



## TRANSCRIPT for Cultural Influences on Children's Play

**PATRICIA RAMSEY (Expert):** Children's play preferences reflect the values that they're being raised in. Children from a more individualistic culture may prefer to spend time alone. They may prefer to spend time doing competitive activities. They may be more caught up in individual achievement and smaller groups, maybe more exclusionary activities, whereas children raised in a more collective, collaborative culture may emphasize inclusion and play in larger groups and be less concerned with a competitive aspect.

Another way that cultures differ is the level of expressiveness that's allowed, that's encouraged. That for some children, some cultures, that restraint is very important and learning to mask your feelings, is a priority. Other cultures it's to be very expressive, what may appear to be so rambunctious or aggressive in one classroom may not be.

Another way that play would vary is the roles that children play. If your child is being raised in a rural area, they may be enacting farming roles, taking care of animals, driving tractors. In a city, children being raised in a city, may be driving taxis and buses and enacting those kinds of roles. Very often in suburban areas you see lots of children being the soccer moms, they'll be driving cars and playing on their cell phones at the same time.

You can also bring in cultural differences with books and puzzles and songs, and learning words in different languages. If you have a book that represents another culture, don't just read the story and drop it. You can build around it with doing stuff in the pretend area, you can do art projects along with it, you can do songs with it.

You should be sure to understand the cultures and not just the surfaces, as we mentioned before, not just the artifacts, not just the cooking, not just the clothing. But really try to understand the values of the culture because that underlies a lot of the things you might be bringing into the classroom.