

# Guide for Observing and Individualizing



3–5 Years

## Social Studies: Respecting individual and family differences

**WHEN INTRODUCED AND EMPHASIZED:** Weeks 1–9

### BEHAVIORS TO OBSERVE

- Understanding Some Ways Individuals Are Unique
- Understanding Some Ways Families Are Unique

## OBSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

### Understanding Some Ways Individuals Are Unique

In what ways does a child show an understanding of some of the ways individuals can be unique as he/she:

- notices similarities and differences between self and others (any free play after Week 1, Day 4)?
- compares pictures of children in *Little Humans* (Week 2, Day 4 center activity)?
- eats a meal at school (any mealtime after Week 1, Day 5)? Example: Child says “I am the only one at our table who likes strawberries!”
- responds to questions about characters in a book (Week 3, Day 4 group activity)?

### Understanding Some Ways Families Are Unique

In what ways does a child demonstrate an understanding of some of the ways families can be unique as he/she:

- describes something he/she likes to do with his/her family (Week 5, Day 5 group activity)?
- plays with materials in the classroom (any free play period after Week 5, Day 4)? Examples:
  - During dramatic play, the child says “I am feeding my baby broccoli just like my mom feeds my sister. Most kids don’t like broccoli, but she does.”
  - In the block area, the child builds a house and describes who uses each room of the house.
  - The child points to his baby sister’s bedroom and says that no one else in our room has a baby sister.
- explores items on the Family Shelf (Week 9, Day 5 center activity)?



## FOLLOW-UP LEARNING SUPPORTS

### Reinforce

*The following activities are designed to support the ongoing development of appreciation of individual and family diversity.*

#### Understanding Some Ways Individuals Are Unique

- Provide the book *All Kinds of Friends, Even Green!* by Ellen B. Senisi (from Social Studies Week 3, Day 4) and the photos used in Social Studies Week 4, Day 4. Invite children to describe similarities and differences between themselves and persons in the book.
- Mealtime: Invite children to notice how they are the same and different in relation to food preferences.
- Provide each child with a piece of paper titled Self Portrait. Explain that a self portrait is a drawing of one's self. Remind children that unique means that there is no other person just like us. Provide drawing tools and invite children to draw a self portrait that emphasizes how he/she is unique.
- Place mirrors in dramatic play or at a classroom table. Invite children to look in the mirror, one at a time, and describe features that are unique.
- Invite children to play a game in which children take turns saying something that is special about themselves or about each other.

#### Understanding Some Ways Families Are Unique

- Invite children to tell what they call their grandparents, aunts and uncles, or other special family members. Write the names on chart paper so the range of names and similar names can be easily identified and discussed.
- Invite children to talk about how items on your room's Family Shelf show differences among families.

### Reintroduce

*The following activities are designed to support the development of appreciation of individual and family diversity among children who find it challenging to appreciate individual and family diversity. The activities are also appropriate for all children.*

#### Understanding Some Ways Individuals Are Unique

- Repeat the Week 1, Day 4 group activity. Remind children of the meanings of same and different. Help children recognize ways that Lexi and Carlos are the same and the ways they are different. Encourage children to talk about ways that they are similar to, and different from, Lexi and Carlos.
- Look at a child's body tracing with him/her. Review the definition of unique from the Week 1, Day 5 activity. Help each child describe ways he/she is unique.

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- Repeat the Week 4, Day 4 group activity. Help children see how they are similar to someone who uses crutches or a wheelchair.
- Provide books focused on individual differences, such as *The Color of Us* by Karen Katz, *Whoever You Are* by Mem Fox, *Same, Same Different* by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw or *Shades of People* by Sheila M. Kelly and Shelley Rotner. Help children describe ways that children in the books are unique.

## Understanding Some Ways Families Are Unique

- Repeat the Week 5, Day 4 group activity. Reintroduce the word family. Emphasize how each family is unique.
- Using the book made on Week 7, Day 4 to explore ways that families represented in the room are unique. Encourage children to describe ways their family is unique.
- Use the book *Our Grandparents: A Global Album* from Week 8, Day 4 to review the concept of grandparents. Encourage children to describe what makes their grandparent or other family member special. Invite children to point out things in the book that are similar to, and different from, what their grandparent/family member does.
- Provide books focused on family differences, such as *Families* by Ann Morris or *Families* by Shelley Rotner and Sheila M. Kelly.

## EXAMPLES OF PORTFOLIO ENTRIES

Children in our room are learning ways to respect individual and family differences. Recently I observed some ways that Isaiah showed respect for individual and family differences in a variety of settings on different days. Isaiah described similarities and differences between individuals, and ways individuals and families are unique. Isaiah demonstrated his skills of respecting individual and family differences in staff-led activities as well as other times, such as free play and mealtimes.

Children in our room are learning ways to respect individual and family differences. Recently I observed some ways Amani demonstrated respect for individual and family differences in a variety of settings on different days. Amani is beginning to notice similarities and differences between individuals. She talked about similarities and differences between herself and another person during an informal time in the day, and is learning what it means for a person or family to be unique. In a staff-initiated group time, she described things she likes to do with her family. Amani offered this information with little prompting from staff. She showed interest in items in room's Family Shelf by asking questions about several specific items. We will continue to provide individualized learning opportunities to help Amani strengthen her respect for individual and family differences.

Children in our room are learning to respect individual and family differences. Recently I observed Yesica's respect for individual and family differences in a variety of settings on different days. Yesica participates in center activities designed to promote awareness of similarities and differences among individuals, but as of yet she is not describing similarities and differences between individuals. She shows interest in the word unique and

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listens carefully when others talk about how someone is unique. In a staff-initiated group time focused on how families are unique, Yesica did not pursue an opportunity to describe something her family likes to do, but she smiled when a staff member described something the staff member thinks Yesica's family likes to do. Recently Yesica commented briefly on an item on the Family Shelf. We will continue to provide individualized learning opportunities to help Yesica develop a greater respect for individual and family differences.