

Moving Beyond Multicultural Education: Promoting Equity in Early Childhood

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Defining Race

- Race- is a contrived sociopolitical way to categorize people based on skin color, which doesn't represent any other underlying differences between people. (York, 2016).
- In other words race is a social construct.



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Four levels of Racism

- Internalize
- Interpersonal
- Institutional
- Structural



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Internalize Racism

- Lies within individuals. These are our private beliefs and biases about race and racism, influenced by our culture. Internalized racism can take many different forms, including racial prejudice toward other people of a different race (Center for Social Justice).



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Interpersonal Racism

- Occurs between individuals. These are biases that occur when individuals interact with others and their private racial beliefs affect their public interactions. Examples include racial slurs, bigotry, hate crimes and racial violence (Center for Social Justice).



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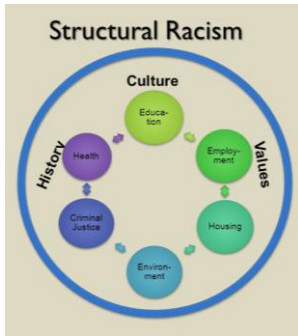
Institutional Racism

Occurs within institutions and systems of power. It is the unfair policies and discriminatory practices of particular institutions – schools, workplaces, the criminal justice system, and yes, the child welfare system – that routinely produce racially inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people (Center for Social Justice).



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Structural Racism

Is racial bias among institutions and across society. It involves the cumulative and compounding effects of an array of societal factors including the history, culture, ideology and interactions of institutions and policies that systematically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color (Center for Social Justice).

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Individual vs. Institutional Racism

- Beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism in conscious and *unconscious* ways.
- Examples: telling a racist joke, believing in the inherent superiority of white people over other racial groups, or not hiring a person of color
- The ways in which policies and practices of organizations or parts of systems create different outcomes for different racial groups
- Examples: federal housing policies, redlining, or mass incarceration.

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Difference between Racism and Prejudice

Racism is:

A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity (York, 2016)

Prejudice is:

A preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience (Oxford Dictionary)

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Difference between Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity



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What is implicit bias?

- Activated involuntarily (i.e., individual not aware of biases)
- Pervasive and robust
- Does not necessarily align with our declared beliefs
- Develops early in life through socialization
- Lack of exposure and experiences with other cultural groups
- Media reinforces stereotypes
- Malleable, but can be unlearned and replaced with new mental associations

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Black people are **looting** for food, while white people are **finding** food.

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Why does it matter?

- Implicit Bias impacts EVERYTHING!
 - Attractiveness bias (Salter, Mixon, & King, 2012)
 - Height bias (Judge & Cable, 2004)
- Implicit bias predicts the extent to which..
 - Police officers use force when arresting Black children (Goff et al., 2014)
 - Arbitrators decide labor grievances in favor of women over men (Girvan, Deason, Borgida, 2015)
 - Pediatricians recommend less pain medication for Black children than White (Cooper et al., 2012; Sabin & Greenwald, 2012)

Adapted from Dr. Rebecca A. Holtz, 2017

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To Understand Equity, We Also Must Understand Privilege

- **Privilege:** a special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group of people (Merriam-Webster, 2018)
- **Racial Equity:** Racial identity no longer predicts access to education or success in life because we have worked to identify and eliminate policies and practices that privilege one group, but oppress another (National Equity Project, n.d.)

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Equity and Disciplinary Practices



- 5,000 preschoolers were suspended at least once and nearly 2,500 were suspended a second time (2014)
- **Black preschoolers:** 3.6 times more likely to be suspended than their White peers (2016)
- **Boys:** 49% of the preschool population, but 82% of all suspensions (2014)
- **Girls** make up 20% of preschool female enrollment but represent 54% of female preschoolers suspended more than once (2014).



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Studies spanning 40 years show that Black children are up to four times more likely to be suspended than White students.

(Bradshaw et al., 2010; Children's Defense Fund, 1975; Milner, 2013; Skiba et al., 2011)



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Equity and Instructional Practices

- Students of color tend to experience lower quality **instructional practices** than their White peers (Phillips et al., 1994; Pianta et al., 2002)
- Black children generally experience lower quality activity settings and **receive fewer rich, stimulating experiences** than White children (Early et al., 2010)



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Equity and Teacher-Child Relationships

Black children tend to have relationships with their teachers that are less positive than those formed with White children

(Walker, Alter, & Landers, 2013)

Black children have more negative and conflictual relationships with teachers than White children

(e.g., Hughes, Gleason, & Zhang, 2005; Kesner, 2000; Murray & Murray, 2004)

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“Cradle-to-Prison Pipeline”


- Preschool-to-prison pipeline was coined to describe the disproportionate number of young Black children who are suspended or expelled from early learning environments.
- Exclusionary practices:
 - Result in interrupted education
 - Increase the likelihood that Black children experience repeated suspensions and expulsions both in early childhood and beyond
 - Are related to later academic achievement and school dropout rates
 - Entrance into the criminal justice system

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By kindergarten entry, many children have been labeled and sorted into categories according to behavior, which has negative effects on children’s self-worth, their perception of school as being safe and supportive, and is directly related to chronic absenteeism and suspension.

(Center for Social and Emotional Education and Education Commission of the States, 2007)

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What messages are we giving kids about their worth?

