opportunities, resources, and each other
- [GLAAD](#) - “Rewrites the script for LGBT acceptance”
- [GLSEN](#) - “Improving education, creating a better world”

The Gender Spectrum

Introduction

The traditional tendencies to associate certain behaviors or attributes to genders, and implicitly assign expectations of what it means to be masculine or feminine, are changing in our culture. We at CDS believe that it is important to be aware of these issues and to raise children who can participate in an inclusive and safe community.

Transgender people face disproportionately hostile environments at school, at work, and in public. Our goal is to create accepting, empathetic children who can engage with all types of people in understanding, appropriate ways. The pressure to conform to societal norms is significant, with countless daily affirmations in media, retail stores, and other areas affirming a standard that not everyone can meet. This can lead to children who do not relate to traditional expectations feeling excluded, and others in the community may react with confusion when they meet someone who does not fit what they are experiencing more broadly.

The thought that “real” boys or girls should act, dress, respond, or think in specific ways does not apply as it has in the past, and it has always been a social construct. These perspectives exclude students who feel that such a system doesn’t describe who they really are. The tools are here to help everyone be acknowledged safely within our community.

Videos for Further Introduction

- [Becoming Me](#) - Stories from 8 families with transgender or gender nonconforming kids
- [Transgender](#) Teen Shares Powerful Message on Bullying - ABC News
- [Beyond the Gender Binary](#), Yee Won Chong - TED, stories about navigating life and tips for being a good ally
- [Lauren Lubin](#) - Breaking free of the gender binary
- [Beyond the Gender Binary](#), Understanding Transgender Youth, Dr. Nichols
- [5 Ways to Support Trans Friends When They Come Out](#) - *Matrix* director Lilly Wachowski (formerly of the famous Wachowski Brothers) talks about supporting transgender people with a link to her own story

Vocabulary

Three basic elements make up how we view ourselves and act.

- Biological sex relates to the physical gender babies are assigned at birth (male *or* female, which doesn’t accurately represent all babies)
- Gender identity is how someone [feels inside](#) (like a boy, girl, both, or neither).
- Gender expression is how people express their gender (clothing, hairstyle, accessories, walking with a swagger, a bowtie, makeup).

Sometimes all three of these factors match up, and other times they don’t. When biological sex and gender identity don’t match up, for instance, a person may identify as transgender. While it

can be more difficult to explain (depending on age and other factors), it's important to note that a number of people fall somewhere on the [gender spectrum](#). They may identify as non-binary, gender diverse, agender, or gender expansive, to name just a few other identities. These people may present their gender in a non-traditional way although they may not technically be transgender, yet could fall under the [encompassing trans* umbrella](#).

Visit these websites for commonly used terms with definitions:

- Teaching Tolerance - [Gender terms](#)
- Welcoming Schools - [LGBTQ definitions](#)

What's Happening at CDS

At CDS, we feel it is important to support everyone in their personal expression as we aspire to be a more inclusive community. Our faculty are working to promote a more fluid concept of gender, allowing for people to have a supportive community.

In Lower School, students begin critically examining literature to identify gender stereotypes. In October, 2016, we partnered with Gender Spectrum to help us all join the conversation. Their message is that we all have a gender and are influenced by gender-related expectations and stereotypes. Although we are assigned a biological gender at birth, some of us identify differently, and express our gender in myriad ways.

We practice using gender neutral language, such as “everybody” or “people” instead of “guys,” “girls,” or “boys,” and inquiring about gender pronouns. While this may seem like a cliché for a progressive community, we believe that creating a space to be mindful of the importance of language helps people feel accepted, seen, and equal, and that it helps create better citizens overall.

- Teach about the social construct of gender, discuss gender stereotypes and how they affect people, and identity stereotypes in texts
- Find stories with lead characters of different genders during read-alouds.
- Read books about kids without normative gender expression and talk about the wide range of expressions
- Students can choose to be characters of any (or no) gender when acting out stories
- Include she, he, and they as gender pronouns
- Avoid grouping students by gender
- Post pictures on the bulletin board that represent a variety of students. All genders are seen doing all tasks.
- Present role models of different genders. Example: regularly highlighting scientists who are women.

