Embracing Equity and Diversity in our Classrooms

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Creating a safe and welcoming space

You are encouraged to:

- Be curious and open to learning
- Show respect and suspend judgement
- Find common ground and note differences
- Be authentic and welcome that from others
- Acknowledge discomfort
Today we will:

• Define equity, diversity, inclusion and bias
• Explore how implicit bias shows itself within early childhood settings
• Understand how to support the development of diversity informed practices
• Identify strategies to counter bias and embrace equity and diversity in our classrooms.
The definition of culture:

- "The sum of attitudes, customs, and beliefs that distinguishes one group of people from another.
- Culture is transmitted, through language, material objects, ritual, institutions, and art, from one generation to the next."

~Dictionary.com
Hammond’s Culture Tree

3 Levels of Culture

• Surface Culture
• Shallow Culture
• Deep Culture
How do you define Equity, Diversity and Inclusion?

As a table group define these 3 words. Write buzzwords, bulleted definitions, whatever comes to mind.
Difference between EQUALITY & EQUITY

**Equality** is giving everyone the same thing.

**Equity** is giving everyone what they need in order to promote similar outcomes across groups. It gives everyone the tools and opportunities they need to succeed, grow and move forward.

Can you spot diversity & inclusion on the visual?
Implicit Bias is...

**Attitudes, Stereotypes, & Beliefs**
that can affect how we treat others.

Implicit bias is not intentional, but it can still impact how we judge others based on factors, such as:

- Race
- Ability
- Gender
- Culture
- Language

http://preventexpulsion.org/overview/
“Indeed, implicit attitudes—which can be activated simply by being in the mere presence of a person of a particular ethnicity, race, religion, social status, ability, and/or gender - can dominate a situation.”

(Peterson, Rubie-Davies, Osborne, & Sibley, 2016)
Examples of bias found in classroom settings

- Girls receive less attention and are asked lower level questions than boys (Sadker & Zimmerman, 2009)
- White students are asked more questions and given more encouragement than students of color (Tenebaum & Ruck, 2007)
- Children with special needs are shown less respect and attention than students without special needs (Heinrichs, 2003)
- Children of color are perceived as less capable or less well behaved than other students (Grissom & Redding, 2016)
- Latino students are suspended at almost twice, and African-American students at more than three times, the rate of white students (Losen & Martinez, 2013)
Implicit Bias in Early Childhood

This data is from a recent research study conducted by the Yale Child Study Center focused on the implicit bias found in preschool teachers.

(Gilliam, Maupin, Reyes, Accavitti, & Shic, 2016)
“Diversity Informed practice recognizes non-dominant ways of knowing, bodies of knowledge, sources of strength, and routes to healing within all families and communities.”
~ Irving Harris Foundation (2012)
Initial Strategies to Counter Implicit Bias and Embrace Equity and Diversity

- Cultivate an Awareness and Concern
- Practice Mindfulness
- Engage in Perspective Taking
- Actively Engage Families
- Raise Your Expectations
To Counter Implicit Bias and Embrace Equity and Diversity

Cultivate an Awareness and Concern

**AWARENESS**
Cultivate an awareness of unconscious bias in general and reflect about your own bias.

**CONCERN**
Become concerned about the effects of implicit bias on ourselves, others and society.

**APPLICATION**
Actively apply strategies to counter bias in order to break unconscious habits and thoughts and create new representations.
To Counter Implicit Bias and Embrace Equity and Diversity

Cultivate an Awareness and Concern

But wait, since implicit bias is unconscious, how do I cultivate an awareness?

- Consider taking the Implicit Association Test to become aware of unconscious associations you may have.
- Meaningfully engage with individuals who identify differently than you do.
- **Practice self-reflection** to develop an awareness of, recognize, and mediate bias and barriers to equity in all areas of teaching.

