

Early Childhood Behavior Guidance Practices and the Role of Implicit Bias

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1



WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

- Mother of a 19-year-old son
- Collect African American Barbie dolls
- Love Shrimp & Grits & Sweet Iced Tea
- Favorite TV shows This Is Us, Black-ish, and Abbot Elementary

2

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

- Mother of three boys (ages 18, 15, and 11)
- Love singing and Broadway musicals
- Diehard UNC fan
- College basketball season is my favorite time of the year.



3

Participant Outcomes

After this session, participants will be able to:

1. Define a challenging behavior vs. a mistaken behavior
2. Describe how implicit bias shows up in early learning settings
3. Outline specific strategies that can be used to reduce the role of implicit bias in disciplinary practices

4



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 prevents me or (my program) from being more inclusive and equitable?

5



Inequities 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)
- **Black children:** 18 percent of the preschool population, but 48% of suspensions (2014)
- **Boys:** 49% of the preschool population, but 82% of all suspensions (2014)

6



Challenging vs. Mistaken Behavior

Challenging Behavior

A behavior that is challenging for an adult to address

Mistaken Behavior

An intentional or unintentional action that causes a conflict or contributes to complications in getting the conflict resolved

A type of communication

7

Examples of Mistaken Behaviors

- Physical aggression (e.g., hitting, kicking, punching, spitting, throwing objects forcefully, pinching, pushing, and biting);
- Destroying property (e.g., crumbling up paper, breaking crayons, destroying art work)
- Taking toys away from other children forcefully
- Tantrum behaviors (e.g., kicking, screaming, pushing an object or person, stomping feet)
- Verbal aggression (e.g., yelling, threats, screaming at another person)
- Ordering an adult to do something (e.g., "leave me alone")
- Persistent or prolonged crying that interferes with the child's engagement in activities
- Inappropriate use of materials (e.g., jumping off chairs, slamming materials, throwing objects)
- Noncompliance (e.g., "I'm not going to do it") or refusal to follow directions

8

Infants and Toddlers (0-2 1/2)

Developmental tasks

- Getting needs met
- Learning cause and effect
- Becoming separate self
- Establishing independence
- "Owning" things
- Beginning to identify feelings
- Learning to talk

Common challenging behaviors

- Crying
- Hoarding toys
- Not sharing
- Saying "no"
- Temper tantrums
- Biting
- Getting into things

9

Preschoolers (3-5 years)

- | | |
|--|--|
| Developmental tasks | Common challenging behaviors |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · More advanced language · Curiosity · Beginning stages of empathy · Friendship development · Imaginative play · Develops fears | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Conflicts with peers · Asking a lot of "why" questions · Excessive worrying · Strong feelings · Defiance |



10

What does the phrase 'implicit bias' mean to you?



11

Implicit Bias in Early Childhood

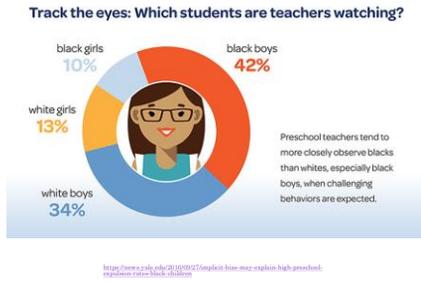
- Early education staff tend to observe Black children more closely, especially when they expect challenging behaviors.
- The nature of the implicit bias seems to differ based on the race of the early educator.
- Same-race empathetic response



Gilliam, Maupin, Reyes, Accavitti, & Shic, 2016



12



13

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; Kosner, 2000; Murray & Murray, 2004)

14



Understanding Implicit Bias

- Pervasive, robust, and activated involuntarily
- Does not necessarily align with our declared beliefs
- Develops early in life through socialization
- Media reinforces negative stereotypes that influence our perceptions and beliefs of others.
- Malleable, but can be unlearned and replaced with new positive mental associations

15

“Black people **looting** for food, while white people **find** food?”



16



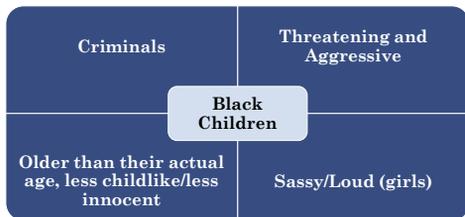
Why does it matter?

- **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)
 - Pediatricians recommend less pain medication for Black children than White (Cooper et al., 2012; Sabin & Greenwald, 2012)

17



Implicit Racial Bias and Black Children



18



Exploring Anti-Blackness

A form of racism that devalues (dehumanizes) blackness and systematically marginalized Black people. In short, Anti-blackness is being opposed to or hostile towards Black people.

Based on the alleged inherent inferiority of Africa and African descendants. Racial stratification is commonplace in our society and dictates the life experiences and opportunities for Black people in our society.

Because Black people have been devalued and maligned across the globe, understanding anti-blackness is critical to unpacking the specific ways racism disproportionately impacts different groups of color.

