

Strategy: My Name / *Mi nombre*

Children's names are closely connected to their identities. Valuing children's names is part of a strong, respectful classroom community. The use of children's names can also bring personal meaning to writing.

“By highlighting the importance of names and their many meanings and accents across cultures, languages and places, we can create a space for acknowledging the identities children embody and move one step closer toward genuinely valuing diversity in classrooms. By using their own names as a starting point for writing free-verse poems, children are using words that are important to them while learning and reinforcing initial letter sounds.”

Mariana Souto-Manning, “Honoring children's names and, therefore, their identities.” School Talk 12.3 (April 2007).

This strategy engages children in thinking about, learning about and talking about their own name.

Implementation

1. The Story of My Name

Read books to children that highlight young characters and the story behind their names, nicknames, or terms of endearments.

As a family conversation, ask families to tell their children the story of how they got their name.

2. The “I am called _____” Poster

Begin by telling the class your own “I am *called*...” story, beginning with your given name, and then explaining all of the other names and nicknames and endearments people in your life use as your name.

Ask them to think about all the different names they are called (*by someone who loves them, a family member or friend, etc.*)

Using the “*I am called*...” sentence starter, have children share their names. You may need to prompt them: “*And does your father call you that also? What does your grandmother call you?*”, *etc.*

After the child has thought of some of their different names, draw a circle in the middle of the page and ask the child to draw a picture of themselves. This becomes the center of the web/poster. As a Family Conversation activity, have families help the child complete the web/poster. They may wish to add photos.

As children bring their posters back to the classroom, provide opportunities for them to share. Children's individual webs can be bound together to create a class book or a posted on the wall to create a “I am called _____” gallery.

Notes on Strategy
