

40 Ways to Increase Bi-Culturalism

Transracial families can benefit from incorporating the adopted child's culture of origin into their homes. For transracial families, it is often a matter of bi-culturalism versus assimilation. Does the adopted child assimilate into the dominant culture of the home environment, or does the home environment and resulting attitudes and lifestyle represent both the parent's culture and the child's culture of origin? Years of experience, both personal and professional suggest the latter. To increase the bi-culturalism of the transracial family, the following list of 40 items serve as a guide.

1. Choose a multicultural babysitter or respite provider.
2. Choose a multicultural faith environment.
3. Choose a multicultural physician.
4. Choose a multicultural dentist.
5. Choose to adopt a multicultural vacation location.
6. Choose to adopt a multicultural grocery shopping environment that also has traditional cultural foods.
7. Choose a multicultural daycare and schools.
8. Choose a multicultural mentor for you child.
9. Choose a multicultural mentor for the parent.
10. Choose to live in a multicultural neighborhood.
11. Choose a regular multicultural entertainment venue.
12. Choose multicultural artwork, i.e., pictures, statues (preferably from the child's culture of origin).
13. Choose multicultural reading material, books, magazines, and poetry. Donate multicultural books to libraries and request libraries to purchase books or videos of color.
14. Choose multicultural toys that reflect the child's race and ethnicity (dolls, superheroes, cartoon figures, lunch boxes, etc.).
15. Choose multicultural restaurants as family favorites.
16. Choose to cook multicultural foods as a usual menu item.
17. Choose to highlight multicultural inventors, teachers, community members, or choose a favorite actor or actress of color and extol their virtues as the desired standard.
18. Choose a multicultural music and musicians as our family favorites, i.e., Kirk Franklin (gospel), Gloria Estefan (Latin sound).
19. Choose multicultural movies to own or rent, i.e., Black Cinderella, The Wiz.

20. Choose multicultural cartoons, TV shows.
21. Choose to engage in multicultural guided activities and extol the virtues of people of color during the news, newspaper, TV or movie watching.
22. Choose multicultural clothing and traditional dress.
23. Choose to attend multicultural celebrations, community events, and celebrate multicultural holidays.
24. Choose multicultural hair salon, barber and hairstyles.
25. Choose to join multicultural professional association, i.e. Latino Chamber of Commerce, Black Social Workers Association, book clubs.
26. Choose multicultural community centers or health clubs to join or frequent.
27. Choose multicultural camps, community ed., Awanas, cub scouts, girl scouts troops.
28. Choose multicultural friends and families whose house you go to for dinner and hang out with (vacation together, camping, long-term close relationships).
29. Choose to create or join multicultural play groups, support groups or playgrounds.
30. Choose multicultural people to join your family as extended or honorary family members to play the role of auntie, uncle, cousin or grandparents.
31. Choose a multicultural place of employment that has people of color in leadership positions, and as co-workers.
32. Choose multicultural issues or causes identified by a community of color to join, fight or advocate for.
33. Choose multicultural agencies, events, and environments to volunteer for.
34. Choose to learn a language, preferably the native, traditional language of the child.
35. Choose a multicultural hobby or interest; learn the traditional artwork, dance or practices of the child's culture of origin.
36. Choose a multicultural class at a university, surf the net, read books, become a life long learner of multiculturalism.
37. Choose multicultural holiday cards, stationery, commercial products, request these at stores.
38. Choose to volunteer at your child's school to educate, and celebrate ethnic history months, i.e., volunteer to bring food, read multicultural books, tell stories, give multicultural posters, etc.
39. Choose to educate family members, friends, school and community about the value of multiculturalism.
40. Choose to recognize the added value that living a bi-cultural life has for each family member.