Conversation Starters at Home or with Other CDS Families

Understanding our adult feelings about transgender people

- Have you considered what it might be like if your gender identity, the gender you *feel* you are, was different from your biological sex as identified at birth? What might it be like to tell family and friends? What could help you feel supported?
- According to the National Transgender Discrimination Survey¹, 78% of students in K-12 expressing a transgender identity reported being harassed, and 35% were victims of physical assault. Sadly, these students are also at a significantly higher risk for self-harm and suicide. How can we as a community embrace the many ways people identify?
- What gender expectations exist in your own parenting? As a society, we've assigned gender to everything, and toys are an obvious area affecting kids. Have you considered if any of your behaviors could express *unstated* expectations?

Helping our children think about transgender people

- Have you ever been misidentified as the opposite sex by someone? How did it feel?
- What comes naturally to you? What would it feel like if everyone thought that was unnatural and wanted you to act differently?
- Can you tell if someone is honest just by looking? We also can't tell about someone's private life or personal feelings by looking.
- Tips for allies of transgender people: <http://www.glaad.org/transgender/allies>

Quick Responses

The following statements have come up during conversations among students, families, and the general public. We want to help parents respond, while also encouraging you to respond in a way that reflects your experiences and values and engage in conversations to build fluency with this topic.

1. "Is that person a boy or a girl?"
 - The most important thing is to treat the question as a natural one that arises in the circumstances — which it is.
 - From a distance, we can offer that we are unsure and it is unimportant to us.
 - If we are engaging with the person, listen first. Be courteous and respectful.
 - If a question is appropriate, "What are your personal gender pronouns?" is one that can be received well. When asking, be matter-of-fact, neither shy and apologetic nor incisive and abrasive. You're asking, as a social courtesy, for information that will allow you to show continued social courtesy. That is nothing to be ashamed of or apologetic about. The more that this question is treated as a natural social gesture, the more it will become a natural social gesture.
2. "Why do we need to talk about pronouns?"
 - As part of creating an inclusive and accepting community, it allows us to be mindful of the fact that we welcome all kinds of people. Being careful of our language in all circumstances lets us keep justice top of mind.

1. “Does he/she/they like boys or girls?”
 - That isn’t really our business and should not matter.

Resources / Media

- [GLAAD](#) Reference Guide - Vocabulary with definitions
- [Gender Spectrum](#) - website full of information about gender, identity, and terms to help guide conversations
- [National Center for Transgender Equality](#) - Advocacy organization for transgender people
- [8 Critical Facts about the state of transgender America](#) - Washington Post, 1/22/2015
- [Miss Representation](#) - How mainstream media stereotypes women and what we can do
- [The Mask You Live In](#) - Conversations with boys about masculinity
- [Straightlaced](#) - Students talk about how gender-based expectations impact their lives

Footnote

1. [National Transgender Discrimination Survey](#) - a 2015 research paper documents the experiences of transgender people in the largest survey of its kind



Learning Differences (Neurodiversity)

Introduction

At CDS, we hope that everyone will have conversations about neurodiversity (also known as learning differences and learning diversity). We recognize that society values certain learning styles over others, and that it often misunderstands and undervalues people who don't conform to certain norms. Many famous people fall under the neurodiverse umbrella: Albert Einstein, Agatha Christie, Steve Jobs, Whoopi Goldberg, Steven Spielberg, Daniel Radcliffe, Keira Knightley, and John Lennon, to name a few.

Rather than viewing learning differences as deficits, we hope to acknowledge them as assets that can enrich the learning of all students through different perspectives. Many of the famous people mentioned gave credit to - rather than blamed - their diverse learning styles as part of the secret of their success. At CDS, we extend accommodations to support children in the way that they learn best. A child's individual learning style may be best explained by a learning specialist. They make recommendations as to how to best support the child room by providing additional learning tools, extra time, or a quiet space to take tests, etc. Resources provided to neurodiverse students do not compromise the learning potential of the neurotypical child.

While the range of learning styles we are able to accommodate at CDS is admittedly limited, we strive to recognize all our students' unique abilities, foster confidence in their learning styles, and promote a greater appreciation for neurodiverse learning styles in general.

