

40 Ways to Increase Bi-Culturalism In Transracial Families

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 a multicultural grocery shopping environment that also has traditional cultural foods
7. Choose multicultural daycare and schools
8. Choose a multicultural mentor for your 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 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, Cosby Show etc.

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 associations, 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