



**PROJECT
CORNERSTONE**
A YMCA of Silicon Valley Initiative

POSITIVE CULTURAL IDENTITY

November Asset of the Month

“Diversity is not about how we differ, it is about embracing one another’s uniqueness.” – Andres T. (student)

Definition

Youth feels comfortable with and proud of their identity, including but not limited to ability status, body size, ethnicity, faith/religion, family status, gender, gender expression, gender identity, immigration status, language, race, and sexual orientation.

The Importance of Positive Cultural Identity

It is important for youth to feel that they belong. Developing a positive cultural identity—a critical element of personal identity—can be difficult for young people. The way that youth are treated in regard to their ethnicity, religion, ability, sexual orientation, or gender directly affects their ability to develop a positive personal identity. As adults, it’s critical that we model recognition,

understanding, and celebrating all cultural identities. The diversity of Silicon Valley is a benefit to our youth as they are exposed to many different cultures.

What You Can Do

- Even very young children are aware of racial and cultural differences among people. Address the issues of stereotypes, myths, and cultural differences in a positive, age-appropriate manner.
- It’s normal for young people to explore different aspects of personal identity, including cultural identity. Children, whose parents promote a positive cultural identity, while allowing them the freedom to explore, tend to develop a healthy personal identity.
- Some elements of a child’s identity might not be shared in common with the rest of the family. Parents should make special efforts to ensure that everyone feels understood, respected, valued, safe, and loved within the family.

To learn more about Project Cornerstone, visit us at
www.projectcornerstone.org