Videos for Further Introduction

- [Educating a Neurodiverse World](#) - TED Talk, held at Teachers College, NY
- [Like Everyone Else](#) - Learning Disability Awareness: Children talk about their lives, how to support them
- [Playing to Our Strengths](#) - TED Talk on neurodiversity and education
- [Here's What Neurodiversity Is - And What It Means For Feminism](#) - discusses the intersection of different aspects of identity with neurodiversity

Vocabulary

- Neurodiversity - a relatively new term to describe the variety of ways in which we learn, and how this diversity brings a richer learning environment for all students.
- Learning disabilities / differences - terms that are falling out of favor due to their emphasis on how a person's learning style differs from traditional standards.
- Dyslexia - a range of learning challenges related to language. For more, click [here](#).
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) - a chronic condition marked by inattention, impulsive behavior, and/or hyperactivity. For more, click [here](#).

- Asset based approach - An approach to learning based on community development, focused on collaboration to achieve positive change using individuals' knowledge, skills, and lived experiences.

What's Happening at CDS

At CDS, for example, certain students take tests separately from their classmates or receive extra time or tools. These accommodations are designed to support children in the way they learn, and our decisions to treat children differently are typically based on recommendations from experts. The important thing to realize is that learning is not a competitive activity and we are not taking resources away from the entire group to give to one student.

Here are a few ways we practice having conversations about neurodiversity at CDS:

- Normalize conversations about how everyone learns differently and we are all on our own journey.
- Give students multiple strategies and empower them to select the one that works best for them.
- Offer student-created projects to support diverse learning styles.
- Group students by mixed abilities and learning styles.
- Talk openly about accommodations so that other students see them as part of the educational landscape, not something to hide or be ashamed of.
- Give students time to reflect before responding. Rely on the “think, pair, share” learning method, which is a collaborative learning strategy in which students work together to solve a problem or answer a question about an assigned topic.
- Offer a variety of learning tools (noise reduction headphones, hand tools, etc.), and discuss how different people need different tools to succeed.
- Consider different learning styles when planning lessons, including visual cues, oral instructions, and manipulatives for kinesthetic learners.

Conversation Starters at Home or with Other CDS Families

Understanding our adult feelings about neurodiversity

- How has the neurodiversity landscape changed since you were a child?
- How was neurodiversity discussed or avoided at home for you?
- Did you struggle with learning as a child? How did you feel about it? Did you receive support?
- In the above list of influential people with learning disorders, when and how might they have been supported in non-traditional ways on their road to greatness?

Helping our children think about Neurodiversity

- How does it feel when you are trying hard at something and still can't get the hang of it? Some things that are easy for us to learn or do can be really frustrating for other people.
- How can we be good classmates when someone is struggling to learn something?

Quick Responses

The following statements have come up during conversations among students, families, and the general public. We want to help parents respond, while also encouraging you to respond in a way that reflects your experiences and values and to engage in conversations that build fluency with this topic.

1. “[Someone] in my grade reads/does math really poorly or doesn’t know X”
 - Did you do anything to try to support them? Wouldn’t it feel good to be helped with something that is hard for you?
 - Can you tell me some things that they do really well?
2. “Why did [someone] have to go to a special school and not stay at CDS?”
 - Your teachers can help many students, but sometimes kids need additional focused, special attention in order to be successful, and we don’t always have enough people to support them well.
3. “Why does that student get extra time (or other accommodations) on tests or assignments?”
 - The extra time or accommodations are there to level the playing field so they can be successful like other students. Like wearing glasses, these accommodations are not unfair advantages but tools to help.
4. “Why do we need to do things differently for that student?”
 - CDS intentionally pays attention to our similarities and differences in many ways so all students feel they belong. Students also benefit from having discussions with people from diverse backgrounds, providing multiple perspectives that make for a richer learning environment for all.

Resources / Media

Websites (Adults / Children)

- [Understood](#) - For learning and attention issues
- [All Kinds of Minds](#) - Putting science to work in classrooms
- [LD Online](#) - Guide to learning disabilities and ADHD
- [National Center for Learning Disabilities](#) - Improve the lives of children and adults with learning and attention issues

For Kids

- [Children's resources on neurodiversity/learning differences](#)

Physical Disabilities

Introduction

At CDS, our goal is for us to acknowledge physical disabilities as part of a person's identity, but not necessarily what defines them. A first step in this is gaining the tools to talk about physical disabilities in a respectful way. The term "disability" covers a wide range of conditions. Some are obvious, such as a child with a physical disability who uses a wheelchair or a child with a visual impairment who uses a cane to navigate when walking. Other disabilities may be more "hidden" -- for example, children who have [autism spectrum disorder](#).

