

A Preschool Play Date for East West Friends

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Kinji recently arrived from metropolitan Japan. He had never visited a traditional American home. One afternoon, Kinji's Grandma Ellen met with Grandma Ann and her two grandchildren for a play date at Ann's traditional family home. Kinji brought a

beautifully wrapped watering can for the garden as a gesture of friendship. He was immediately impressed with the size of the home that included a front yard, a backyard, a garden, and lots of open space. When Kinji met Christy and David, he was impressed with how friendly and carefree they were in running through the yard. Typically, Kinji would bow and stand quietly to observe his new friends. On this play date, he was encouraged to just have fun and not worry about sitting and observing as a new guest.

A Day in the Garden

Kinji was so excited when he visited the vegetable garden. He was encouraged to freely pick and taste a variety of fruits and vegetables directly from the garden. He had never dug in dirt before. Kinji had so much fun creating dirt roads and construction sites with the shovels and outside toys. Eventually, the



three children stopped playing for a snack. They grabbed a tablecloth and casually sat down for a meal of fruit and crackers without stopping to wash their hands. Kinji was excited about the relaxed pace of his play date. Christy and David were impressed with Kinji's appreciation of all that was provided to him during the afternoon visit. Kinji expressed his appreciation calmly, respectfully, and with much formality at the end of the day. Christy and David enthusiastically asked Kinji to come back often to share these East West play experiences.

Reflecting on the Visit

When Ellen and Ann met to discuss this memorable afternoon, both agreed on the following:

Carefree child play is an international language with no barriers to bonding and care.

Our children have the capacity and interest to learn

more about friends from other cultures with no preconceived bias or prejudice.

World peace can only be achieved through cultural exchanges that are open, unbiased, and respectful.

As Ellen and Ann shared their reflections, they were amazed how the grandchildren relished their unique cultural experiences! They agreed that all can benefit from play dates with friends from different cultures.

Happy play times with you children!

Joyce

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