

# Stereotypes in the classroom

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**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

“ If Americans are to embrace diversity, the conscious and unconscious expressions of racism (sexism) within our society must be identified and done away with. ” Teachers must prepare themselves and the children for the ever changing challenge of interacting and communicating with diverse races. Reduction of fear, ignorance, and personal detachment are possible benefits to a multicultural education ( Wilson). Multicultural education is the potential catalyst to bring all races together in harmony.

Educators today have a moral responsibility to move beyond the limits of racial context to a social context that embraces humanity without barriers and fear. The responsibility of teachers is to get to know the children and the families that will be entering the program. Classrooms need to reflect every child and every family in the class. Do not make assumptions of what a child's ethnic background is. This is putting a stereotype as to what you think of that culture.

Get to know the children so that you can respectfully and accurately reflect them, their families and their lifestyles in the classroom ( York, 2003).

Children should feel like they belong in the class. Teachers need to make sure that they greet each child by name as they enter the classroom at the beginning of the day and to say good bye at the end of the day. Teachers need to remember to stay away from commercial teaching materials.

Cartoon images inaccurately portray human beings and human diversity (York, 2003).

Multicultural children's books can be used effectively as a means for coming to understand individual human stories, and the universal emotions and

themes they contain. Teachers need to be careful when picking books to use in the classroom. A book may look good when you first look at it but it may contain one or more stereotypic images. Teachers need to be very critical in evaluating books that they want to use in the classroom. Make sure that authors are writing fiction for young children that authenticate a culture's heritage.