Gaining equality and accessibility for the disabled community is an important goal for us as a society. Some statistics illustrating the importance of this subject are that one in five Americans has a physical disability, and that only 17% of eligible workers with disabilities are employed vs. 65% of those without ([Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), June 2015).

Videos for Further Introduction

- [Things to Do When Your Kid Points Out Someone's Differences](#)
- [Physical Disabilities](#) - TED Med Talk
- [Talk to Me](#) - An 11-year-old girl with cerebral palsy makes a request
- [We're More Alike Than Different](#) - People with Down syndrome challenge stereotypes
- [The Present](#) - Animated short story about a boy with a disability who receives a present, based on a comic strip by Fabio Coala
- [25 Inspiring People](#) Who overcame their disabilities

Vocabulary

- Handicapped - Although handicapped is widely used in both law and everyday speech to refer to people having physical or mental disabilities, those described by the word tend to prefer the expressions "disabled" or "people with disabilities."
- Physical disability - A limitation on a person's physical functioning, mobility, dexterity, or stamina. Other physical disabilities include impairments which limit other facets of daily living, such as respiratory disorders, blindness, epilepsy, and sleep disorders.
- Accessible - rather than using "disabled" to describe parking space or bathrooms, for instance, we encourage "accessible"
- [Respectful Disability Language: Here's What's Up!](#) - National Youth Leadership Network includes helpful language and outdated terms

What's Happening at CDS

At CDS we try in our curriculum to keep children aware of physical disabilities to foster a richer understanding of the human experience and build sensitivity to the people around them. Third graders learn about people with disabilities, experience what it's like to navigate halls and

classrooms in a wheelchair, and visit a local dance troupe made up of physically disabled performers.

Conversation Starters at Home or with Other CDS Families

Understanding our adult feelings about physical disabilities

- Did you experience or know anyone with physical disabilities as a child that had an impact on you?
- How has your family discussed or reacted to people with physical disabilities in the past? What areas could you use practice with?
- How many public figures or celebrities can you name with major physical disabilities?
- Can you name the physical disability of these accomplished people? Stevie Wonder, Marlee Matlin, Franklin Delano Roosevelt...
- If you are a hiring manager, parent/guardian, child - how can we remain open minded and empathetic toward people with physical disabilities? How can we be allies and create equity?

Helping our children think about physical disabilities

- No two people are the same -- some differences are just more noticeable.
- A disability is only one characteristic of a person. People have many facets, with various likes and dislikes, strengths and challenges.
- Children with disabilities are like all children in that they want friends, respect, and inclusion.
- Children can be born disabled or become disabled from an accident or illness. You can't "catch" a disability from someone else.
- Just because someone has a physical disability (when a part or parts of the body do not work well) does not mean they necessarily have a cognitive (or thinking) disability.
- Children with disabilities can do many of the things that other children do, but it might take them longer. They may need assistance or adaptive equipment to help them.

Quick Response Quiz

The following statements have come up during conversations among students, families, and the general public. We want to help parents respond, while also encouraging you to respond in a way that reflects your experiences and values to and engage in conversations that build fluency with this topic.

1. "Why is she in a wheelchair?"
 - She uses a wheelchair because a part of her body does not work as well as it could.
2. Hearing your child and their friends talking about another child's physical disability or appearance
 - Keep your cool and remain neutral. Stress that how a person looks doesn't indicate anything about who they are, and be sure to refrain from making negative comments yourself about another person's appearance.

3. Witnessing someone with difficulty walking navigate public transportation
 - Imagine what it's like for the person in the wheelchair, receiving this negativity on a daily basis. Stand up and offer assistance (lowering a seat, helping with a safety belt, etc.), but don't assume your help is needed - and don't feel dejected if the offer is refused.

