



Big Heart World Parent & Caregiver Guide

Similarities & Differences

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PRESENTED BY
sparkl**er**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH **noggin**

What is Big Heart World?



Big Heart World helps families learn together about social and emotional skills — what it means to have a *big heart* and how to grow one. This means:

- ★ Learning about me (self)
- ★ Learning about you (others)
- ★ Learning about us (relationships)

Learning social and emotional skills is *always* important to children's development. From the time babies are born, they are learning about who they are, developing confidence, compassion, and a sense of what is right and what is wrong.

Parents are particularly concerned about their children's social and emotional development now due to transitions and school closures brought about by COVID-19.

If you're wondering how to help your child express their feelings, figure out friendships, share, enter a classroom environment, or learn what makes them special, Big Heart World is for you.

If you're feeling overwhelmed by the pandemic and endless change and transition, Big Heart World is for you.

If you feel like you can't handle one more tantrum and you want to know what your child is really trying to tell you when they act out, Big Heart World is for you.

This guide walks you through what is available on Big Heart World this month and what you can do with it. Learn more:

www.BigHeartWorld.org

Big Heart World is produced by Sparkler Learning with support from Noggin, the Walton Family Foundation, and many non-profit partner organizations.





Similarities & Differences:

The Third Unit of Big Heart



The world is made up of different people — people of different races/ethnicities, religions, traditions, languages, abilities, and talents. Sometimes these differences can divide people. For example, people of different political beliefs might fight with each other, or sometimes people of different races or religions might not socialize.

But differences have the power to bring people together in ways that are wonderful! Learning about other people can open our eyes to new traditions, stories, foods, words, beliefs, and ideas. Playing and working with different people helps us solve new problems in new ways and learn new perspectives.

Unit 3 focuses on the similarities and differences between us and others. This unit has three core ideas:

1. It is important to recognize, embrace, and value similarities and differences.
2. Every person belongs.
3. We are better together.

All children notice differences. Research shows that children notice racial differences in people as early as 6 months of age. Parents, caregivers, and educators can talk to children about differences — in physical appearance and beyond — to help them learn to respect all the different people that make up a classroom, a community, or a country.

Grown-ups can help children acknowledge and celebrate the things that make us different as well as the things that make us similar. There are many tools that adults can use to help children learn about similarities and differences, including:

- Books that incorporate a range of characters, cultures, abilities, and languages
- Cooking recipes from many cultures
- Games that teach words from different languages
- Activities or gatherings where children have opportunities to meet people with different backgrounds, races, beliefs, etc.

Conversations about similarities and differences early in life can help children to appreciate people's unique differences and to use their voices to stand up for all people, no matter their color or background.

The Big Heart World Learning Approach



In April, we started learning about “me” with a focus on identity and belonging. In May, we continued that focus by exploring feelings. This month, we round out our study of “self” by diving into similarities and differences.



Identity & Belonging

Our identity makes us who we are. This includes our skills, passions, preferences, physical traits, culture, and language.



Feelings

Identifying emotions and managing them helps us build relationships and overcome challenges.



Similarities & Differences

Recognizing similarities and differences helps us appreciate that we have a lot in common and that everyone is unique.



Friendship

Interacting with others and treating them with kindness helps us form strong relationships.



Empathy

Walking in others' shoes helps us understand others and form stronger relationships with them.



Problem Solving

Sharing, listening to others, solving problems together, and taking turns helps us collaborate with others.



Helping

Being kind, fair, and helping others helps us become great friends, neighbors, and community members.



Upstanding

When we see something wrong, we can learn to stand up for what's right. Learning to stand up will help children grow up to be change-makers.



Global Citizenship

Each of us is part of a BIG world: together, we can make the world a better, kinder place.

Let's Learn Some Big Heart Words!



When you introduce new vocabulary words, you help your child learn the words they'll need to express their feelings and communicate with you and others. Here are some words you can share related to similarities and differences.

