

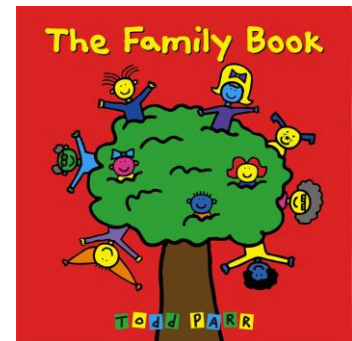


DIVERSE FAMILIES ON MOTHER'S DAY AND FATHER'S DAY

As we celebrate and honor parents and families in schools, Mother's Day and Father's Day can be opportunities for recognizing the diversity of family structures.

While some students have a mother and a father, others may have two moms, two dads, a single mom or dad, grandparents raising them, divorced parents or a whole range of other family situations.

If you include recognition of Mother's and Father's Day in your curriculum, this guide offers ideas for making those activities more welcoming for all students and their families.



- Inclusive celebrations can serve as an important learning experience by providing opportunities to discuss and acknowledge the many kinds of families in our communities and the many caring adults who are in children's lives.
- These holidays can also create teachable moments for older elementary students about gender and how the roles of mother and father are tied to certain gender stereotypes.
- For some students, this may be especially affirming to see their families acknowledged in the classroom. When students feel seen and understood at school, they fare better both emotionally and academically.

INCLUSIVE WAYS TO CELEBRATE PARENTS AND FAMILIES

- Help children focus on what they have, not what they don't have, by looking at the range of caring adults in their lives.
- Check out Welcoming Schools' [lessons](#) that can help you embrace family diversity in your classroom such as: [Trees of Caring – Roots and Wings](#) or [Circles of Caring Community: A "Family Tree" Activity Showing Support for Children in All Families](#).
- Read books with students that feature many kinds of family structures such as [The Family Book](#) by Todd Parr or [The Great Big Book of Families](#) by Mary Hoffman.
- Create a [Love Makes a Family](#) display for your school hallway with student drawings of their family or caring community.
- Find out from your students or their families the language they use to talk about their families. This'll help you guide students through any conversations that come up during the discussion.

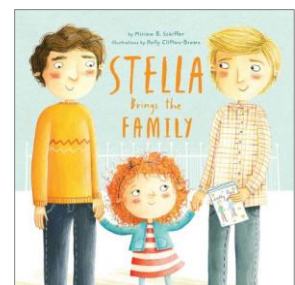
INCLUSIVE WAYS TO CELEBRATE MOTHER'S DAY AND FATHER'S DAY

- Make sure that you talk about the different people in your students' lives who could receive any cards or gifts students' might create. On Mother's Day, for example, a child could make something for an aunt or birth mother. Or if they have two dads as primary caregivers, they could create cards in May and June.

- With older elementary students, Mother’s Day and Father’s Day can also be used as an opportunity to look at gender stereotypes. Students can discuss the qualities that mothers and fathers have and explore why these qualities have culturally been assigned to a specific gender. Questions you could discuss include:
 - What are important qualities for parents to have? Can either a mom or dad have these?
 - What kinds of things do parents do for or with their children? Can either a mom or dad do these?
- For younger students, steer clear of activities that involve gender-stereotyping – like making cards shaped like ties for Father’s Day.
- If you do plan to hold an event for either Mother’s Day or Father’s Day where students ask their mother or father to the school, make sure no child is alone while most others have a parent or family member who can attend. Call on other people within your school, such as aides or other staff, to be there for students.
- Some schools celebrate with a Parents’ Day or Family Day so that activities can be more inclusive of the many families in their school.
- Recognize that there may be students in your class who have lost a parent or whose parent is absent, and difficult emotions may come up if you celebrate Mother’s Day or Father’s Day in your classroom.
- Making something in the classroom can always present challenges. The key is to be sensitive and help those children who need it, so that they do not have to handle challenges alone.

LESSON PLANS FROM WELCOMING SCHOOLS

- [*Diverse Families on Mother’s & Father’s Days*](#) (K – 2)
- [*The Great Big Book of Families: Discussion Guide*](#) (K – 2)
- [*What is a Family?*](#) (K – 3)
- [*Trees of Caring: Roots and Wings*](#) (1 – 3)
- [*Where I’m From: Family, Community and Poetry*](#) (4 – 6)



RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR STUDENTS

- *Antonio’s Card / La Tarjeta de Antonio*. Rigoberto Gonzales. (Pre-K – 1)
- *The Family Book*. Todd Parr. (Pre-K – K)
- *The Great Big Book of Families*. Mary Hoffman. (Pre-K – 3)
- *One Family*. George Shannon. (Pre-K – 2)
- *Stella Brings the Family*. Miriam B. Schiffer. (Pre-K – 1)
- Welcoming Schools [Great Books Featuring Diverse and Inclusive Families](#)
- Welcoming Schools [Great LGBTQ Inclusive Picture and Middle Grade Books](#)

