



## Creating Anti-Bias Classrooms in Early Childhood Environments: a book study with *Don't Look Away*

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### ABOUT THE BOOK

*Don't Look Away: Embracing Anti-Bias Classrooms* leads early childhood professionals to explore and address issues of bias, equity, low expectations, and family engagement to ensure culturally responsive experiences. Importantly, this book will challenge you to consider your perceptions and thought processes.

This book will help you:

- Identify your own unconscious biases — we all have them!
- Recognize and minimize bias in the classroom, school, and community
- Connect with children and their families
- Help close the opportunity gap for children from marginalized communities

This book offers strategies, tools, and information to help you create a culturally responsive and equitable learning environment. Gryphon House Publishing has the book [available for purchase](#) as well as free accompanying resources.

### CREATING CHANGE

The critical need for anti-bias and anti-racist (ABAR) practices in early childhood environments cannot be stated strongly enough. Embodying anti-bias and anti-racism is a journey that requires hard work. The Schoenbaum Family Center (SFC) is using a book study to engage in concrete steps toward ABAR practices because this is one way to be intentional about creating time and space for introspection as well as the ability to engage professionally in how this impacts our practice.

***Why use a professional book study for early educators?*** A professional book study is a planned and structured gathering of professionals who come together to talk about a book that they find interesting and that will help them improve their daily practices within the classrooms or within their organization. Professional book studies are grounded in the principles of adult learning because it is a self-directed, task-centered activity that drives individual learning through group discussion. Book studies typically involve multiple discussion sessions with groups of teachers and practitioners. Teachers must commit to reading the entire book and being engaged in an open discussion that is grounded in the question of, “How can I use this book to build my knowledge and skills that will help me improve my practice?”

What we've outlined next is our approach to help spark ideas for you in your own setting.

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## SCHOENBAUM FAMILY CENTER'S BOOK STUDY

The SFC book study (made up of teachers and providers from 11 child care centers and 8 family home programs) will be created for Zoom. Each session will go through the main ideas from each chapter using engaging discussions, reflective activities from the book and others developed for this study, and Q+A. After an introductory session with two of the book's authors, identified coaches from SFC will lead the sessions. Coaches will also listen to and provide feedback on the participants' applied learnings.

**Ground rules:** The SFC team establishes that the Zoom sessions are a safe space. We ask our teachers to please be respectful, be patient, be brave, participate, and encourage others during our discussions. We are all trying to grow and learn.

### Program Goals:

1. Introduce to teachers that racism is a form of stress that leads to trauma that children and families face
2. Raise teachers' awareness about their biases toward the children and families served
3. Provide anti-racist and anti-bias strategies to change and improve classroom practices

**Schedule:** Two different times will be offered for each session to accommodate participant schedules.

Week 1: <b>Introductory Session</b>	Drs. Curenton and Iruka will discuss the research for the book.	
Week 2: <b>Session 1</b>	<b>Chapter 1</b>	<i>Resource:</i> <a href="#">The Missing Links: Enhancing Anti-Bias Education with Anti-Racist Education</a>
Week 3: <b>Session 2</b>	<b>Chapter 2</b>	<i>Resource:</i> Dr. Donna Y. Ford podcast, " <a href="#">Black and gifted: A Trailblazer's backstory</a> "
Week 4: <b>Session 3</b>	<b>Chapter 3</b>	<i>Resource:</i> NAEYC's " <a href="#">Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education</a> " Position Statement
Week 5: <b>Session 4</b>	<b>Chapters 4 &amp; 5</b>	<i>Resource:</i> <b>I Am From</b> poem by George Ella Lyon (*useful for gathering information about families and sharing information about self. See sample <a href="#">here</a> .)
Week 6: <b>Session 5</b>	<b>Chapter 6</b>	<i>Resource:</i> <a href="#">Talking to Young Children about Bias and Prejudice</a>
Week 7: <b>Session 6</b>	<b>Chapter 7</b>	<i>Resource:</i> <a href="#">5 Benefits of Human-Centered Design Thinking for Family Engagement</a> (resource from book on pg. 114)

### Approach:

- Prior to each session, participants read and reflect on what they gained from the reading and how they connected with it.
- Starting the session, each person shares briefly how they applied learnings from the previous session and the results.
- Next, participants (one at a time) share the most significant part of this week's reading and explains why it stood out to them. Others weigh in briefly on that topic (expanding on ideas), before another person shares their insight. Continue until all main points are identified.
- Participants can then share experiences with identified insights, whether in their personal or professional life. Once this discussion happens, participants will then discuss how this can and should apply to their current practice. The coach will allow time to practice concepts, as needed.
- Finally, participants will journal learnings and what they will apply (and report on next session).