- ★ **Appreciate** - to understand the worth/importance of something
- ★ **Belong** - to be accepted and liked
- ★ **Culture** - the beliefs, customs, and traditions of a group of people
- ★ **Different** - not the same as something else
- ★ **Diversity** - having many different forms, types, ideas, etc.
- ★ **Equal** - the same as
- ★ **Equality** - having the same rights
- ★ **Fairness** - treating people in a way that doesn't favor some over others
- ★ **Family** - a group of people who are related to each other
- ★ **Include** - to make someone or something part of something else
- ★ **Language** - the system of words or signs people use to express themselves and communicate thoughts and feelings
- ★ **Race** - a group people have been put in based on their history, language, culture, and sometimes physical qualities like skin color and facial features
- ★ **Religion** - an organized system of beliefs with ceremonies and rules used to worship
- ★ **Respect** - a feeling of admiration for someone or something
- ★ **Similar** - resembling without being identical
- ★ **Together** - with each other
- ★ **Tradition** - a way of thinking, behaving, or doing something that has been done for a long time
- ★ **Unique** - being the only one of its kind



BIG HEART

Activities



“Celebrate Our Difference”



“Celebrate Our Difference” is a song in Noggin’s Big Heart Beats album by Grayson DeWolfe, Chris Sernel (a.k.a. Oh, Hush!), and Matt Richert (a.k.a. Matrik). Just like the title says, the lyrics urge children to celebrate what makes each of us unique.

We’ve all got different faces
We come from different places
Everybody’s got somewhere that they’re from!
And so, some speak a different language
Have different ways of playin’
The whole wide world is bigger than us

So we...celebrate our difference
We each have our traditions
It’s great if someone is different than me
So we...celebrate our difference
We each have our traditions
It’s great if someone is different than me

We have different religions
We have unique opinions
But we can all still get along
‘Cuz when we
Always love one another
Learn more ‘bout other cultures
We learn the world is bigger than us

So we...celebrate our difference
We each have our traditions
It’s great if someone is different than me
So we...celebrate our difference
We each have our traditions
It’s great if someone is different than me

La da da da da da da
La da da da da da da
It’s great if someone is different than me
La da da da da da da
La da da da da da da
It’s great if someone is different than me





Ways to Explore Feelings Using “Celebrate Our Difference”



- 1. Dance Your Difference!** (Wellness, Social and Emotional)
Play “Celebrate Our Difference” on www.bigheartworld.org. Sing and dance along. Babies will enjoy moving with you as you dip, sway, and spin. Bigger kids can dance what they feel as they listen to the song. See if each person can dance with their own different dance moves to show off their own unique way of dancing. Dancing together is one way for people to build strong attachments and create warm memories.
- 2. Celebrate Our Drumming!** (Learn About: Social and Emotional Skills, Focus & Problem Solving, Arts)
Help children build rhythm and focus by drumming along to the song “Celebrate Our Difference.” Use a toy drum or a pot turned upside down. See if your child can keep the beat!
- 3. Different Party!** (Learn About: Social and Emotional Development)
The song “Celebrate Our Difference” encourages listeners to celebrate the things that make them unique. Take a moment to literally celebrate those things. Have a family (or classroom) party to celebrate what makes you different. Bring something — a food, a song, a hobby, etc. — that makes you special and different and share it with everyone else.
- 4. What Makes Us Unique** (Learn About: Social and Emotional Development)
The lyrics to “Celebrate Our Difference” encourage listeners to celebrate the things that make them unique — from their ways of playing to the languages they speak. Talk about the things that make each of YOU unique and why they’re special. Illustrate your favorite super differences.
- 5. Play Your Differences!** (Learn About: Social and Emotional Development, Arts)
After listening to “Celebrate Our Difference,” try a feelings activity from our playroom (www.bigheartworld.org/big-heart-playroom) — off screen, with paper and crayons — to help your child understand feelings and practice managing emotions.





