

LNS Family Books are beloved. The children return to them regularly. As the year begins, each child's book is a way to touch base with family and the rituals of home that bring comfort and reassurance. As we settle into the flow of our days together the children begin to share their stories and a pile of family books grows next to any adult reading books with the children. Then, adults are no longer needed. The books travel around the room, children sit in pairs or a cluster gathers around as they share with each other in the block area, at the writing table or in the alcove. Perhaps there's a picture that connects to the play in progress.

The Family Books play a large part in our anti-bias curriculum. The book *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves* by Louise Derman-Sparks, Julie Olsen Edwards shares four goals, 1) Identity (I'm OK!) 2) Diversity (You're OK!) 3) Justice (That's not fair!) 4) Activism (We can fix this!).



Goal 1: Identity (I'm OK!) states that teachers will nurture each child's construction of knowledgeable, confident, individual personal and social identities. Children will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities. This goal means supporting children to feel strong and proud of who they are without needing to feel superior to anyone else. It means children will learn accurate, respectful language to describe who they and others are. Teachers will support children to develop and be comfortable within their home culture and within the school culture. Our Family Books make every child and their family visible in our room and offer each child a comfortable way to talk about themselves, which leads to the second goal.



Goal 2: Diversity (You're OK!) states that teachers will promote each child's comfortable, empathetic interaction with people from diverse backgrounds. Children will express comfort and joy with human diversity, use accurate language for human differences, and form deep, caring connections across all dimensions of human diversity. This goal means



guiding children to be able to think about and have words for how people are the same and how they are different. It includes helping children feel and behave respectfully, warmly, and confidently with people who are different from themselves. It includes encouraging children to learn both about how they are different from other children and about how they are similar. These

are never either/or realities because people are simultaneously the same and different from one another. This goal is the heart of learning how to treat all people caringly and fairly. We have been sharing family books with each other in small groups of three. By sharing about ourselves and listening to others we have been finding similarities and differences between us, making connections.

Children make observations and share connections in their family books:

"I can hold my brother's hand, I am very strong so I can even pick him up. I helped my brother right here." "Mom and Dad take care my sister." "I don't have any cats and dogs, my dad is allergic to cats and dogs." "I have dino. I had him on a plane." "I have a couple actually. I have one, two, three lovies, four, I have five lovies!" "Every morning I go down as quietly as I can cos I don't want to wake my brother up and then I snuggle with my mama." "When it's night time I usually fall asleep, some times I have trouble falling asleep so I snuggle in the big bed."

Learning about each other helps us build our Studio Purple community. Sharing about ourselves makes us more confident, and learning about others can foster empathy as we notice similarities and differences. These are important feelings for building a welcoming and caring group, and to help build a more just and understanding society.