(Gillanders & Procopio, 2019; Staat, 2016)
To Counter Implicit Bias and Embrace Equity and Diversity

Practice Self-Reflection

- Am I observing the situation accurately or am I projecting how I feel onto what is happening?
- How would I respond if this person were a different gender/race/ethnicity/etc.?
- What is the basis for my assumptions about this person?
- How can I challenge my assumptions?
- What can I do to educate myself more so that I am aware of my own assumptions and bias?

~Cultural Coach International
To Counter Implicit Bias and Embrace Equity and Diversity

Engage in Perspective Taking

- **Perspective-taking** refers to a person’s ability to consider a situation from a different point of view.

- It requires you to put yourself in the other person’s position and imagine what you would feel, think, or do if you were in that situation.

Looking at a situation from another’s point of view reduces bias, as does the exercise of focusing on what others have in common with us rather than focusing on their differences.
To Counter Implicit Bias and Embrace Equity and Diversity: Engage in Perspective Taking

Perspective of SELF
• This is how the situation is interpreted from your own experience, based on your own thoughts and feelings in that situation.

Perspective of OTHER
• This is how the situation is interpreted from the experience of the other person involved in the situation, based on their thoughts and feelings.

Perspective of THIRD PARTY
• This is how the situation is interpreted from someone who isn't involved in the situation, but instead looking from a neutral, outside perspective (“the fly on a wall” approach).

Handel, 2012
To Counter Implicit Bias and Embrace Equity and Diversity

Engage in Perspective Taking

- SUSPEND: Your own views, opinions and judgements
- ASK: How does the situation look from the other person’s perspective?
- CHECK: Your understanding of their perspective by asking questions
- AVOID: Justifying / explaining why they are wrong to see the situation that way
- VISUALISE: How they feel, given their perspective on the situation
- CONVEY: Empathy for their situation

ADAPTED BY BINNA KINDOLA ‘THE VALUE OF DIFFERENCE: ELIMINATING BIAS IN ORGANISATIONS’ 2009
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Engaging children and families from a stance of respect and curiosity allows teachers to establish positive relationships with families and to create learning environments that support and value children’s racial, ethnic, gender identities, abilities and funds of knowledge (Moll et al. 1992).

Acknowledging and addressing behaviors that result from unconscious biases has the potential to improve teacher-family relationships.
To Counter Implicit Bias and Embrace Equity and Diversity:
Actively Engage Families

**Start with looking at YOURSELF**
- Challenge your own assumptions.

**Acknowledge families as equal partners**
- Constantly revisit and revise plans based on input from families.

**Meet parents where they are**
- The ways families contribute to their child’s education may differ.
To Counter Implicit Bias and Embrace Equity and Diversity:

Raise Teacher Expectations

- Many times implicit bias is the root of teacher low expectations for student achievement.
- If teacher implicit bias is present, the effects are greater as it has a negative impact on students’ overall academic success.
- If you don’t expect them to learn, if you don’t expect them to succeed- then it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

~Les Brown

No one rises to low expectations.
To Counter Implicit Bias and Embrace Equity and Diversity: Raise Teacher Expectations

High Expectation Teachers:
- Use flexible groupings
- Create a warm socioemotional climate
- Use goal setting with students to foster
  - MOTIVATION
  - ENGAGEMENT
  - AUTONOMY

(Peterson et al., 2016)
Embracing Equity and Diversity In our Classrooms results in:

- respect for differing viewpoints
- a decrease in implicit bias
- the potential to reconsider one’s own perspective and consider diverse perspectives
- the ability to explore diverse perspectives, cultures, and world views
- improved student outcomes and allowing students to reach their full potential

(Dey, 2010)
“All children have the right to equitable learning opportunities that help them achieve their full potential as engaged learners and valued members of society. Early childhood educators have a professional obligation to advance equity and diversity.”

National Association for the Education of Young Children 2019
Thank you!

WE all SHOULD know That DIVERSITY makes for a rich tapestry, AND WE MUST understand that all the threads of the tapestry are EQUAL in value no matter what their color.

- Maya Angelou