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Teaching Racial-Cultural Empathy and Challenging Discrimination in Early Childhood

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? Culturally Responsive Teaching & Learning in Early Childhood Education

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Our presenter



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Objectives

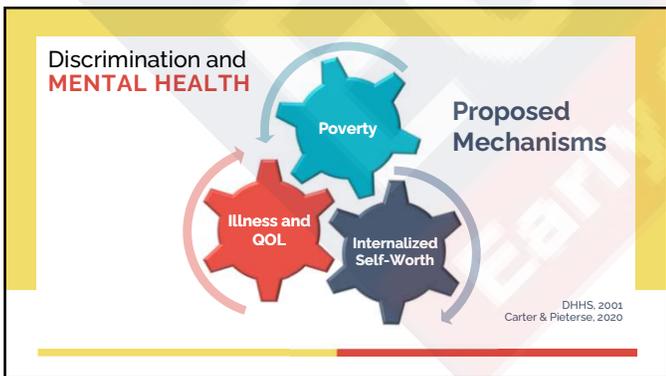
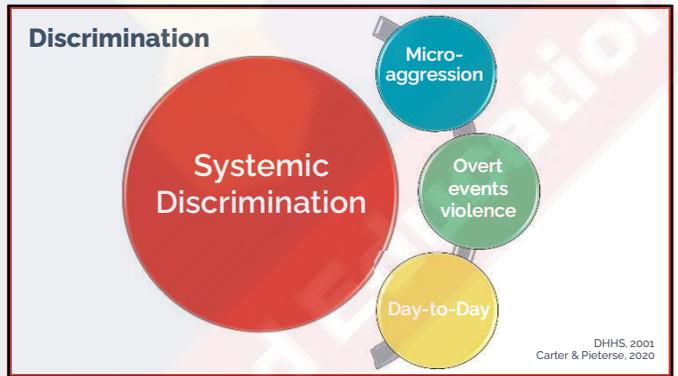
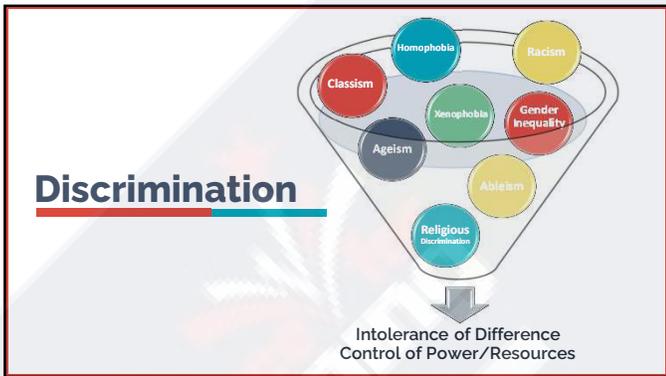
- UNDERSTAND** Understand the importance of promoting racial-cultural empathy and challenging discrimination during early childhood to promote racial and cultural inclusion among young children.
- BECOME** Become familiar with the components of teaching racial-cultural empathy in early childhood education programs, including knowledge of inter-group differences, awareness of biases, and social-emotional skills to overcome prejudice and practice solidarity.
- IDENTIFY** Identify program-wide inclusive policies and family engagement practices that challenge discrimination and propel the development of racial-cultural empathy.

What is Racial-Cultural Discrimination and Empathy?



Why is this important in early childhood?

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Effects of chronic traumatic stress on learning & development in early childhood

Muscle tension and pain, shakiness

Difficulty with concentration, memory, and learning

Disrupted digestion

Inability to relax
Sleep problems

Harvard Center for the Developing Child, 2020

The Prime Opportunity for Wiring Empathy

By age 4 children express racial prejudice

<http://www.childrecommunityschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/theyre-not-too-young-1.pdf>

Teaching racial-cultural discrimination...

...happens in close relationships in a safe environment

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Cultural Empathy: the Foundation of Inclusion

Emotional process involving capacities like tolerance, humbleness & authenticity.

Pedersen, Crethar and Carlson, 2008

COMPONENTS of Racial-Cultural Empathy

Non-linear, life-long journey

Knowledge of Differences

Exposure to diversity ASAP.
Highlight racial/cultural differences and similarities within the program and families.
Role-model interest in/comfort with others who are different.

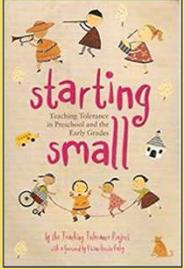
The Family Book. Todd Parr.

Knowledge of Differences

Learn about different cultures through holidays, music, stories, etc.

Diverse children's books, pictures and songs are not enough, but are good conversation starters.

Is your library inclusive?



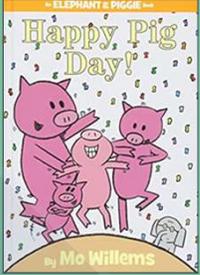
Starting Small: Teaching Tolerance in Preschool and the Early Grades. 1997. The Teaching Tolerance Project

Awareness of Assumptions

Recognize that you and others can be biased and keep trying to soften your assumptions.

Notice children's assumptions, stereotypes, and prejudice, to redirect towards curiosity and problem solving.

Inclusion replaces discrimination over time.



Happy Pig Day, Mo Willems.

Awareness of Assumptions

Acknowledge the reality of discrimination, injustice and privilege.

Process together the feelings that arise.

Celebrate improvements and instill hope!



Pink is for Boys, Robb Pearlman and Eda Kaban

Social-Emotional Skills

Explain and practice fairness, to link to social justice.

Facilitate friendships with peers who are different.

