



# Anyone Can Play Lesson Plan #ImagineEquity

Hello, and welcome to [The Imagine Neighborhood](#)!

What is The Imagine Neighborhood?

The Imagine Neighborhood is an award-winning podcast that teaches kids and their grown-ups social-emotional skills like building friendships, practicing patience, and finding calm. Our show takes place in a special, magical neighborhood; a place where it sometimes rains rubber chickens or you have to hop on rocks to cross Lava Avenue. The Imagine Neighborhood lives inside everyone's imagination, and every week we tell fun stories about the fun things that happen here.

## Talking about race and identity with your kids

In The Imagine Neighborhood, we strive to create a world where everyone is treated fairly. But it's important to remember that a fair and equitable world is one that requires effort, focus, and conversation. Kids as young as five years old begin to notice racial differences and internalize biases\*. You can help equip your kids for these kinds of conversations by encouraging questions and by finding shows, books, and podcasts with strong diverse representation.

## ABOUT "ANYONE CAN PLAY"

The team at The Imagine Neighborhood partnered with multiple esteemed researchers in the field of positive racial identity development to create a six-part series titled Imagine Equity: Six New Stories About Race, Identity, and Making Things Right. In this episode, "Anyone Can Play," Macho Supreme and Count Vacula are using their imaginations to pretend to be characters from their favorite movie, Nebula Trek! But every time Vac tries to help Macho save the galaxy, Macho won't let him play because in the movie, those characters are white, and Vac is Asian. Macho learns that excluding someone is never okay. Instead, the kind thing to do is to use your imagination to make room in the story for everyone. Make it okay for everyone to play!

Help your students #ImagineEquity

Your identity is made up of all the things about you that make you who you are, and it's special to you. Having friends of all different identities makes the world a lot more fun. It's never okay to exclude someone based on their identity. When Macho excluded Vac from playing as his favorite character in Nebula Trek, he really hurt his feelings and Vac didn't want to play the game anymore.

Ask your kids to imagine that they saw someone being excluded. How could they make it okay for everyone to play? Would they say, "Make it okay for everyone to play"? Would they say, "It's not macho, dude, when you exclude"? Invite your kids to try writing a catchy phrase of their own that makes it okay for everyone to play.

## More discussion questions as you listen:

### Question 1

Q: What does excluding mean?

A: To exclude means to leave someone out or tell them that they can't play. If you exclude, it can also mean that someone's feelings will get hurt and everyone will have less fun.

### Question 2

Q: Can you pretend to play a character from a movie, book, or game even if their identity is different from yours?

A: Yes! If you can use your imagination to pretend that you're part of a story, you can definitely be any character you want.

### Question 3

Q: What should you do to make sure that no one gets excluded?

A: Use your imagination to make it okay for everyone to play. You and your friends can "make your box bigger" by making sure everyone can play as someone they like. If you want, you can even make up new char-

## Additional resources:

[Cultural Relevancy in the Cafeteria](#); Learning for Justice

[P.R.I.D.E.](#) (Positive Racial Identity Development in Early Education); University of Pittsburgh

[Imagine Equity series](#); The Imagine Neighborhood

\*Sullivan, J., Wilton, L., & Apfelbaum, E. P. (2021). Adults delay conversations about race because they underestimate children's processing of race. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 150(2), 395–400. <https://doi.org/10.1037/xge0000851>