

Teaching Respect for Native Peoples

• **Do** present Native peoples as appropriate role models with whom a Native child can identify. • **Don't** single out Native children, ask them to describe their families' traditions, or their people's cultures. • **Don't** assume that you have no Native children in your class. • **Don't** do or say anything that would embarrass a Native child. • **Do** look for books and materials written and illustrated by Native people. • **Don't** use ABC books that have "I is for Indian" or "E is for Eskimo." • **Don't** use counting books that count "Indians." • **Don't** use story books that show non-Native children "playing Indian." • **Don't** use picture books by non-Native authors that show animals dressed as "Indians." • **Don't** use story books with characters like "Indian Two Feet" or "Little Chief." • **Do** avoid arts and crafts and activities that trivialize Native dress, dance, or ceremony. • **Don't** use books that show Native people as savages, primitive craftspeople, or simple tribal people, now extinct. • **Don't** have children dress up as "Indians," with paper-bag "costumes" or paper-leaf "headdresses." • **Don't** sing "Ten Little Indians." • **Don't** let children do "war whoops." • **Don't** let children play with artifacts borrowed from a library or museum. • **Don't** have them make "Indian crafts" unless you know authentic methods and have authentic materials. • **Do** make sure you know the history of Native peoples, past and present, before you attempt to teach it. • **Do** present Native peoples as separate from each other, with unique cultures, languages, spiritual beliefs, and dress. • **Don't** teach "Indians" only at Thanksgiving. • **Do** teach Native history as a regular part of American history. • **Do** use materials which put history in perspective. • **Don't** use materials which manipulate words like "victory," "conquest," or "massacre" to distort history. • **Don't** use materials which present as heroes only those Native people who aided Europeans. • **Do** use materials which present Native heroes who fought to defend their own people. • **Do** discuss the relationship between Native peoples and the colonists and what went wrong with it. • **Don't** speak as though "the Indians" were here only for the benefit of the colonists. • **Don't** make charts about "gifts the Indians gave us." • **Don't** use materials that stress the superiority of European ways, and the inevitability of European conquest. • **Do** use materials which show respect for, and understanding of, the sophistication and complexities of Native societies. • **Do** use materials which show the continuity of Native societies, with traditional values and spiritual beliefs connected to the present. • **Don't** refer to Native spirituality as "superstition." • **Don't** make up Indian "legends" or "ceremonies." • **Don't** encourage children to do "Indian" dances. • **Do** use respectful language in teaching about Native peoples. • **Don't** use insulting terms such as "brave," "squaw," "papoose," "Indian givers," "wild Indians," "blanket Indians," or "wagon burners." • **Do** portray Native societies as coexisting with nature in a delicate balance. • **Don't** portray Native peoples as "the first ecologists." • **Do** use primary source material—speeches, songs, poems, writings—that show the linguistic skill of peoples who come from an oral tradition. • **Don't** use books in which "Indian" characters speak in either "early jawbreaker" or in the oratorical style of the "noble savage." • **Do** use materials which show Native women, elders, and children as integral and important to Native societies. • **Don't** use books which portray Native women and elders as subservient to warriors. • **Do** talk about the lives of Native peoples in the present. • **Do** read and discuss good poetry, suitable for young people, by contemporary Native writers. • **Do** invite Native community members to the classroom. • **Do** offer them an honorarium. Treat them as teachers, not as entertainers. • **Don't** assume that every Native person knows everything there is to know about every Native nation.