Calm down defensiveness while playing.

Reward inclusive and empathic behavior.



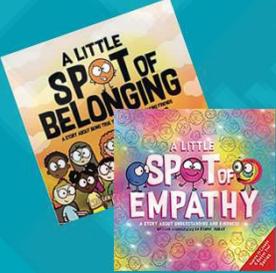
Shamee Street, Common and Colbie Corral - "Be a Better Friend" with Elmo. <https://youtu.be/m2x2D0pYA>

Social-Emotional Skills

Reaffirm sense identity and belonging to community.

Play collaborative games and play with toys/books that encourage kindness and empathy.

Make art projects and songs that support connection and interdependence.



A Little Spot of Belonging, A Little Spot of Empathy. Both by Diane Adams

Program-wide INCLUSIVE POLICIES

Program policies must promote and sustain racial-cultural empathy practices



Allen and Smith. 2015. The Pyramid Model Consortium.

Elements of **INCLUSIVE** POLICIES



- Create policies through collaborative and culturally-sensitive process with stakeholders.
- Change organizational structures according to individual cultural needs and values.
- Effective Professional Development that supports the transfer of learning.
- Include anti-bias curriculum.

Allen and Smith, 2015. The Pyramid Model Consortium.

INCLUSIVE Family Engagement



Engage families in the creation and implementation of program-wide inclusive policies

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RESOURCES for Adults

-  American Academy of Pediatrics. 2019. The Impact of Racism on Child and Adolescent Health. <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/144/2/e20191765>
-  Allen and Smith, 2015. The Pyramid Model Consortium. Expelling Expulsion: Using the Pyramid Model to Prevent Suspensions, Expulsions, and Disciplinary Inequities in Early Childhood Programs. https://www.pyramidmodel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/expelling_expulsion.pdf
-  Pedersen, Paul B., Crethar, Hugh C., and Carlson, Jon. Inclusive Cultural Empathy: Making Relationships Central in Counseling and Psychotherapy. American Psychological Association, 2008.
-  The Teaching Tolerance Project. Starting Small: Teaching Tolerance in Preschool and the Early Grades. Southern Poverty Law Center, 1997.
-  Carter, Robert T., and Alex L. Pieterse. Measuring the Effects of Racism: Guidelines for the Assessment and Treatment of Race-Based Traumatic Stress Injury. Columbia University Press, 2020.

RESOURCES for Adults

-  They Are Not Too Young. <http://www.childrencommunityschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/theyre-not-too-young-1.pdf>
-  Project Implicit. <https://www.projectimplicit.net>
-  <https://www.kidlit.tv/2018/02/when-racial-bias-is-taught-through-childrens-literature/>
-  Center for Racial Justice in Education. Resources for Talking About Race, Racism, and Racialized Violence with Kids - <https://centerracialjustice.org/resources/resources-for-talking-about-race-racism-and-racialized-violence-with-kids/>
-  Racism and Violence: Using Your Power as a Parent to Support Children Aged Two to Five. ZERO TO THREE. www.zerotothree.org/resources/1598-racism-and-violence-using-your-power-as-a-parent-to-support-children-aged-two-to-five

RESOURCES for Adults

-  Implicit Teacher Bias. Walter Gillian. <https://youtu.be/8bothK4-hrRE>
-  Toxic Stress Derails Healthy Development from The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University - <https://youtu.be/vVwFkcOZHJw>
-  Brené Brown on Empathy from RSA - <https://youtu.be/1Ewvgu36gJw>
-  PODCAST: Code Switch (Race, In Your Face) from NPR - <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/>
-  PODCAST: Seeing White (2017) from Scene on Radio - <http://www.sceneonradio.org/tag/season-2/>

RESOURCES for Adults

-  Office of the Surgeon General (US); Center for Mental Health Services (US); National Institute of Mental Health (US). Mental Health: Culture, Race, and Ethnicity. A Supplement to Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General. Rockville (MD): Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (US); 2001. Aug. PMID: 20669516.
-  Who Is Being Expelled from Preschools and Why? <https://youtu.be/EQqAQgBwJxY>

RESOURCES for Children

-  Great Diverse Books to Engage Students on Bullying and Bias. Welcoming Schools. <https://www.welcomingschools.org/pages/books-to-engage-students-on-bullying/>
-  Ballard, Jamie. "18 Children's Books to Help You Talk About Race and Racism With Kids." Woman's Day. 4 June 2020. www.womansday.com/life/entertainment/g32748133/childrens-books-race-racism/.
-  Allen, Autumn, et al. "20 Picture Books for 2020. Readings to Embrace Race, Provide Solace & Do Good." EmbraceRace. 2020. www.embracerace.org/resources/20-picture-books-for-2020.
-  Sesame Street: Common and Colbie Caillat - "Belly Breathe" with Elmo (2012) https://youtu.be/_m2bzD0pyfA
-  ToddWorld: It's OK to Be You (2006). An animation based on Todd Parr's work. <https://youtu.be/ldgTetUld3U>

RESOURCES for Children

-  Parr, Todd. It's Okay to Be Different. Megan Tingley Books. 2009.
-  The Yoga Garden Game - https://www.amazon.com/YogaKids-The-Yoga-Garden-Game/dp/B000tNBZM/ref-sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=YOGA+GARDEN+GAME&qid=1626902383&sr=8-1
-  Sesame Street in Communities (Resources, Strategies, and Support for Community Providers) - <https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/>
-  FEATURE FILMS. Hotel Transylvania 1, 2, & 3 from Sony Pictures Animation
-  FILM: Ruby Bridges (1997) - Disney

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