



K/1 SOCIAL STUDIES & PHE

WHAT IS A FAMILY?

RATIONALE

This lesson will explore the diverse types of families that exist in society. The interactive activity teaches students that all families are special, express love and support their family members in similar ways to others families and are of equal importance and value within society.

CURRICULUM REFERENCES

SOCIAL STUDIES, K

- **Big Ideas:** Stories and traditions about ourselves and our families reflect who we are and where we are from.
- **Curricular Competencies:** Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions.
- **Content:** Ways in which individuals and families differ and are the same. Sample Topic: different types of families (nuclear, extended, step-families, adoptive and biological, same-sex, single-parent, etc.).

SOCIAL STUDIES, 1

- **Big Ideas:** Healthy communities recognize and respect the diversity of individuals and care for the local environment.
- **Curricular Competencies:** Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions.
- **Content:** Diverse cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives within the local and other communities.

PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION, K/1

- **Big Ideas:** Learning about ourselves and others helps us develop a positive attitude and caring behaviours, which helps us build healthy relationships.
- **Curricular Competencies:** Identify caring behaviours among classmates and within families.
- **Content:** Caring behaviours in groups and families.

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Lesson Plan: What is a Family?

(From The Gender Spectrum: What Educators Need to Know)

Curriculum Connections

- **Socials K** - Ways in which individuals and families differ and are the same.
- **Socials 1** - Diverse cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives within the local and other communities
- **PHE K/1** - Caring behaviours in groups and families

Rationale & Preparation

Work with your Teacher-Librarian to collect a variety of pictures and picture books about all kinds of families. This gives students a “mirror” to see their own situation, and also a “window” to see the many kinds of families out there, even if they aren’t in your class or school. Have these displayed within your room or easily accessible for students to look at during your “book time”. Make sure that you have a variety of resources that you can use to read aloud to students about families. Be well aware of the socio-economic status of families in your classroom. The language we

use regarding families really impacts children's understanding of who is included and who is not. Try to use phrases like, "Take this home to your family", which doesn't assume two parents, or a mom and a dad. Celebrate all forms of family!

Lesson Plan

1. Begin by asking students "Who's in a family?" Record their ideas on chart paper along with key words and picture symbols (i.e. people's heads) so that non-readers can tell who is who. Be careful not to draw girls and boys in gender stereotypical ways (i.e. stick figures with skirts or pants) or using gendered colours (i.e. pink and blue)

2. Prior to reading stories about families, ask students to listen and watch for the different kinds of families they see within the books. Read the story "Who's in A Family?" by Robert Skutch or "All Families Are Special" by Norma Simon. You can also use "The Family Book" by Todd Parr, although it is less descriptive.

3. After reading, show students a chart with different kinds of families on it. Write the name of each form of family in a different colour so that non-readers can tell them apart. You will need to design this in advance using pictures (from the internet or copied from the books) or drawn picture symbols of people's heads and the following words:

- Adoptive Parents, Foster Parents, Blended Families, Couples without Children, Extended Families, Inter-Racial Families, Opposite Gender Parents, Same Gender Parents, Single Parent, Parents who live apart.

All of these forms of family are shown in the book by Robert Skutch

4. Ask students to take turns using a pointer and being "the teacher" to point out their own family. Help those who might be confused to identify their own family. (Make sure you know the families of all students well before you teach this lesson).

5. Now read a story featuring a family with two moms or two dads such as:

- And Tango Makes Three by Justin Richardson
- Heather Has Two Mommies by Leslea Newman
- Stella Brings the Family by Miriam B. Schiffer
- Donovan's Big Day by Leslea Newman

6. Ask the students if they think it would be different to have two moms or two dads? Remind them that when two men fall in love, we use the word "Gay" and with two women who love each other we often use "Lesbian". These are OK words to use, but never in a hurtful or name-calling way.

7. Read stories about all kinds of families throughout your unit on families. Make sure students see positive representations of all forms of family. Be explicit in your teaching in that all families are equal and important. Gently debunk the myth that all families must have a Mom and a Dad who live together. For other titles that portray same gender families go to sogieducation.org

8. Return to your chart throughout the unit to re-teach the names of the different kinds of families.

Assessment

Use the final page of "Who's in a Family?" which depicts all the families (without words) and ask students individually to point to different kinds of families as you verbally prompt them with questions. i.e. Can you find the single parent family? Can you point to the same gender family? Where is the opposite gender family?

Extension

If you would like to teach acceptance of same gender families use the following book: “ABC-A Family Alphabet Book” by Bobbie Combs.

- Prior to reading, brainstorm all the activities your students do with their own parents and guardians on a T-chart. Add picture symbols to the words you scribe on the chart.
- Read the story and ask students to watch for other activities that families do together. After reading, add additional ideas to the chart from the story based upon student responses.
- Have students draw and/or write about something fun that their family does together.