



Introduction

Welcome to 2018 and the new year! For many parents, the new year marks a time of reflection. It is also a time when many of us make New Year's resolutions focusing on positive and healthy living, such as eating healthy, exercising, or spending quality time together as a family. With Martin Luther King Jr. Day coming up on January 15th, this can also be an opportunity to consider resolutions that focus on celebrating diversity and finding ways for you and your children to be a helper in your community. Ready to start making your New Year's resolutions?

This series of newsletters is inspired by and created just for parents. If you have suggestions, comments, or ideas for future newsletters please email: opec@oregonstate.edu. For additional parenting resources, like us on Facebook (Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative) and follow us on Twitter (@OPECParentingEd).

Rock your Resolutions in 2018

Sometimes, it can feel that there is as much pressure to create a good resolution as there is to keep it. In the age of social media, many family and friends take to Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter to share how they plan to start the year off right. This can place a lot of pressure on parents and families to 'up the ante' on New Year's resolutions. Remember, it is not a competition and any healthy living choices or positive change that you are willing to make is a good thing! Here are a few tips for creating your resolution this year (courtesy of the American Psychological Association):



- Start Small
- Change one behavior at a time
- Talk about it with others
- Don't beat yourself up (Be forgiving of yourself!)
- Ask for support

★ ★ ★
★ Involve your children in the process!
Sharing your ideas for healthy living
in the new year is a great way to
model these skills for your children. ★ ★

Celebrate Diversity

It's not always easy to know how to talk to children about diversity, but it is an important conversation to have at any time of year given that children as young as 2 years old begin to notice (and ask many questions!) about gender and racial differences. As a parent, you can teach your child to learn about and celebrate these differences.



“Diversity activities teach young children to respect and celebrate the differences in all people. Learning about different cultural aspects offers new experiences for children. It also helps them realize that we’re all humans, despite differences.”

- PennState Extension

One way to start this conversation is by reading books that celebrate diversity. Check your local library for these or other books recommended by PennState Extension:

- **The Sneetches** by Dr. Seuss: In this story the star-belly and plain-belly Sneetches learn that neither type is superior and that they are able to get along and become friends.
- **The Color of Us** by Karen Katz: This story explores how everyone in the neighborhood is a different shade of brown - from peanut butter to chocolate - and does a great job of subtly explaining that people are all different shades of the same color.
- **Why Am I Different?** by Norma Simon: This book outlines the variety of ways people can be different from each other including hair color, size, language, and family.
- **It's OK to be Different** by Todd Parr: The author explores sensitive issues such as adoption and unusual things such as eating macaroni in the bathtub, but manages to explore diversity in all forms.



Fun With Your Kid! Be a Community Helper

Looking for a fun way to bond with your kiddos? Make it a resolution to help out in your community this year! Volunteering as a family provides time for children to bond with both parents and siblings in a special context. It is also a great way to develop empathy in young children and can lead to important conversations between parents and young children about feelings. Children have the opportunity to feel connected to their community as a helper and learn how even small gestures or acts of kindness can help in a big way. Here are a few ideas to get your family started:

- Have a family meeting to discuss volunteering
- Pick the right place to volunteer
- Connect with community organizations that have age-appropriate volunteer activities
- After volunteering, meet to discuss feelings and lessons learned



References

<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/resolution.aspx>
<https://extension.psu.edu/programs/betterkidcare/knowledge-areas/environment-curriculum/activities/all-activities/we-are-different-we-are-the-same-teaching-young-children-about-diversity>
<https://www.extension.umn.edu/family/school-success/families/supporting-learning/volunteering/>



Oregon State University
Hallie E. Ford Center