Resources / Media

Websites

- [LightHouse](#) for the Blind and Visually Impaired - San Francisco center that offers training and resources, and promotes "independence, equality and self-reliance."
- [Aging and Disability Resource Center](#) - SF Gov, information about long-term services and supports, aging, and living with disability.
- [How to Truly Listen](#) - Deaf professional percussionist Evelyn Glennie talks about music
- [Disability Programs and Resource Center](#) - San Francisco State University website with links to information plus physical and technological resources



Adoptive Families

Introduction

CDS has a strong tradition of being openly supportive of diverse family structures, including racially similar and transracially adoptive families. While adoptive families have been a “norm” at CDS for some time, misperceptions persist.

For children, understanding that their family is built by adoption can be an affirming story, along the lines of, “Your birth parents loved you but realized they couldn’t take care of you, so they needed to find a family who could. We are so fortunate to be the family who gets to have you.” Still, some adoptive children can get unwanted attention or scrutiny, along the lines of “Who are your real parents?” or “Why were you given up for adoption?” Adults of transracially adoptive families may be asked “Where are the real parents?” or “How are you going to support their ethnic background?” While the intent may stem from pure curiosity or genuine concern, these questions can feel invasive and hurtful.

To help normalize these conversations, CDS teachers use a variety of materials to engage in intentional discussions about family structure and read books where characters happen to be adopted, whether of similar or transracial backgrounds. It’s important to validate that moving from one birth parent to another parent is a huge thing, even more so for transracially adopted children. We hope conversations at home can help demystify the topic for curious children and adults alike.

Videos/Media

- [National Council for Adoption](#) - website with adoption resources

Vocabulary

- Real mom, dad, or parent - often used with innocent curiosity (though the impact may be hurtful), meant to distinguish between a biological parent and the person who raises a child
- Birth mom, dad, parent - biological parent
- Mom, dad, parent, guardian - person raising a child, regardless of biological connection
- Positive adoption language - see a list from the Adoptive Families [website](#)

Conversation Starters at Home or with Other CDS Families

Consider how you might talk about the following topics with other CDS families. How can you begin to talk about it with your children?

- How was adoption discussed in your family growing up, if at all?
- What messages did you get about adoptive families from friends, at school, in the media?

- Did you know adoptive families growing up? How many adoption stories do you know?

Quick Responses

The following conversations have come up during conversations among students, families, and the general public. We want to provide examples of how you could respond, while also encouraging you to respond in a way that reflects your experiences and values. Most of all, we encourage you to engage in conversations to build vocabulary and understanding around this topic.

- “Is that your real dad/mom/parent/guardian?”
 - “What do you mean by that? I’m sure you didn’t mean it, but what you said is hurtful. Real parents are the ones who care for me.”
- “Why did that child’s real family give them away?”
 - “Some families realize they are unable to give children the love and care they want to. One choice is to find an adoptive family that can. It’s a difficult decision, and one that is for the greatest good of the child.”
- “Isn’t it sad that kids doesn’t have real parents?”
 - “The child’s family is their real family.”

What’s Happening at CDS

Here are a few examples of how teachers are addressing issues of adoption in the classroom. These are meant to give insight into the kinds of conversations that may be happening at CDS so you can be prepared for what may come up at home.

Here are a few ways we practice having conversations about adoptive families at CDS:

- Use books and other materials that include different family structures and adoptive families throughout the grades
- Explicitly discuss exceptions when normative culture is expressed in a book. Example: “Not all families look that way...”
- Invite families to come in to share their family structure (preschool)

Resources / Media

- *Over the Moon* - children’s book about adoption in general
- *Maya* - children’s book about a girl adopted from Guatemala, living in Missouri
- [Adoption Terms](#) - relevant to the adoption process, from *Findlaw* website
- [Adoption Stories](#) - the trials, tribulations, and joys of adoption, from *The Atlantic*
- [Realities of Raising a Kid of a Different Race](#) - Time Magazine article about transracial adoption
- [Adoptive Families](#) - website with resources and adoption stories

Applying this Toolkit

Given these conceptual and linguistic tools as a foundation, our goal is to bring inclusion to our everyday life at CDS.

