



Center for Strategic Partnerships



# Cultural Icebreakers

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ACTIVITIES TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER ON A DEEPER LEVEL

**A – Ask Me Anything**

**B – Before This...**

**C – The 3 C's**

**D – Dinner Time**

**E – Emoji Fun**

**F – Find Something**

**G – Grow with me**

**H – Hair Talk**

**I – In Their Shoes**

**J – Jigsaw Puzzle of Life**

**K – Kicking Things Off**

**L – Look into my Home**

**M – My Music**

**N – What's in a Name?**

**O – Open House**

**P – Personal Space**

**Q – Quote the Culture**

**R – Respectful Listening**

**S – Self-Portrait**

**T – Truth or Dare**

**U – Unmet Needs**

**V – Values**

**W – Warm Fuzzy, Cold Prickly**

**X – Exchange Cultural Greeting**

**Y – You're Not Alone**

**Z – Zip Lock Baggie**

### **A Ask Me Anything**

This activity requires everyone involved to create a completely SAFE SPACE. Allow anyone in the space to ask you at least 1 question, in which they can ask you ANYTHING! This activity is not meant to gather information to be used against one another, but to create a space where folks can become family and learn intimate parts about each other to learn how to support each other.

### **B Before This...**

“Before this I was... I did... I had... I lost...” This activity is designed to provide room to talk about what life looked like before this young person moved into this new place. Start each sentence with “Before this, I...” to learn more about each other’s past.

### **C The 3 C’s**

Name 1 Cuisine, 1 Cartoon, and 1 Color that represents your personality. The goal is to learn more about each other’s cultural identities.

### **D Dinner Time**

Describe your favorite thing to eat for dinner. Then go find and write down the recipe. Agree to make this dinner together at least once a month.

## **E Emoji Fun**

Ask each person to choose an emoji that represents their mood or personality. Have everyone share their emoji and explain why. Ask questions or make comments based on each other's emojis. This is a great way to get to know each other in a fun and creative way. Plus, emojis are universally recognized, so it's great for people from different backgrounds and cultures.

## **F Find Something**

Find something in the home that represents you or represents a fond memory. Resource parents can share more about the things in their home that are valuable to them, and youth can share about things they might miss from home.

## **G Grow with me**

Plant something with your new family member! Go to the 99c store or any home improvement store, buy plants, seeds, and shovels to plant something outside. Take this time to learn more about each other's creative interests.

## **H Hair Talk**

Ask your youth if they know how to do their hair and how they like their hair done. Ask them if they have any hair care preferences and take a trip to the store to pick up a few new things. Take this time to learn more about their hair care routine.

### **I In Their Shoes**

Put on each other's shoes and try to walk around in them for an hour. This activity is an exercise of empathy. Shows how difficult it can be to walk in each other's shoes, figuratively and literally. Then discuss. How does it feel? What does this activity mean to you?

### **J Jigsaw Puzzle of Life**

Buy a small jigsaw puzzle with about 10-15 pieces. Each person will write their name and a personal fact about themselves on the back of the puzzle pieces. Then put all puzzle pieces in a bowl or bag. Then randomly distribute the puzzle pieces among the group. Then everyone will take turns pulling a piece and adding it to the board. As you pull a piece, read the back and then share how you relate to that fact or how you feel about it. This helps to encourage creativity and problem-solving skills and provides a fun and interactive way to get to know each other.

### **K Kicking Things Off**

Play Kickball! Getting outside to play a game is great for getting in some physical activity and for team building. Create your own rules like if anyone kicks the ball out of the yard, they're out! Or if anyone uses their knee to rebound the ball, they get extra points!

### **L Look into my Home**

Draw what home looks like to you. Take this time to talk about what aspects of their old home they want to bring with them to their new home and what aspects they want to leave behind.

### **M My Music**

Ask about their favorite kind of music, their favorite artist, favorite song, and favorite music video. Then play those things and jam out together!

### **N What's in a Name?**

Ask questions like Who gave you your name? What does it mean? Why were you given it? This activity gives some cultural and familial insight into your new family member.

### **O Open House**

Walk your young person around their new home, and explain to them the significance of each space. This will show them what you place value in. Then, ask them about what space they have kept sacred or have made for themselves in the past. Try to help them recreate that space.

### **P Personal Space**

This is a conversation starter. Encourage yourself and your young one to think about their physical behaviors and how they might be different depending on things like culture, attitudes, gender, etc.

### **Q Quote the Culture**

Discuss a few widely known quotes or sayings that your culture uses and talk about their significance. This can help you all understand how each other thinks and operates and can give you more insight into each other's values.

### **R Respectful Listening**

One person will speak for 2-3 minutes on a random topic while the other person listens actively, *without* interrupting or offering commentary. Choose a topic that is relevant to the relationship, such as "what does respect mean to you?" or "what is one thing you would like to change about our communication?" After the first person has finished speaking, the other person should summarize what they heard and validate the other person's perspective. This can be a powerful tool for building trust and creating a foundation of mutual respect.

### **S Self-Portrait**

Each person will draw a self-portrait that reflects their personality, interests, and identity. Encourage them to include as much detail as possible. Then explain what each element of the portrait represents and why it is important to them.

### **T Truth or Dare**

Sit facing each other. Take turns asking each other "truth or dare?" and coming up with questions or dares that help to build empathy and understanding. For example, the parent might ask "What is one thing you wish I knew about you?", while the youth might dare the parent to do something that is outside of their comfort zone. Then discuss what they learned about each other and how they can use that knowledge to build a stronger relationship.



## **U Understanding Unmet Needs**

Take turns identifying unmet needs that you may have, but that the other person may not be aware of. Start with the youth, who will identify one unmet need they have that the parent may not know about. For example, "I need more alone time to recharge." The parent then identifies one unmet need they have that the teenager may not know about. For example, "I need more open communication and honesty from you." After everyone has identified unmet needs, discuss what they learned and how they can work together to address these needs.

## **V Values**

Share a value that you hold close to you. Discuss what this means and looks like for you and your family. How do you wish to see that value played out in this new environment??

## **W Warm Fuzzy, Cold Prickly**

Start by explaining that a "warm fuzzy" is a positive or kind action or thought, while a "cold prickly" is a negative or unkind action or thought. Each person will share. After everyone has shared their warm fuzzies and cold pricklies, have the group discuss how it feels to receive a warm fuzzy versus a cold prickly, and how they can use this knowledge to build empathy and understanding.

### **X Exchange a Cultural Greeting**

Go round the room (or enter in chat) and greet other people in a greeting from home or another one you know and teach each other a bit about greeting in that culture.

### **Y You're Not Alone**

Ask each person to write down a challenge or struggle that they have faced or are currently facing. Collect the slips of paper and randomly distribute them among the group. Have each person read the challenge on their slip of paper and share any advice or personal experiences that they have related to that challenge. Offer support, empathy, and guidance to each other. This will build trust and create a supportive environment.

### **Z Zip Lock Baggie**

Fill up a Zip Lock baggie with a bunch of random words (e.g., taco, blue, foot, break, truck, long, etc.). Any random word you can think of, throw it in the bag. Then randomly pick a word and come up with a story (either made up or true) that is centered around that word.