

[00:00:01] Speaker A: So next Sunday is Father's Day here in the US and we wanted to do an episode just about family makeup and maybe talking a little bit about holidays. And we're just going to see what unfolds as we. As we go here.

There are many different kinds of families and people who invest in students.

How can we honor different families and their traditions of celebrating?

This is sticky Hope.

[00:00:38] Speaker B: Like, families look different.

And our job at school is to honor those differences and be respectful of the fact that kids have very different life experiences and how we choose to present families in the books that we read and how we talk to children and the different ways we represent families in our classroom. It's just critical that we stop and remember that not every kid in our class comes from what used to be stereotypical mother and father, married and together in a home with their children. That is becoming less and less the norm. And it's super important that we are honoring of that.

[00:01:28] Speaker A: So just take a minute and think about the students on your roster, or maybe you're out of school for the summer, so think about, you know, last year's list. But if you just kind of do a mental check down and just think about what their families look like, it's just wide. There's a lot of different options for families.

And just like, a lot of families are celebrating different holidays. And. And so being aware of that, I think, as public school teachers, is important.

And then with Father's Day coming up, oftentimes what we'll see in schools are, like, we'll see something in celebration of Mother's Day. Mother's Day Tea. Some schools I know around here, they'll do, like, moms and muffins, and then the next month they'll do, like, dads and donuts or that kind of thing. And so where we want to recognize, right, the important people in children's lives.

And at the same time, not everybody's living with a biological mom or dad. And so I was kind of wondering, like, how do we navigate that, right? Like, how do we honor those who are living with their biological moms?

And how do we honor those kids who maybe aren't or are living in a home where there's not somebody in a mother figure, what does that look like then when we're doing these kinds of events in our schools or in.

[00:02:59] Speaker B: Our classrooms, I think it's so important to stop and have those moments of reflection and then to have conversations with the people around you at school about, like, what are school values, right? Like, do we.

Is the value really in the biological mother, Right. Like, is that really the part that we're celebrating or is it in the things and the love that mother that those mothers are providing the children and is it just their mothers that are providing it? Right. If there's not a biological mother in that child's life who is providing the things that that child needs, is it an aunt or an uncle or a grandparent or a neighbor or a foster parent?

There are so many other people who step into the lives of children who provide them with the love and the care and the intention that they need to be able to learn and grow and be well

nourished. And the seemingly simple shift away from just focusing on the mom or the dad and, and focusing on people who choose to love the children. Right.

And opening it instead of, you know, muffins for mom. It could be like just a morning where, I don't know, some alliteration, some beautiful alliteration about like loved ones. Right. Like lunch with loved ones or something. Could be something that you could create that opens the door for the kids who already feel different. Right. The kids who don't come from, come from homes with both of their biological parents can often feel different because as much as we try, they're not as well represented as the kids who come from homes with both of their biological parents present.

And so when we choose to honor the experiences of kids who have different lives, it just helps them to feel seen and important in an equal way with equity to the other children around them.

[00:05:09] Speaker A: You love your alliteration, Becca.

Lunch with loved ones.

I was thinking as you were naming all the people, right. It comes back to the research about the, the webs of support.

And when we're looking at children and some of this work has been done around kids who have been in foster care, what they find is those who are able to overcome oftentimes the reason why is because they have a really strong web of support.

So if, and the same is true for us. Like when I think about myself, you know, I got my well nourished adult, but I have a really strong and healthy web of support. There's a lot of people in my life who care about me and invest in me. And so for kids, I was thinking about that webs of support.

And when we're, we're thinking about like families even, you know, sometimes I'll hear people, teachers refer to them as your grown ups because, you know, your grown ups can be anyone, right? Like it can be your bus driver that you're chit chatting with. For the 20 minute ride that you have or you. It can be a neighbor, it can be. There's lots of different kinds of grownups in a child's life. But what's important is that we're nourishing those webs of that web of support. And so I think like just trying to draw this bigger circle around our school family connection, that it's really about who's investing in the child and how can we help nourish that web of support.

[00:06:55] Speaker B: I think that it is so critical to stop and consider the variations around our children in, in who cares for them. Right. Because our society today is one where parents are often working two jobs or second or third shift and other people are stepping in.

And it doesn't fit the, the old stereotypical mold of mom and dad and everyone sitting around the dinner table together every night.

And when we take the time to nourish those circles of support, those webs of support, we're choosing to help kids feel seen and that showing them and their families and their grownups that you belong here, we see you, we appreciate you, we value you, you belong here.

And like, this is how we're going to celebrate together. And so I think that I've fallen in lots of different places on the continuum of celebrating holidays in my classroom. You know, at the very beginning of my career, I was like, I'm never going to celebrate a holiday. Like I. That was my way of like avoiding having to think about any of this. And then I moved to a different school that had huge celebrations for some very traditional holidays, but didn't acknowledge other holidays.

And that felt kind of uncomfortable to me because it. And the reasoning was that there weren't children in our school who celebrated other holiday like those other holidays. And so we just don't acknowledge them. Like, that felt uncomfortable because I came from a school where like Ramadan and Eid were huge important things for my students. While we didn't celebrate them necessarily in school, they were really important. But to be focusing so heavily on holidays like Christmas and Easter and Mothers and Father's Day in my new school, but to not be talking about things like Ramadan and Eid and Kwanzaa and Diwali and that felt uncomfortable too. And so what I've come to decide, at least at this point in my career, is that it's important to be having these conversations and in every conversation to be honoring the fact that people do things differently and it's okay that things are done differently. And what my kindergarteners and my kids at home would tell you is it's okay to be different, but it's not okay to be mean about it. But. Right. And sometimes it comes down to the fact that, like, choosing to celebrate something and not acknowledging who it's leaving out or the negative impact it's having on someone, like, that's actually mean and that's not who we are. And so taking the time to stop and consider is what I'm doing, what I'm choosing to celebrate in my classroom, and how I'm choosing to do it. Is it equitable and. And honoring for the children in. Within my classroom and the grownups in their lives?

[00:10:16] Speaker A: So good thoughts, Becca. I think you're such a great model of just, you know, like, the way that you allow yourself to change your thinking.

And that, I think, is kind of the point of why we just wanted to talk about this topic for an episode was because, like, families are important.

And so it's not about, like, not talking about families, but just recognizing that the way that the family dynamics can be very, very different from student to student to student. And so if we're planning any kind of celebration, it'd be even something as simple as, like, a writing celebration that's not even tied to a holiday. It's just like, so then how do we talk about that? What's the invitation look like? You know, making sure that it's not just saying, bring your parents, but bring those who support you. Bring those who'd like to see you write. You know, your parents may be working, but there could be somebody else that might be like, that might really enjoy coming during the school day and just helping kids. Right. Draw a wider circle around. That is important, too.

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