2SLGBTQI+ FAMILY INCLUSION TIP SHEET FOR EDUCATORS

NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES ARE COMMON FOR 2SLGBTQI+ FAMILIES WHEN ACCESSING SCHOOL, DAYCARE, LIBRARY & FAMILY PROGRAMS. FOLLOW THESE TIPS TO CREATE A WELCOMING SPACE!

1 WHEN MEETING OR TEACHING FAMILIES OR STUDENTS INTRODUCE YOURSELF WITH YOUR NAME & PRONOUNS

This will enable you to correctly identify your students and their families, let them know you are an ally & help create a comfortable experience. Try this: "Hi, I'm ___, and I use she/her pronouns. It's nice to meet you! What's your preferred name and pronouns?"

2 ASK PARENTS WHAT PARENTING LABELS THEY USE

Don't assume you know the names, labels, or family structure of your students & their families. For example, do not assume kids have one mom and one dad or two moms, etc. There are so many different kinds of families and different names students call their parents.

3 DON'T ASSUME CHILDREN ARE GENETICALLY LINKED TO THEIR PARENTS. DON'T ASK UNLESS THIS INFO IS NECESSARY.

There are many ways to make and be a family. Ask yourself: in my teaching do I centre heterosexual two-parent families as normal? What kind of changes can I make with my words and curriculum to include all kinds of families? Ask the OSSTF or ETFO for 2SLGBTQI+ inclusive materials. EGALE (www.egale.ca) also has great resources.

4 ENSURE YOUR DAYCARE, SCHOOL, OR PROGRAM FORMS ARE INCLUSIVE OF ALL PARENTS, GENDERS & FAMILIES

2SLGBTQI+ families experience erasure & discrimination through forms that only include Male/Female, Mother/Father, or two-parent-only options. This is easy to fix! E.g., you can replace "Male/Female" with "Gender," allowing parents to write their answer. You can replace "Mother/Father" with multiple entries for "Parent."

5 ENSURE YOU THINK ABOUT RACE & 2SLGBTQI+ FAMILIES

Did you know 2SLGBTQI+ Indigenous, Black and racialized parents report higher incidence of being discriminated against and misrecognized as the friend, "nanny", sibling, or grandparent to their own child? Racialized 2SLGBTQI+ parents, particularly fathers, Two-Spirit, trans & nonbinary parents, report being seen as predators when doing ordinary things, like bike riding or traveling, with their children, which can lead to police intervention and criminalization. Thinking about how racial bias & gender norms influence your perception of families is important. Seeking out anti-racist and 2SLGBTQI+ equity training is key.

6 THINK CRITICALLY ABOUT YOUR CURRICULUM

Do your songs only include reference to mothers and fathers? What about the books you read? Do you encourage your whole class to make gifts for whomever their parents/caregivers are for Mother's and Father's day? Do you teach kids, parents, and students about all kinds of families and about discrimination of all forms?

7 THINK CRITICALLY ABOUT GENDER ROLES & STEREOTYPES

Normative ideas about gender and gender roles as well as gendered language like "girls and boys," "moms and dads," and "ladies and gentlemen" can exclude and discriminate against gender variant students and parents. Do you teach students that everyone can be nurturing, strong, smart, and beautiful? Do you promote friendships across genders? Try using inclusive language like: "Hello, students!" "Greetings everyone!" "Hello, class!"

8 IF YOU MAKE A MISTAKE, IDENTIFY, LEARN, APOLOGIZE & MOVE ON

Mistakes happen! When they do it is important to identify your error, apologize, state a commitment to doing better & move on. It is uncomfortable for students and families if you dwell on your errors.

9 ENSURE YOU EXPLICITLY WELCOME ALL FAMILIES

When you meet families, begin your program, or start a new school year, it is important to share that you welcome all families and genders into the space. It is also important to state that discrimination will not be tolerated. Rainbow flags & positive space signs are not enough!

10 BE FRIENDLY & KIND

The 2SLGBTQI+ community has a long history of discrimination and many of the families you teach likely have had many experiences of feeling erased and excluded in education settings. Honour this by being kind, friendly and following these tips.