My Bread, Your Bread

Peppa and her family like to eat bread when they have a picnic! They aren't the only ones — cultures all over the world love to bake and eat bread.

Different cultures have different breads like ciabatta, roti, challah, baguette, tortillas, naan, injera, pita, steamed buns, and buttermilk biscuits — just to name a few!

Enjoying foods from other cultures is a delicious way to help your child learn about different people and cultures. Try a new recipe (or order from a new restaurant) to get a taste of another culture.

My Bread, Your Bread

Ages: 6 months - 10 years

Skills: Curiosity, Empathy

Vocabulary Words:

- Bread - a food made of yeast, flour, and water
- Culture - the customs, arts, and institutions of a group of people
- Taste - a little bite of food

Materials: Bread ingredients

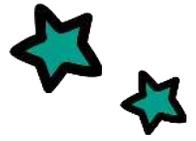
Recipe for Play:

1. Let's try a new kind of bread today!
2. We can bake bread together or find a restaurant where we can buy bread from a different culture.
3. Let's bake (or buy) and taste the bread! Let's say its name.
4. How is this bread the same as the bread we usually eat? How is it different? Let's look at the ingredients and shape of the bread for clues!



Find this and other Big Heart World co-play activities online at: <https://bigheartworld.org/big-heart-playroom>

What Color Is Your Skin?



Blaze, Ryder, Rusty, and Ruby have different colors of hair, skin, and eyes — and so do all of us! No two people are exactly the same.

Talking about our different skin colors with children is a way to talk about our similarities and our differences — and it's a good way to introduce important topics like inclusivity and being an upstander! Children notice differences in skin tone from infancy, and talking with grown-ups about what they see will help them to make sense of — and be open to — the world around them and the people in it.

You and your child can join the Big Heart World Community Colors Project to help start the conversation!

Community Colors

Ages: baby - 10 years

Skills: Identity, Curiosity, Empathy, Expression

Vocabulary Words:

- Skin - the outer covering of something
- Tone - a tint or shade of a particular color
- Melanin - pigment that gives human skin, hair, and eyes their color

Materials: Smartphone

Recipe for Play:

1. Let's use my smartphone to take a close-up picture of our skin.
2. Look at the pictures of our skin — what colors do we notice? How can we describe our colors? Is the color similar or different?
3. Let's upload our pictures to the Big Heart Community Colors Project at www.bigheartworld.org! People's skin can be so many different colors! The colors we see are different — and every single one is beautiful!



Note: Toddlers and bigger kids can think about people they know with different skin colors — do any of the skin tones in the Big Heart Community look similar to our skin or the skin of the people we know? Follow your child's lead and answer their questions openly and honestly. Extend the conversation by talking about how some people judge or even harm others because of their skin color. This is wrong — and it's something that we need to work together to change.

The Power of Pause from Move This World



Practice Strategies to Slow Down and Calm our Minds and Bodies!



Move This World, one of the nation's leading providers of school-based emotional health programs, is a Big Heart World partner. The organization is sharing nine Power of Pause videos and activities that will help classrooms and families practice breathing and movement strategies to gain focus, calm, and strength.

Visit www.BigHeartWorld.org to explore these action-oriented, fun, and mindful new activities, including:

- **Emotional Building Blocks:** practice how different emotions look for every letter of the alphabet.
- **Collect Our Grapefruits:** consider and share what you're grateful for!
- **Kudos:** give compliments to others!
- **Heart to Heart:** calm your mind and your body with counting and breathing.



MOVE
THIS WORLD

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Little Kids, Big Hearts



***Little Kids, Big Hearts* is a podcast that helps parents and educators introduce big topics in social and emotional learning to children.**

The first episode features a discussion about what it means to have a big heart. The second episode is focused on Identity: what makes me, me? The third is focused on feelings!

Listen on Apple, Spotify, wherever you find your podcasts. Find discussion guides and more at www.BigHeartWorld.org/podcast.