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“Not everything that can be faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”
James Baldwin

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Addressing Equity in Education

- We are entrenched in “first generation” equity work©.
 - Isolated or ‘band aid’ interventions
 - Based upon a *blame the victim* mentality (Black children and families are at-risk and in need of fixing)
 - Unwillingness to identify and address root causes



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First Generation Equity Work©

- Makes us feel like we are doing something meaningful
- Allows us to stay in a place of comfort
- Maintains the opportunity and achievement gaps
- Does little to address root causes



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Second Generation Equity Work

- Borrowed from Guralnick (1993):
 - Early intervention was in the midst of a rapid period of change
 - Marked by a movement away from superficial analyses regarding the effectiveness of services and supports for young children with disabilities
 - Researchers and policy makers were being pushed to ask more specific questions and develop a more nuanced understanding about how to meet the needs of young children and their families.



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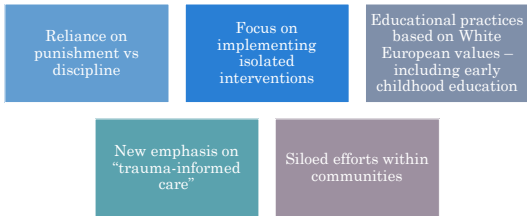
Moving Into Second Generation Equity Work

- Will require a unique commitment and determination
- Let go of the traditional 'band aid' approach to education and intervention
- Push through some discomfort to understand the structural barriers and root causes **as well as our own role in perpetuating disparities**
- Keen understanding of how our systems were set up and how they have morphed over time

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Equity efforts so far.....



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Current Equity Work is Grounded in Colorblindness

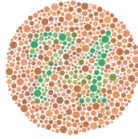
- Belief that there is no racial hierarchy
- Failure to consider the permanence of race's role within our nation's institutions
- Reliance on band aid interventions or approaches
- Sustains White as the norm and ensures this cultural frame of reference for all behaviors, interactions, and experiences **as well as the establishment of policies and practices**

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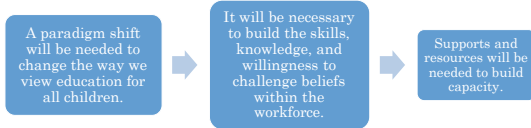
Colorblind Ideology

- Colorblindness actually prevents us from thinking critically about race.
- It allows to avoid talking about racial inequity in schools.
- Colorblindness actually leads to more biases.



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Guiding Principles for Achieving Equity



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Achieving Equity in Early Childhood Education

- Focus on outcomes is important, but we also must:
 - Examine the root causes of inequities, including what they look like in everyday practice.
 - Eliminate policies, practices, and attitudes that perpetuate disparate outcomes.
 - Enact policies and practices that address the root causes of inequity *and* promote better outcomes.



(National Council of Teachers of English, 2016)

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Cultural Disconnect between Home and School

European American culture greatly influences early childhood. Content of teacher education programs often based on White American-European theorists.^{Worth, 2013}

- Majority of early childhood teachers:
 - Are white-monolingual especially in K-3 settings
 - Lack experience and exposure to children from diverse backgrounds
 - Unaware of white privilege
 - Often view children from other cultures from a deficit lens
 - May not be comfortable discussing race

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Cultural Disconnect

Culturally diverse students are *less* likely to have their:

- academic and social needs meet
- cultural experience and backgrounds affirmed & validated
- cultural qualities honored and respected

They are *more* likely to be measured by White middle-class standards

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Characteristics of European American Culture

Characteristic	Description
Time	Clock conscious, concerned with being on time
Future orientation	Emphasis on the future rather than the present
Thinking style	Knowledge is fixed; logical, sequential thinking
Learning style	Continuous improvement and progress through problem solving
Individualism	Personal freedom, choice, and autonomy
Self-responsibility	Responsible for own behavior and management of it

York, 2017

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Differences between Current and Culturally Responsive Anti-Bias Practices

Typical Learning Environment

- Rule-driven
- Conformist
- Rigidity, order
- Thing-focused
- Hierarchical

Sullivan, 2016

Culturally Responsive Anti-Bias Environment

- Freedom-loving
- Creative
- Flexibility
- People-focused
- Democratic

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Principles of Culturally Responsive Anti-Bias Pedagogy

Children's cultural references included in all aspects of learning

Learning within the context of culture

All children are welcomed, supported, and provided with the best opportunities to learn

Positive for children's self-concept

Focus on teaching equity and social justice

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Culturally Responsive Anti-Bias Practices

Behavior management

Instructional practices

Establishing teacher-child relationships

Positive identity development



Seven horizontal lines for notes

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Benefits of Culturally Responsive Anti-Bias Education for *All* Children

- Encourages a true sense of self by helping children from all cultural backgrounds engage in positive identity development
- Promotes healthy development of all children
- Prepares children for the future by helping them develop cross-cultural skills that will be needed to fully participate in society
- Prevents social isolation



Seven horizontal lines for notes

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Train-the-Trainer Approach to Sustainability

- One ECE organization becomes the “keeper of the vision” (e.g., Head Start, Pre-K)
- Existing PD program that includes coaches or TA providers
- Train coaches/TA providers on introductory training, CRAB practices, and practice-based coaching (PBC)
- Implement PBC to support teachers



Seven horizontal lines for notes

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Reflecting on
Culturally
Diverse
Children,
Families, and
Communities

How can I better serve culturally diverse children, families and communities?

What do I need to become a culturally competent and responsive practitioner?

What does my program need to be more inclusive of diverse children and families?

What barriers exist that prevent me or (my program) from being more inclusive and equitable?

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Questions?

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