



Diversity and Inclusion Newsletter

December 2020



Inclusive Language avoids biases, slang, or expressions that discriminate against groups of people based on race, gender, or socioeconomic status.

Gender-Inclusive Language

by Andrea Seidl, She/Her/Hers
Mom to Charles, Preschool

Watching a fire engine go by and Charles asks “Where are the firemen going?”

Reading a group email addressed “Hey guys!”

Wanting to get your friend’s attention with a “Dude! Look at this!”

Opening a presentation with “Ladies and Gentlemen”

These phrases, on their own, generally feel innocuous. Gendered words and [unconscious gender bias](#) have been woven into the vernacular to a point that you might not notice or question it. Language is a powerful tool that can be used to unite as well as divide, marginalize, and discriminate. The universal use of “mankind”, “man”, and “guys” in English defines the default as male and erases [women and nonbinary people from everyday conversation](#). It can be damaging to be misidentified or overlooked by others, in whatever way that misidentification or exclusion takes place. [Multiple studies](#) show that LGBTQ+ youth have higher rates of mental health challenges as compared to their cisgender peers. Your children are figuring out their world by listening to the adults closest to them, the books you read to them, and the mirrors *everything*, than I ever learned reading articles or having discussions with trans- and queer-identified friends. In my pledge to listen, learn, and improve, I am committing to make a conscious effort to use inclusive and validating language. I will circle around to the power of language in February for Black History Month and using Person-First language in May for Mental Health Awareness Month. I catch myself daily, and it is work. As I hear Charles echoing back what I say, I learn that communication depends on how something is *heard*, not just what is said.

In this issue, our Parent Educator, Jane, breaks down how children develop their self-identity and perception of the identities of others and Teacher Erica shares some ideas for celebrating holidays during a pandemic.



******Monthly Challenge******

Pay attention to not only your words, but the vocabulary in the books you read to your children, and in the shows and movies they watch. Which inclusive or exclusive words and phrases are your children using in everyday language? What language do they use to express their identity?

Examples of Recent Language Shifts

GENDERED NOUNS He/Him/His - She/Her/ Hers Father - Mother Husband - Wife Son - Daughter Brother - Sister Boyfriend - Girlfriend	NEUTRAL NOUNS They/Them/Theirs Parent - Guardian Spouse - Partner Child-Kid Sibling Partner - Significant Other
GENDERED JOB TITLES Waiter - Waitress Steward - Stewardess Mailman - Mailwoman Policeman - Policewoman Fireman	NEUTRAL JOB TITLES Server Flight Attendant Postal Worker Police Officer Firefighter
GENDERED GREETINGS Ladies - Gentlemen You Guys Ma'am - Sir Mr., Mrs., Ms., Miss	NEUTRAL GREETINGS Distinguished Guests Y'all, Folks, Everyone Hello or greet these titles He, or use name and/or professional title

The use of X or @ to indicate gender-neutral identifiers:
[Folx](#) or [Latinx](#)

The singular ["they"](#)

Gender-neutral language [around the world](#)

[Sharing](#) your own person pronouns

Calendar

Ongoing: [Town Hall Seattle](#) Civics Events

Ongoing: Every Monday, 6-7pm: [Equity Fishbowl](#) led by Erin Jones

Ongoing: [Classrooms Without Borders](#) calendar of events

January 6: Service Project drop off your mittens and hats for *Mari's Mittens*

January 11: Diversity and Inclusion Committee meeting, 7pm

January 18: MLK Jr. Day

February 6: Open House for Prospective Families

Family Resources

[Using Gender-Inclusive Language with Children & Families: 7 Tips](#)

[Playing with Pronouns coloring sheets](#) coloring sheets

[How to Start a Conversation About Inclusive Language With Your Child](#)

[11 Ways to Teach Kids to Be Inclusive of Others](#)

[Becoming You - Apple TV](#) Docuseries told through the eyes of over 100 kids across the globe.

[Suggested books](#) available at Seattle Public Libraries

Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress - Christine Baldacchino

King and King - Linda deHaan

Red, A Crayon's Story -Michael Hall

I Am Jazz - Jessica Herthel

Julian is a Mermaid - Jessica Love

Sparkle Boy - Leslaea Newman

William's Doll - Charlotte Zolotow