

The colors of **Kwanzaa** are black, red and green. These colors can be utilized in decorations for **Kwanzaa**. Also decorations should include traditional African items, i.e., African baskets, cloth patterns, art objects, harvest symbols, etc. The karamu, or feast, is held on December 31 and is one of the high points of Kwanzaa.

The Seven Guiding Principles of Kwanzaa

- Umoja** (Unity)
- Kujichagulia** (Self-Determination)
- Ujima** (Collective Work and Responsibility)

It was a tradition that each tribe or community in Africa would come together to sing, dance, eat and drink and celebrate the harvest of the first fruits and vegetables. They would bring food they grew or items they made to give to the feast.

Celebrating KWANZAA

AN AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL HOLIDAY!

(December 26 to January 1)

- 1** Gather the **7 Kwanzaa symbols**: **kinara**, a candle holder with space for 7 candles; **mkeka**, a placemat, preferably made of straw; **mazao**, fruits and vegetables to represent harvested crops; **muhindi**, ears of corn, 1 for each child in the family; **kikombe cha umoja**, a communal cup to symbolize unity; **mishumaa saba**, 7 candles (1 black, 3 red and 3 green); and **zawadi**, educational or culturally enriching gifts, exchanged only among parents and children.
- 2** Spread the mkeka on a low table or on the floor.
- 3** Place the kinara in the center of the mkeka and add the mishumaa saba.
- 4** Arrange the muhindi on either side of the mkeka.
- 5** Distribute the zawadi, kikombe cha umoja, and a basket of mazao on the mkeka.
- 6** Hang a Benders (flag of the Black Nation) facing east, and deck the room with trimmings of your choice in black, red and green.
- 7** Light a new candle on the kinara every day and discuss one of the 7 guiding principles of Kwanzaa.
- 8** Hold a karamu, which is a Kwanzaa feast, on December 31. This is a perfect time to sample many dishes from around the world that are influenced by the African culture. *(Possible Menu: Fried Okra, Sweet Potato-Squash Soup, Cornish Hens, Collards, Fried Plantains, Benne Cakes)* Just be creative.
- 9** Exchange zawadi (gifts) on January 1.



Kwanzaa (Swahili for "fresh fruits") is based on an African harvest festival. **Kwanzaa** is celebrated daily from December 26 to January 1. **Everyone is welcome to celebrate this African-American holiday, even if you are not African-American.**



Kwanzaa was created by Maulana Karenga, a professor of black studies at California State University at Long Beach, in 1966. It is a nonreligious celebration of family and social values for African American families.



Gifts are given mainly to children, but must always include a book and a heritage symbol. The book is to emphasize the African value and tradition of learning stressed since ancient Egypt, and the heritage symbol to reaffirm and reinforce the African commitment to tradition and history.



Celebrating Kwanzaa

It is tradition to pour libation in remembrance of the ancestors on all special occasions. Kwanzaa, is such an occasion, as it provides us an opportunity to reflect on our African past and American present.



Brought to you by:
The National Council
on Educating Black
Children



Issues, Responses and Approaches for Educating Black Children Reference

Blueprint for Action Parent Stakeholder Strategies

- Create a home environment that communicates and builds respect for and interest in learning and education and celebrates high achievement. Model learning for your children.
- Help other parents of school-age children to understand their rights and responsibilities and help to develop models for effective parent and family involvement.
- Increase your school and classroom visitations.
- Form partnerships with organizations in your local school community to improve child and youth outcomes.
- Develop working relationships with school administrators and teachers to improve student achievement.
- Advocate for schools and districts to provide services such as transportation and child care to encourage and support parental involvement at school events.
- Promote awareness of the severity and intensity of problems of adolescence, such as family poverty and stresses; education dropout/pushout/fallout; youth employment; peer pressure, teen pregnancy and parenthood; youth violence and others, and effective community-based solutions
- Seek help early for challenging behaviors and recognize symptoms of mental illness
- Recognize and understand drug and alcohol use and abuse, HIV/AIDS and other prevalent health concerns.
- Seek help for your child's special needs and fight for appropriate services.



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The National Council on Educating Black Children

National Reports and Trend Data

“Black boys represent the worst case scenario of all students in public education.”
— The Schott Foundation

National Data: Black Boys:

- Are overly enrolled in Special Education
- Have extremely high discipline and referral rates for inappropriate behavior
- Have low enrollment in Advanced Placement courses
- Have low enrollment in college preparatory classes
- Have low high school graduation rate

Sources: Education Trust, Schott Foundation, American Council on Education

Black boys' performance on state achievement tests:

- Are Below Basic and Basic (two lowest levels of performance) in reading and mathematics in grades 4, 8 and 11

(The goal is to get more black students performing at the Proficient and Advanced levels.)