We must have starting point for creating this safe and protected space in our language and everyday behavior. It is easy to be tempted to dismiss this kind of deliberate action as overly restrictive or unnecessary, but it is our belief that the thought required to make these small daily changes serve as the foundation for living a purposefully inclusive way which is respectful to everyone.

Politically Correct vs Inclusive

Acting politically correct is typically defined as avoiding language or behavior that any particular group of people might feel is unkind or offensive.

This has certainly become a cliché in today's society and has undermined the importance of taking a deliberate stance to including a wide range of people. At CDS, we appreciate that our world is fraught with differences that, when called out, can be hurtful or make people feel excluded. Being completely neutral in our speech is admittedly impossible. Thinking about what we say before saying it is something we can all do, and it will result in more people feeling respected.

The reason that we ask for our community's attention and participation in taking what may feel like extreme steps is the very reason stated above. The mainstream media and world outside of our school certainly does not follow the structure we are hoping to put in place. Taking the steps to create an ideal scenario here serves a few purposes.

1. It creates a safe, more ideal place for our children and parents to have a rich community
2. It keeps everyone here aware of the perspectives held by others around us
3. It starts habits that benefit us in the outside world, even if society is not fully participating with us

For Our Children

Everything we do at CDS is foremost for our children. Here are the outcomes we are hoping for in our effort to create a diverse and inclusive environment for all families and a safe space for the differences and discussion of each child.

1. Celebrate the uniqueness of every child.
2. Give each child space to express themselves safely.
3. Let our children practice having hard discussions.
4. Teach them to be allies to others safely and effectively.

Aside from the in-class curriculum, there are other outlets at CDS for participating in the social justice dialogue. One of the main ways is through our Affinity Groups.

CDS Affinity Groups

Affinity Groups are meetings where students who share a core identity – usually underrepresented – can meet and hopefully feel more connected, visible and included. These gatherings create a safe space where every member can speak openly about their experiences.

These groups are based on core identifiers such as race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, family structure, neurodiversity/learning differences, and more. We offer as many groups as possible, depending on adult facilitators who also share the given affinity.

Watch a video on Affinity Groups at CDS [here](#).

FAQ's

Why hold affinity groups?

- Affinity groups provide a space for students traditionally underrepresented in society to connect, share their experiences, and feel safe and “normal” as they explore their identity. While not every child experiences affinity groups in the same way, these groups can be life-changing. Teachers and staff who lead the groups share some of their own stories and, in so doing, open the door for students to share as well.

Who leads affinity groups?

- Affinity groups are lead by teachers and parent volunteers.

How old are the children who participate?

- We hold groups in both the lower and middle school.
- Research shows that children beginning at age two or three notice physical differences¹ and, though they may not understand the social construct of race, they begin to understand their own identities in relation to the rest of the world.

What kind of benefit are we expecting from these groups?

- Affinity groups can be an effective way of promoting positive identity development.
- Recent publications find that engaging early in these kinds of discussions is an important element to nurturing children’s social/emotional needs. By doing this we are hoping to strengthen their character, increase their resilience, and provide greater chances for future success².
- CDS students in their own words have said this about affinity groups: “I realize I’m not alone,” “I learned about how many people have divorced parents,” and “We got to talk to people about topics that we had in common.”

How do they work?

- In lower school, these groups are largely social gatherings, a chance to share a meal and talk about whatever comes up using simple guiding questions. Participation is optional, and they may meet during lunch or after school.
- In middle school, we feel students are developmentally ready to engage in deeper discussions about identity (and are doing so in classes), so participation is required. Students have a say in which groups are held, decide how they as individuals identify,

and which group they'll join. Discussions are largely student-led, and they are encouraged to bring relevant topics to the table. In the past, middle school groups met every fourth Friday from 2:45-3:30 p.m.

- Students may participate in multiple groups.

Can parents/guardians participate?

- The student affinity groups are just for the children. However, CDS does have adult affinity groups. These groups are encouraged to hold one or two social events per year. Events can be very casual, from a potluck picnic in the park to a weekend day on the yard at 333 (each group can hold one event on the yard at no additional fee). These events are low cost for both hosts and participants, and they are easily accessible by public transportation.
- Currently, we have the following groups:
 - African American/Black
 - Asian
 - Indian/South Asian
 - Latino/a
 - Neurodiversity Task Force (Formerly Learning Differences Network)
 - LGBTQ-Headed Families
 - Families Built Through Adoption
 - Single Parent / Guardian

Where can I find out more?

