

Cultivate Cultural Collaboration Strategies For Creative Parenting Of Bicultural Children

Some frequently mentioned parent- child culture clash examples are:

1. Your child will answer only English when spoken to in your native language.
2. Your child wants you speak to only English in front of her friends.
3. Your child finally admits he rarely brings friends home because he is ashamed of your 'foreign' ways
4. Your child doesn't want you to volunteer for field trips (room parent, classroom helper, soccer coach etc) because you are 'different' (accent, clothing etc)
5. Your child wants you to 'be just like the rest of her friend's parents'
6. Your child is grumpy, or non communicative, about family cultural events.

Some strategies that have proved helpful in parenting bicultural children are:

AS A BICULTURAL PARENT:

1. Identify what was happening in your own life and family near your child's current age. What are your losses and disappointments from your cultural heritage? What things that are missing in your child's experience in the country or region where you live now? (cultural events, holidays, rituals) Write them down. Prioritize those closest to your heart.
2. What are the loyalty pressures from your extended family? Think about the way things 'should be done'. How are you handling the conflict between your childhood experience and your child's cultural environment today? Make some notes on what is working and what you need to talk about with your spouse or other supportive adults.
3. Have you made your peace on how you interact with your family about your identity as a bicultural person or mixed cultural couple?

AS A BICULTURAL COUPLE

1. Talk to each other about those things in your cultural heritage(s) which are most important to each of you. Make decisions about and those things which you can confidently prioritize as the most important things you want to pass on to your children. You can't have it all.
2. Your young children will be learning about your culture(s) daily by example. But as your child gets beyond the first grades, she will be very influenced by the majority culture. It is important to admit and accept your sadness, culture loss, fear of losing the child to the dominant culture.
3. As a couple, develop a united front on how you deal with cultural conflict with the child and with your extended families. You will have to find your way as a couple to walk the line between keeping traditions and demanding unrealistic loyalty to the culture in which you were raised or your child's sense of self esteem will suffer tremendously.

HAVE MIXED CULTURAL FAMILY FUN WITH STORIES

1. Tell your children the stories about your homeland and people. Be specific in relating the story and its meaning. Your child will not have the cultural cues you had so he needs your guidance to understand why you want to keep the tradition alive.
2. Help your child celebrate the traditions you most value at each age and stage. Find ways to make a bridge between the stories of your culture and the one your child is growing up in.