Behind the Big Heart Beats Album



Advice from the Artists: Celebrate Difference!

This past year has highlighted society's differences: politics, faith, race, and culture have divided people.

The newest song from Noggin's Big Heart Beats Album, "Celebrate Our Difference" uses a 1920s era sound with a modern vibe to recast people's differences as a cause for celebration.

"I live in Minneapolis, and we've had a lot of tension here this past year due to our differences," said one of the songwriters, Grayson DeWolfe. "This song is hopefully a great example of how to teach kids the importance of respecting and loving one another for their differences, not just loving others despite them."

Grayson — along with Chris Sernel (a.k.a. Oh, Hush!) and Matt Richert (a.k.a. Matrik) — created the song to encourage kids (and their grown-ups) to stop ignoring people's differences and to start building a more open, accepting society.

"Everybody is different. And I think difference often scares people a little bit. But difference is great! Difference is fun!" Chris said. "We can learn from each other's differences and become better, smarter and more well-rounded, fulfilled people if we celebrate difference instead of shy away from it."

Read the whole article and see a behind-the-scenes video of the recording session at Big Heart World: www.bigheartworld.org.



Books to Spark Big Heart to Heart Conversations



Big Heart World partner organizations **First Book** and **School Library Journal** have shared beautiful books that help parents, caregivers, and educators talk with children about similarities and differences and promote wellness. See all the recommendations at www.bigheartworld.org/the-big-heart-book-list.

- ★ **Alma and How She Got Her Name, Written and Illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal**
In this 2019 Caldecott Honor Book, a little girl named Alma Sofia Esperanza José Pura Candela thinks she has too many names! She explores all six of her names, discovers their stories, and realizes that one day *she* will have her own story to tell!

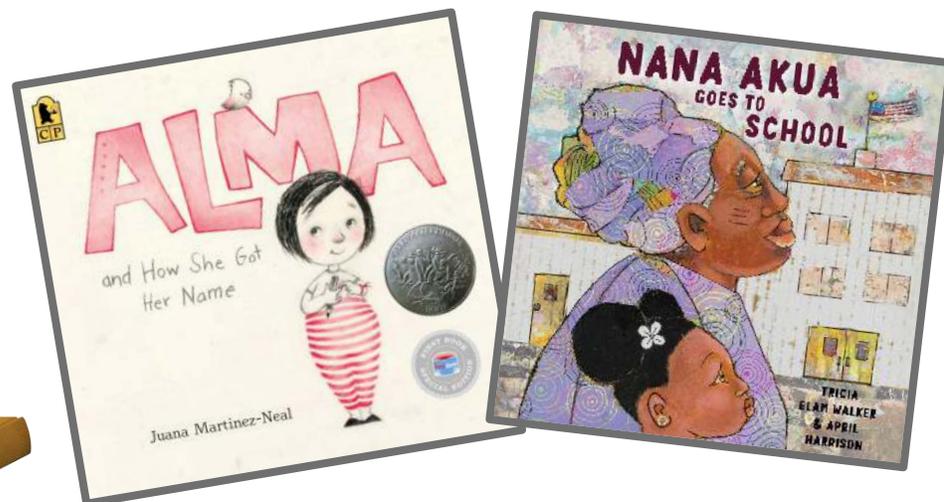
For Discussion: What is YOUR name? How is it similar to and different from other people's names?



- ★ **Nana Akua Goes to School, by Tricia Elam Walker and April Harrison**

Zura brings her beloved West African grandmother, whose face bears traditional tribal markings, to meet her classmates. She is nervous, but Nana is able to explain what makes her special in a way that makes all the children feel special — and that celebrates diversity.

For Discussion: What are some differences that make us and other members of our family unique and special?





How wonderful would it be if we lived in a big heart world?

Join us!★



For more tools and resources, please visit us
online at www.BigHeartWorld.org