- For more information, please click [here](#) to read a statement on the role of affinity groups written by former CDS parent and Board Member Richard Hylton.

Don't affinity groups just promote segregation and not diversity?

- Affinity groups are one aspect of creating a diverse and socially just world. They create the safe spaces needed for people to have conversations and shared experiences that build strength and pride. Equally as important, are the collaborative efforts between different groups towards creating equity for all. Allies are people who do not identify with a certain affinity group, but want to support the equal rights of people from that group. Ally work and affinity work are both important aspects of creating social equity.

What are the affinities represented?

Affinity Groups in 2015-16:

Lower school

- Students of Color
- Girls of African Heritage
- Students of Asian Heritage
- Multiracial
- LGBT-Headed Families
- Students of Divorced Families / Single Parent
- Families Built Through Adoption
- Neurodiversity / Learning Differences

Middle school

- Students of Color
- Asian Pacific Islander
- Latino/a
- White Ally (students preferred this name over “White”)
- Multiracial
- International (born outside the U.S., child of immigrants...)
- Multiple Households / Divorced Families
- Girls
- Boys
- Queer Alliance

Footnotes

1. *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*, Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum, numerous other sources.
2. *How Children Succeed*, Paul Tough.

For Adults

We appreciate the effort and participation of all our families in this process of creating a model environment for our community.

The objectives for our parents align with the lessons we are hoping to give our children. We are asking you to use of this toolkit to discover the ways in which you can contribute to our school’s efforts at being inclusive. Here are our hopes for our parents:

1. Be welcoming in your language and approach. It is easy to make great friends and long-lasting relationships at CDS, and to create social circles that are tight and meaningful. The language and behaviors laid out in this toolkit can serve as a reminder that there are many individuals making up our community who we may not see often or even know. We ask you to keep the interest of diversity in mind and participate in our efforts for the broader community.
2. Be allies. We are teaching our children how to consider the feelings and experiences of others throughout their daily life. We are giving them lessons in safely approaching people and engaging in sensitive discussions. These are leadership lessons, preparing them for the future and we ask you to learn about and model ally behaviors for your children.
3. Create safe situations for everyone in the community. It is easy to innocently overlook or be dismissive about a small thing like having a “Dads’ Night Out” at the auction, but even if one family with two moms questions their access, then the entire community suffers. We ask that we are all mindful of creating an inclusive atmosphere for our families.

Creating Inclusive Events

We do not expect that every event be open to every person, but when making events public, we do request that our community considers how available it will be to the larger group.

Here are some things to consider.

Accessibility

- How close is the event space to public transportation?
- Is the space accessible to people in wheelchairs, crutches, or with mobility issues?

Socioeconomics

- Please be mindful of the costs for both hosting and attending events. Consider the range of families at CDS and how to limit cost as a deterrent to the event.
- How can we create events at both private homes and apartments where people from different socioeconomic backgrounds can feel comfortable and welcome?
 - Small changes in language can help people feel welcome and comfortable. Example: Does naming something a “cocktail party” exclude non-drinkers? Is the event a social gathering focused on alcohol, or could another expression be found such as “Parent/Guardian Night,” or “CDS Adult Social.”

Themes

- We take pride in our cultures and traditions and, if not handled carefully, themes can lead to insult or exclusion. And, even if one member of a culture says it’s OK, that person may not represent the majority feeling of CDS families of similar background. Examples might include: science fiction, music, notable decades...

Gifts and Appreciations

- If you are giving gifts, it’s a good idea to check in with families to see if they have preferences around gift giving in general or specifically with their child(ren). It is hard to know what exactly may be inappropriate, so have a discussion first. Some examples might include:
 - Giving toys that include weapons
 - Giving a doll of a certain race
 - If you are giving clothes, whether there are any preferences related to messages or modesty

Partial List of Events at CDS

- Welcome Picnic
- Fiesta
- Country Fair
- Family Affinity group parties
- Family Diversity Potluck - Everyone is welcome. Come share, discover, and celebrate!
- Grade-level parent parties
- Family class parties
- Birthdays

