



FAMIPED

Familias, Pediatras y Adolescentes en la Red. Mejores padres, mejores hijos.

Healthily diverse

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These thoughts are taken from M^a Ángeles Gascón, head of a child health center in the old town of Zaragoza . It is located in a multicultural area with gypsy and immigrant population.

They have successfully managed to cope with diversity and, above all, not to create a ghetto. Local population and isolated population take part in their activities and this is not easy in a society where it is sometimes frightening that our children meet “different” children (we tend to protect our children).

They have been awarded with “Aragón Multicultural” prize because of the work done with the mother of these children and of achieving this difficult integration step by step.



Healthily diverse

It is essential for parents that their children grow up safe and strong. Worrying about nutrition, checking that a child reaches the suitable weight and height, following the pediatrician's instructions related to walks and environment are simple concerns with visible indicators that most people take into consideration. We should go deeper in the notion of health. We should evolve from physical to emotional necessities. In this context, it is very important the contact with the world, the otherness that is not me: mother, father, siblings, friends... If we combine this differentiation of the world with health, that idea is more difficult than feeding your baby or taking them to the park for a while.

Making decisions regarding the World that we want for our children is related to socialization environments, their game Partners, how I am going to introduce them to "other" children ... It is here where we are often guided by intuition, we do not ask for opinions and we are driven by scare towards otherness. In this coexistence, a fundamental aim is protection toward our children which make us look for "safe" environments: similar partners who are not in trouble ... The difference is culturally and economically excessive. We are frightened and we want to keep our children away from "poverty", "isolation" and "special". Then, how will their future friends be! These reasons make us feel quiet, "justify" our decision and keep our small and "safe" world as it is.

While parents think of these controversial ideas, children, who are expert in their necessities, behave in a natural way and can answer some "adult" questions. The problem is that, most of the times, we do not listen to them and we make a decision on our own. We should try to pay attention to our children, observe their behaviour and games. If we enter their world and analyse their gestures, looks and expressions we can learn from and with them.

For children, it is important to have a partner to run with, to catch him and to enjoy with him. Someone to let them know their possibilities and state their self-esteem... If that partner is from a different skin colour or speaks another language, that will not be an obstacle. What really matters is the opportunity to create and build together, the ability to generate a common game zone. This will create a range of chances to get mixed: listening, negotiating, solving conflicts ... We cannot reach that world on our own, we cannot communicate and we cannot understand others.

Game moments are fundamental. Telling a story makes you feel together, the same than choosing a character or a fancy dress. Each one will bring an invented tale from their day-to-day life. Important cultural aspects will be present in them and that will be a way to link both worlds. The economic level, religious ideas, stories from other continents and social values will be part of that "imaginative story", a symbolic games developed by children.

An abyss which separates us can thus become a door to know and to grow for children in such a simple way.

We are surrounded by universal truths which are shared in tales, games, everyday lives which are not so different as love, life, death, friendship or power.

So different and so similar. What make us choose different friends? Skin colour? Money? Ability to dream together, to create chances, to get angry and then solve problems?

Then, what should parents do? How can we care for that emotional well-being of our children? We should forget recipes, workshops or courses. We should not close reality and we should take advantage of what this diverse world offers us.

Difference is the first step to generate identity, the conflicts to learn to negotiate, the diversity of beliefs and values to go deeper into tolerance and in the struggle for universal human rights. Educating in diversity, open towards a changing world will make our children to develop flexibility, ability to adapt and build.

We are not dealing with magic. We should make an effort and forget our preconceived ideas. We will find obstacles on the way: there will be personal ghosts, we will feel scared but all this process will be done with our children and it will allow us to grow up in humanity. That will improve for sure our physical and emotional well-being apart from our children one.

If you try it, through game zone, at school or in your area, you will repeat.

Moreover, even secondary effects are usually beneficial.

