Children are lovely beings that are often like sponges, easily absorbing their surroundings. Children start recognizing differences between themselves and others as early as age 3. So it is very important that, as parents and educators, we help our children to be kind, moral and loving. We each have the opportunity to contribute to bettering our communities, by helping ourselves and others to be accepting of everyone and all of the unique characteristics we each have. Diversity can be a scary topic to talk about because for many of us, it can be a potentially controversial topic. I think diversity conversations should be encouraged with our children so they do not face uncomfortable settings in the future. It is important to make sure our children are aware that not everyone is the same and that differences are not bad or undesirable. There are many characteristics that make us unique: nationality, personality, gender, race/ethnicity, religion, education, physical ability, socio-economic status, language, thinking processes, profession, personal interests, etc. The list can be pretty endless.

There are a number of ways we can engage conversation with children (or other adults): in response to an interaction with someone who has a different set of beliefs than you do, or who looks differently than you do. Here are some ideas- eat at a variety of restaurants or cook a variety of different foods that increase exposure to different cultural traditions; read stories that share experiences of a variety of people and represent different cultural practices; discuss observations of commercials, advertisements, TV shows or movies to increase an awareness and understanding of human differences and similarities; and go to cultural festivals, or museums to learn and engage with diverse people.

Also as we engage in experiences and conversations about diversity, it is first important to assess ourselves and how we interact with others. As I said before, children are like sponges—if they see us acting in a certain way, they may mimic our behavior. So, consider our own actions, think about the way you speak about and with people from a variety of cultural group. Are you speaking and acting in a way that creates inclusion or exclusion?

Whatever we do, make sure not to discourage questions from children. That teaches them that these topics should not be discussed. We are all unique in our own beautiful ways, so why not celebrate our differences and personal characteristics? It will encourage more learning and value in our community, and teach children to grow from interactions with a variety of people. Whether your family and peers engage in regular conversation about diversity or not, hopefully this article can provide you with some new resources to continue and ease the conversations.
The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning and Ally (GLBTQ2A) Resource Center is here to support you, your family, residents and community! No matter who you are, or how you identify, you are welcome at the GLBTQ2A Resource Center!

The GLBTQ2A Resource Center is a great resource to learn and seek answers about the GLBTQ community, and engage in mindful conversations on how to become an ally to the GLBTQ community. You can rent a movie or borrow books for free or participate in the Center's scheduled programs and weekly events that occur during a semester. The Center is always looking for great ideas and skills, so feel free to drop by the office to share your ideas, skills and talents.

Currently located at LSC West, East Entrance of the Campus Rec Center, the Center will move back into the Lory Student Center sometime in the Fall semester. The Resource Center offers individualized GLBTQ 101 workshops that cater to diverse needs and knowledge levels of people across campus. The length of the workshops vary. You can request a workshop by filling out a request form from the Center’s website: http://glbtrc.colostate.edu. The Center also offers free printing and this will be useful to some of us who experience low printing credits by the end of semester.

And, one more exciting piece of news. The GLBTQ2A Center has a new director - Aaric Guerriero. Read about him on the website.

One of my favorite movies is How to Train Your Dragon. Charming and enchanting, this movie truly captivates one's imagination. My favorite aspect of the movie is how each dragon has its own unique physical feature and ability which helps it live in the fictitious Isle of Berk. After thinking about this, I had an idea that would take that same concept and turn it into a creative program for youth where they would make their own dragon.

To start off, you would provide a template of a dragon. After a quick google search, I found tons of templates online. Next you would have sheets of paper with various physical adaptations on it, for instance, feathers, gills, horns, talons, webbed feet - the list goes on. Kids would cut these adaptations out and paste them on their dragon, and afterwards they could color it with markers, colored pencils, or crayons. You could even provide them with colored paper, which can be found in the resource room at Durrell. Afterwards, you can ask them how these physical features help their dragon or have them draw their dragon in its natural habitat.

In conjunction with the sequel, How to Train Your Dragon 2, which came out on June 13th, this would be an excellent program for youth. Not only is it fun and allows kids to use their creativity in making an imaginary animal, but it would be an educational experience as well. Kids would have to think critically about how these physical adaptations would benefit their dragon in an environment. The kids can also apply what they’ve learned to understanding more about animals in the real world. In addition, you could invite families to either watch the first movie or have an outing to the theater to see the sequel. Whatever you decide to do, this program would surely be a hit!

LOCATION
LSC West (access through East Entrance of Campus Rec Center)
HOURS
8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday - Friday
PHONE
970.491.4342
WEBSITE
www.glbtrc.colostate.edu

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