

# Reflection Questions: Racially, Ethnically, and Culturally Based HALLOWEEN COSTUMES

By E. Ito, Bay Area Educator, adapted from an article by Kat Lazo

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Many people in our community love Halloween and the magic of dressing up. Part of creating a safe school community for ALL students on Halloween is making sure racially, ethnically, and culturally based costumes are NOT part of our festivities because cultures are not costumes. We invite families to reflect on the questions below.

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## **1. Is The Costume Racially, Ethnically, or Culturally Based?**

If so, it's probably going to make people from those racial/cultural/ethnic groups feel unsafe and disrespected. If you're not sure, the names of the costumes usually make it very clear: "Hey Amigo Costume, Geisha Costume, Native Child Costume" etc.

## **2. Does Your Child Belong to That Group of People?**

If the answer is no, please reflect on what it means to borrow someone else's culture or race for a day-- because for many people it's not a costume, it's their everyday lives.

## **3. If The Costume Is Meant to Be Funny, Why Is It Funny?**

If the costume is meant to be funny because it is making light of an ethnic or racial group, then it is most likely a caricature and hurtful.

## **4. How Would Everyone Feel If Someone Wore That Costume Around That Group of People?**

If an Indigenous family were to welcome a child into their home wearing an Indian Child Costume, what would the impact be on everyone? What about wearing a Hey Amigo Costume around a Latinx family? A geisha costume around a Japanese family?

If the impact is harmful on any given day, then Halloween is no exception.

We also invite our amazing caregivers to explore the resources below as a way to help nurture a safer, more inclusive anti-racist community for all of our children!

- <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/cultural-appropriation-halloween-costume-video>
- *This Book is Anti-Racist: 20 Lessons on How to Wake Up, Take Action, and Do The Work* by Tiffany Jewell
- *So You Want To Talk About Race* By Ijeoma Oluo
- [www.theconscioukid.org](http://www.theconscioukid.org) and their Instagram Account @theconscioukid
- [www.teachandtransform.org](http://www.teachandtransform.org)
- <https://www.embracerace.org>