Source: National Assessment of Education Progress

After School Research about Achieving 10-year-olds

- Snack, homework, play or TV, help parent with dinner and clean up, hobby or TV, reading, bed
- Music lessons, dinner, homework, visit grandfather, errands, TV, game or read, bed
- Visit aunt at work, swim, help with dinner, homework, TV, bed
- Chores, play, read, homework, sign language class, dinner, TV, bed
- Homework, snack, baseball practice, dinner, clean up, TV, read, bed

Stated Parent Concerns in Interview Settings regarding Special Education Services in their schools

- White teachers are not addressing needs
- School staff are saying “everything is fine” even when parents say there’s a problem
- Students are suspended for minor issues; too many
- Teachers have “no connection” to students
- Classroom materials don’t match the culture
- Youth employment is needed
- Parents and students feel railroaded; conferences never “one on one”; always multiple teachers and administrators; feeling bullied by the school
- Parents are unsure what questions to ask in Special Ed case conferences; school folks using jargon; parents think they are being taken advantage of during the conference.
- Teachers think that parents do not have high expectations for their children
- Schools do not accommodate the parents’ schedule; come at the time designated or suffer the consequences
- Parents feel unprepared for IEP/case conferences; IEP rules printed really small, looking closely at goals
- School communication is based on writing and language base on Eurocentric institution
- How teachers view black children—they do not have high expectations for them
- Parents see children differently than teachers and schools do
- Fear of status quo - related to speaking out
- Black boys are losing their identity
- Parents have concerns about solving conflicts in school – feeling safe at school is important

Nine African American Cultural Influences (Interrelated dimensions that influence the behavior of AA boys and males)

Source: Boykins



Spirituality – An approach to life as being essentially vitalistic (alive) rather than mechanistic, with the conviction that nonmaterial forces influence people’s everyday lives.

Harmony – the notion that one’s fate is interrelated with other elements in the scheme of things, so that humankind and nature are harmonically conjoined.

Movement – an emphasis on the interweaving of movement, rhythm, percussiveness, music, and dance, all of which are taken as central to psychological health.

Verve – a propensity for relatively high levels of stimulation and for action that is energetic and lively.

Affect – an emphasis on emotions and feelings, together with a special sensitivity to emotional cues and a tendency to be emotionally expressive.

Communalism – a commitment to social connectedness, which includes an awareness that social bonds and responsibilities transcend individual privilege.

Expressive Individualism – the cultivation of a distinctive personality and proclivity for spontaneous, genuine personal expression.

Oral Tradition – a preference for oral/aural modes of communication, in which both speaking and listening are treated as performances, and cultivation of oral virtuosity – the ability to use alternative, metaphorically colorful, graphic forms of spoken language.

Social Time Perspective – an orientation in which time is treated as passing through a social space rather than a material one, and in which time can be recurring, personal, and phenomenological.

Seven Principles of Nguzo Saba (N-goo-zoo-sah-bah)

Umoja (oo-moe-jah)
Unity - The first principle is a commitment to the idea of togetherness. This principle is a foundation; for without unity, neither the family nor the community can survive. National African American unity begins with the family.

Kujichagulia (coo-gee-cha-goo-lee-ah)
Self determination - The second principle is a commitment to building our lives in our own images and interests. If we, as a people are to achieve our goals, we must take the responsibility for that achievement upon ourselves, for self-determination is the essence of freedom.

Ujima (oo-gee-ma)
Collective work and responsibility - The third principle encourages self-criticism and personal evaluation, as it relates to the common good of the family/community. Without collective work and struggle, progress is impossible. The family and the community must accept the reality that we are collectively responsible for our failures as well as our victories and achievements. Discussions concerning each family member’s responsibility will prove helpful in defining and achieving family goals.

Ujamaa (oo-jah-mah)
Cooperative economics - Out of the fundamental concepts of “African Communal Living: comes the fourth principle of Nguzo Saba. In a community or family, wealth and resources should be shared. On the national level, cooperative economics can help African-Americans take physical control of their own destinies.

Nia (Nee-ah)
Purpose - The fifth principle is for reviewing our purpose for living. Each family member should examine his/her ability to put his/her skill or talent to use in the service of the family and community at large. Take time to reflect on your expectations from life: discuss your desires and hopes with family and friends..

Kuumba (koo-m-bah)
Creativity - The sixth principle of the Nguzo Saba relates to building and developing our creative potential. It involves both aesthetic and material creations. It is essential that creativity be encouraged in all aspects of African American culture. It is through new ideas that we achieve higher levels of living and greater appreciation for life. Each family member should find creative things to do throughout the year that will enhance the family as a whole.

Imani (e-mah-ne)
Faith - The seventh principle is belief in ourselves as individuals and as a people. Further, it is a commitment to the development of the family and the national African-American community. African America’s goal of freedom rests significantly on our belief in our own ability and right to control our own destiny. Without Imani (faith) there is no possibility of victory.

Source: Maulana Karenga, Ph.D., 7th of September 1965

A Checklist for Helping Your Child with Homework

- A quiet place to work with good light.
- A regular time each day for doing homework.
- Basic supplies, such as notebooks, paper, pencils, pens, markers, and ruler.

Questions to Ask Your Child

- What is your assignment today?
- Is the assignment clear? If not, suggest calling the school’s homework hotline or a classmate.
- When is it due?
- Do you need special resources (e.g. a trip to the library or access to a computer)?
- Do you need special supplies (e.g., graph paper or poster board)?
- Have you started today’s assignments? Finished them?
- Is it a long-term assignment (e.g., a term paper or science project)?
- For a major project, would it help to write out the steps or make a schedule?
- Would a practice test be useful?

Other Ways to Help

- Look over your child’s homework, but don’t do the work although it is fine to answer questions and to help your children think!
- Ask your school about tutors if your child needs extra academic support.
- Meet the teachers early in the school year and find out about homework policy.
- Review teacher comments on homework that has been returned and discuss with your child and if necessary with the teacher.
- Observe your child’s style of learning and try to understand how he works best (e.g., by using visual aids or by reading some material aloud).
- Contact the teacher if there’s a homework problem you can’t resolve.
- Encourage persistent effort and congratulate your child on a job well done.