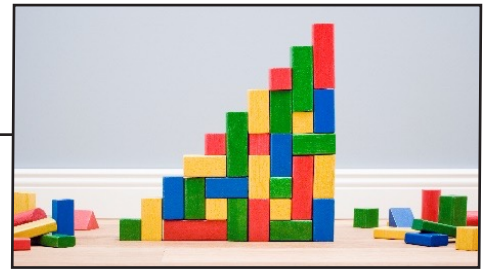


# Inclusion Tips *for* Childcare Providers



Millions of children are affected by potentially life-threatening food allergies. Childcare providers often have the task of ensuring the safety of these children by providing safe foods. With families having different traditions, the list of tips below can help foster inclusion.

## Check out these tips to foster better inclusion while providing childcare:

- ❑ Check with your local food program to see if they've updated food options to include food allergies and religious or cultural needs and begin to change your selections from their programs. If you provide meals, always ask parents what is safe and approved for their child before feeding them or making meal substitutions. EVERY TIME!
- ❑ A young child with food allergies may be at risk if they share the same toys and play space with children who eat these allergens. Keep play areas and toys separate from food areas.
- ❑ Many children have religious restrictions on their diets. Some may eat vegan, vegetarian, kosher, or halal. Always ask the parents and/or caregivers what restricted foods are safe and approved. Keeping family traditions is very important for many people.
- ❑ Not all families are headed by two biological parents or opposite-sex couples. With many homes headed by grandparents, stepparents, adoptive parents, same-sex couples, and non-binary couples, it is important to be respectful. Additionally, more children are being raised without traditional pronouns. It is important to make sure these children are just as at home in your care as everyone else. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services offers information on diverse family structures on its Head Start website.
- ❑ Be mindful of events that may include gender-specific or family-of-origin-specific activities. For instance, if you like to have daddy and daughter day, why not change it to parent/caregiver and child day?
- ❑ Holidays are not the same for everyone. Check FAACT's diversity calendar to see what holidays or religious events you can support for the families who have entrusted their child's care to you. There are many different religious and cultural celebrations at the end of each year. Children who feel included are more likely to thrive and their families will have even more reason to trust you if they know you are invested in them.
- ❑ When coming up with ideas for trips, outings, or family-sponsored celebrations, be mindful that not everyone has the same economic experience. Even with reasonable pricing, childcare costs can be tough on families. Additional fees can be a stretch for some, although you may not see obvious signs of financial challenges. It is also sometimes emotionally hard for families to receive or accept help. Keep these thoughts in mind when planning events.
- ❑ Consider diversity training for yourself and your staff. Unconscious bias can show up even when dealing with children. It always helps to take the extra step to develop yourself and your team.