

What Makes a Family?

Every family is unique. There are certain roles that we often think of when we think of a family, like parents, siblings, grandparents, and children. A family could have two moms, two dads, a mom and a dad, or a single parent. A family could have parents, grandparents, cousins, and siblings all living in one home, or living in all different places. A family could be blended, with multiple families coming together to make a new family. A family could be chosen, where people who were not born into the same family come together to love and support each other like a family.

In this Invitation to Play, we give some suggestions about creating opportunities for children to experiment, imagine, and play with the concept of family in its many forms.

Planning	
Summary: In this Invitation to play, the room will be divided into stations with activities themed around family. After the educator briefly introduces the topic and the stations, learners will be able to move between and engage with stations however they like.	
Materials Needed	Preparing the Space
Drawing station • Paper • Pencils & erasers • Markers or crayons Role play with dolls & puppets • Variety of dolls & puppets • Doll clothes & props Puzzles • Printed photos of different families ◦ Laminated & cut out to make a puzzle Books • Storybooks ◦ See suggestions at the end of this document Family portrait gallery • Photos and drawings of different families ◦ Can invite learners to bring in photos/drawings of their own families, or find stock images online	Arrange tables and chairs to create 4 stations: • A drawing station, where learners can draw and colour a picture of their family • A role play station, where learners can create pretend families using dolls and puppets • A puzzle station, where learners can put together puzzles depicting different families • A picture book station, where learners can read stories independently or to each other about different families Around the perimeter of the room, hang up photos and drawings of different families and invite learners to have a 'gallery walk' between activities. Encourage them to talk to chat about what they notice about the family portraits.
Connecting with Community	
Consider inviting members of your local queer community to lead an activity for your learners. For example: • Invite a queer elder to come and talk about their family • Invite someone to talk about their chosen family • Invite children's families into the space to talk about the different kinds of families that already exist in the classroom. Invite someone who organizes local pride events or leads community activities talk about the kinds of events that take place in the area that centre families and encourage intergenerational connections.	
Expanding	
Children may engage with the stations in ways we might not expect. They might combine activities from different stations in creative ways or find ways to play in the space that are completely different from what	

we imagined. Children's inventiveness and suggestions for play can inspire our reflections on the activities and inform how we set up future learning spaces.

Engaging	
Supporting	Extending
Educators may circulate among different tables and join some of the activities.	Encourage conversations between learners about what their families are like and who they would consider part of their chosen family. Ask learners if they would like to share stories about their families.
Educators can be curious and ask their learners to tell them more about how they are playing with the idea of family	Invite learners who are interested to share something they made or something they learned in front of the group.
Noticing and Recording	
As you have conversations with your learners, summarize some of their ideas on a whiteboard.	
Take photos of the learners while they are doing the activities. Remember to ask learners if it is okay to take photos, and offer the option to not have their face in the photo	
Ask learners if they would like to add their drawings to the family portrait gallery	

Reflecting
Documenting
Take photos of the stations before and during the activities.
Ask learners if there is anything they would like added to the whiteboard where you've been keeping notes, and document the notes by either taking a photo or writing them down.
Write down your observations about what the learners enjoyed about the activities, how they engaged with the activities in ways you didn't expect, and any ideas you have for changes you'd like to make for next time
Initiating Community Reflection
Share photos of the activities and the children's artwork on the school website and/or in the hallway outside the classroom
Reviewing
How did the learners respond to the invitations to play?
What can we add to foster curiosity and creativity?

Books bout Families

Sophie Beer. (2018) Love Makes a Family
 Emma Donaghue. (2017). The Lottery Plus One
 Nancy Garden. (2004). Molly's Family
 Sandra Garrish. (2011). Above the Trees
 Mary Hoffman. (2010). The Great Big Book of Families
 Leslea Newman. (1989). Heather has Two Mommies
 Leslea Newman. (2009). Daddy, Papa, and Me

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Leslea Newman. (2009). Mommy, Mama, and Me
Leslea Newman. (2011). Donovan's Big Day
Vanita Oelschlager. (2010). A Tale of Two Daddies
Vanita Oelschlager. (2011). A Tale of Two Mommies
Todd Parr. (2003). Family Book
Bao Phi. (2019). My Footprints
Justin Richardson & P. Parnell. (2005). Tango Makes Three