Open-mindedness

OPEN-MINDEDNESS means a willingness to consider new ideas; un-prejudiced.

Activity 1
Talk with your children about what open-mindedness means and how it can be applied to every day life and then explore a new activity called Try It-You Might Like It. Tell your children to think of one thing beginning with each letter of the alphabet that they have never tried before. They might include things such as foods that may be new to them, a new game to try, a new place to see, or a new friend to make at school. Not only will your children stretch their minds, but also they will push the limits of each other’s comfort zones and perhaps even their vocabulary. Make sure that a list is kept so that they will follow through with trying out some of these new concepts. A connection might be made with a bully at school who just may not be a bully after all!

Activity 2
Every parent tries to develop routines with their children. It is often difficult to set routines into place when children are young and once they are in place we don’t like to Rock the Boat! This activity teaches your children that it is sometimes fine to break the routine when a change has a positive behavioral result. Discuss a time when a bully picked on you or your child. At the end of the discussion, generate three credible reasons why the incident happened and counter each with a different behavior that you or your child could have tried to prevent the wrong from happening; go ahead and rock the boat a little to be willing to consider other ideas.

Activity 3
Teachers often use a phrase that is called Monitor and Adjust. It generally means that we should observe certain behaviors and then change or adapt every now and then to encourage a new way to look at something or a new way to do something. Your children should also experience the opportunity to see that differences are good sometimes and that these differences encourage open minds. Remind them that there are as many different people as there are fingerprints – each one of us is unique and brings new and sometimes controversial things to the table we call life! Have them take risks to experience new ideas and meet new friends of different shapes, colors and personalities. Follow up by talking with them about what they learned and discovered by reaching out beyond their grasp.

Activity 4
Most likely, playing games is an age-old way to bring out the best in your children. This activity, called Judge a Book by its Cover is meant to stimulate open mindedness as well as understanding that we often can make big mistakes by being too hasty with opinions that we have about people and situations. Have your children gather up some books that they have read from around the house. Make a big pile of them, and then divide the material equally. With blank paper have them cover up the real titles and create their own new titles (or not). Have them re-tell the stories with imaginary protagonists and antagonists and see how many points they can score for each time they figure out that the book title and story is incorrect. A light-hearted discussion could follow after the game is finished about not judging a person by how they look to us from the outside. This is a fun way to teach tolerance as well.

Activity 5
First and foremost, it is important for parents to be the role models for behavior they wish to see in their children. Each family member brings unique gifts and talents to the family but negative behavior and attitudes should be discouraged quickly. This activity allows your children to engage in role-playing. Start your own in-house drama club by acting in your own play! Roll 'Em is a unique and fun way to engage your children in getting the point across about negative behavior and bullying as an example. Teach your children through role-playing the methods that are acceptable to curb bullying in their own environment. Have your children write a short play with a theme of bullying and have them use the following three steps to stop bullying: 1) Interrupt the bullying, 2) Educate calmly by talking it out if possible, 3) Leave and get help. Have them present the play at your family’s Roll ‘Em theater hour!