19



Exploring Anti-Blackness

The racial hierarchy in this country cannot be ignored. Black people are disproportionately impacted by every social measure within our social structures and institutions.

Negative images about who we are continue to flourish throughout our society including media, television, and film.

Non-Black groups of color can more easily assimilate into American culture. Therefore, they are more likely to benefit from anti-blackness because they can gain access to power within American institutions and are accepted into the idea of whiteness.

20



The Manifestations of Anti-Blackness in Our Society

Workplace discrimination: EEOC reports tens of thousands of racial discrimination charges filed each year.

Continued housing discrimination against Black people - less likely to receive a home loan.

Black people are more likely to be arrested, convicted, and receive longer sentences than Whites people.

Differential access to health care and reports of mistreatment within the health care system

Black people are more likely to live in food deserts.

Vast differences in wealth between Black and White people

21



Colorism

Colorism is the process of discrimination that privileges light-skinned people of color over their dark-skinned counterparts (Hunter, 2005).

Colorism has its origins in Eurocentrism and racism. Just as race, privileges whites, colorism privileges light skinned individuals.



22

Colorism

Is a by product of racism

- Roots in Slavery
- Roots in colonialization

Affects groups of color

- Manifestation of internalized racial oppression
- Creates intragroup conflict

Perpetuated unintentionally (intentionally)

- Media, TV, film
- Within families and communities



23

24

In what ways does anti-blackness and colorism show up in early childhood?

25





Colorism in Early Childhood

- Children with darker skin:
 - Are treated less favorably than children with lighter skin tones,
 - are more likely to be suspended or expelled,
 - experience lower academic achievement,
 - Are more likely to enter the juvenile justice system.

26



Adultification Bias and Black Children

- Phenomenon where adults perceive Black children and youth as being older than they actually are
- **Georgetown Law Review:** Black girls as young as five years perceived as needing less protection and nurturing, compared to their White girls.
- **Dr. Phillip Goff:** Black boys are viewed older, less innocent than White children (APA).
- Black boys more likely to be held accountable for their actions; White boys given the benefit of being innocent children
- Police more likely to use force against Black children (dehumanization).

27



Adultification of Black Girls Video

28

“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

29

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)

30

What messages are we sending Black children about their worth?



31

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*



32

What colors do you see in this image?



33

What is anti-racist education?



A systematic, explicit and proactive approach to recognizing, resisting, and rectifying racial injustice and oppression in schools and society
www.buffetinstituteofnebraska.edu

37



Anti-Racism in Early Childhood

Identify and Address	Reduce	Build
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colorism and anti-blackness in disciplinary practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of anti-blackness and colorism in teacher-child relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More authentic relationships with families

38



Preventing and Reducing Suspension and Expulsion

- Strengths-based focus
- Building relationships with families
- Adult-child relationships
- Reflect on and unlearn implicit bias

39





Strengths-Based Focus

- Whole child perspective
 - Culture
 - Home environment
 - Life events
 - Individual skills of child
- Seeking to understand behaviors from a child's point of view

40



Building Adult-Child Relationships

- An early relationship with at least one consistent, nurturing caregiver is essential for later academic success.
 - Protect against poor school performance
- Children with insecure attachments
 - At-risk for lower social competence and lower self-esteem



41



Culturally Responsive Family Engagement

Move beyond traditional methods of family engagement and develop strategies that are inclusive of families' cultural and life circumstances

ALL families are equal partners in actively supporting the learning and development of their young children.

Family engagement is more than parent-teacher conferences or back-to-school nights.

42



Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement

Positive, goal-oriented, mutually respectful partnerships with families

- Understand the importance of working together with parents by sharing planning and decision-making to support child learning and development and family well-being.
- Help families feel comfortable, safe, and respected by building trusting relationships over time.
- Show respect for each family's culture, values, and life situations.

43



Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement

Self-aware and culturally responsive relationships-respect and respond to the cultures, languages, values, and family structures of each family.

- Understand that each family has unique strengths and are resilient
- Reflect on one's own beliefs, values, experiences, ethics, and biases to enhance self-awareness
- Engage in relationships that are responsive to others' culture, languages, and values.

44



Un-Learning Implicit Bias

We must be willing to accept that we do, in fact, have biases, and to make ourselves aware of them.

We must be determined not only to unearth our own stereotypes, but also to challenge them.

We need to learn how to exchange those automatic biases for different, more inclusive, notions.

45



Educators, administrators, and other helping professionals working with Black children and families must:

- See the humanity in Black children and help them see their own humanity.
- Help Black children move past internalized racial oppression (e.g., believing that being smart/intelligent, or having goals, or speaking in complete sentences in somehow Anti-Black).
- Celebrate, affirm, and protect the mind, body, and spirit of Black children.
- Create safe environments where their multiple identities are welcomed, safe, and affirmed

Seeing the Humanity in Black Children

46



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47





48