



## CELEBRATION POLICY

NMCAA honors DEIA (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility), which means that we create programming and environments that are respectful. We are accepting of all people and their diverse backgrounds so that everyone feels valued and included. *We appreciate that everyone is equal and avoid making assumptions about anyone.* When preparing for celebrations, program staff will consider how all the following are being respected:

- **race** (social term often used based on skin color and or ancestry)
- **ethnicity** (person's cultural background)
- **religion** (person's beliefs and practices)
- **differing abilities**
- **family structure** (different kinds of family's people have)
- **body type and physical traits** (how a person looks)
- **gender identity** and how they identify themselves (how people see themselves as male, female, etc.)
- **sexual orientation** and whom they love (who people are attracted to)
- **education level**
- **financial situation** (how much money someone has)

1. Before planning celebrations, consider the backgrounds of all the families in your group and how the celebration may impact each person's sense of inclusion.
  - Consider how the planned activities reflect the children's life experiences, as well as broaden their insight into the lives and experiences of others.
  - Keep in mind, cultures have their own set of rules and expectations, and cultural concepts are best taught by using the children's varied family heritages and community resources.
  - Avoid teaching stereotypes from the past.
  - Learn about family traditions and use them when possible (i.e. songs parent/guardians sing to children, games they play, etc.)
2. Celebrations are an opportunity to highlight children's learning and experiences in NMCAA early childhood programs. When celebrating the children and their work use pictures, videos, and displays to show children's accomplishments.
  - Be careful not to confuse celebrations with holidays. (i.e., Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, etc.)
3. Activities need to be open ended and process oriented so that ALL children can be involved successfully.
4. Concepts being presented must be developmentally appropriate.
5. Preparation should not dominate a month's worth of activities.
6. If food consumption is involved in a celebration:
  - We cannot ask parents/guardians specifically to provide these food items. (They may, however, volunteer to bring items or volunteer to give time: i.e.: set up, serve, and clean up.)
  - Involve children in food preparation as much as possible, always keeping food allergies in mind.
  - Nutritious foods must be strongly encouraged and provided whenever possible.
7. Celebrations held after hours should also follow these guidelines.
8. Celebrations held after hours cannot be used as substitutes for classroom or home visiting time.
9. We cannot imply or request individual parents/guardians to provide gifts, money, or materials for celebrations.

If you need clarification on any point about this policy talk to your Ed. Coach, Coordinator, or PSC.



## Celebration Policy Guidance

Holiday traditions are family events celebrated differently from home to home. Staff will not plan activities specifically related to religious, cultural, or commercial holidays.

When planning and setting up the environment to include items below, ensure the children and families can see themselves reflected in the materials, and that the materials are representative of the diverse world we live in. Be mindful of where the materials come from, consider things such as: authenticity, who the author or artist is, and what's their background.

### **This is what we CAN DO:**

- . . . have all kinds of books, and read by request or choice
- . . . have music in a wide variety of styles and authentic instruments
- . . . talk about different types of homes, families, work, and foods
- . . . display posters and artwork, have dolls, puzzles, clothing in dramatic play, and cooking items that represent a variety of people, including differing races, ethnicities, abilities, family structure, different body types and physical traits.
- . . . display artwork covering a variety of periods and styles
- . . . celebrate the seasons, using items like pumpkins, clovers, pinecones, gourds etc...
- . . . send valentines home when brought in by a child
- . . . learn and share words in another language
- . . . set up the environment to represent diversity
- . . . have parents/guardians share about their culture and traditions...if they ask to
- . . . have parents/guardians contribute to the dramatic play area by sending in empty boxes, cans, etc. from foods they eat