Addressing Anti-Bias and Anti-Racist Practices in Early Childhood Education

JOURNEY OF UNLEARNING AND RELEARNING

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TAKE HOME POINTS

How to be anti-racist through being R.I.C.H.E.R.
Racist or Anti-racist

SILENCE IS COMPLICITY.
What is Implicit Bias?

A set of automatic and uncontrolled cognitive processes that affect our attitudes toward others. These biases are thought to be involuntary and not under the conscious control of the individual and can lead to either favorable or unfavorable characterizations of others.

What is Institutional Racism?

Racism is the use of institutional power to organize around white supremacy AND the oppression, denigration, and dehumanizing based on skin color. This means that white people, people who look white, or whiteness based on language and culture benefit from this system and arrangement of power, privilege, and resources. Whiteness is then regarded as beautiful, intelligent, worthy, and something to aspire to; thus maintaining the racist system.

- Adapted from Crenshaw, 1995; Lee, 1996
Dominant narratives about race (family, media, society) coupled with racialized structural arrangements and differential outcomes by race all prime us to believe that people of color are inferior to white people, create and maintain harmful associations, and lead us to make harmful assumptions, consciously and unconsciously, about people of color.

Implicit Bias

Structural Racism

Inequitable outcomes and experiences resulting from policy decisions in health, housing, employment, education, and life expectancy - reinforces white supremacist beliefs and ideology; dominant narrative uses disparate outcomes as evidence of white superiority, promotes whiteness as "normal" and desirable and justifies inequality.

Race is created to justify enslaving people from Africa (economic engine of country)

Policies and practices that consolidate and protect power bestowed upon white people through economic, social, cultural, and political advantage to people called "white," and unequally disadvantage to people of color.

National narrative (ideology, belief system) about people of color being "less than" human (and less than white) justifies mistreatment and inequality (white supremacy).

For Example:
- Voting Rights
- FHA Loans
- Residential segregation
- Access to education, green space, resources, safety, healthcare, etc.
- Jobs, hiring and advancement
SYSTEMIC RACISM
Defining Equity
(adapted from RWJF)

“Everyone has a **fair and just opportunity** to thrive and reach their potential. This requires **removing obstacles** such as poverty, racism, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness, lack of access to resources, network, and capital, and basic necessities.”
Racial Equity

Everyone has a fair and just opportunity to thrive and reach their potential regardless of their race. This requires removing racism that leads to poverty, discrimination, exclusion and their consequences, including trauma, powerlessness, lack of access to resources, network, and capital, and basic necessities.
How can we engage in evidence-based anti-bias and anti-racist practices?

A lot of our evidence is based on white supremacy and deficit lens about Blackness and non-White people?
Black bodies and other minoritized populations have been used to advance science, but often not for their benefit.

- Tuskegee Syphilis “Study”
- Jewish Hospital Cancer Cells “Study”
- Willowbrook Hepatitis “Study”
- And so many more...

VS

- Early childhood education/intervention
- Crime & punishment, age of culpability
- Breastmilk v. formula
- And so many more...
Eugenics is evident in today’s science by maintenance of a white supremacy and deficit lens that often perpetuates Blacks especially as less than in all facets of life.
Everything Black is bad and pathological, and everything white is good and superior.
HOW A REPORT SET TODAY’S FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT PRACTICES AND POLICIES


Although Moynihan described a “tangle of pathologies”—from disintegrating families to poor educational outcomes, weak job prospects, concentrated neighborhood poverty, dysfunctional communities, and crime—that would create a self-perpetuating cycle of deprivation, hardship, and inequality, he saw the breakdown of the nuclear family as the fundamental source of weakness in the black community. Moynihan argued that high nonmarital birth rates among blacks and the large share of black children raised in female-headed households created a matrilineal society that undermined the role of black men. Because of diminished authority within the family, black men would abdicate their responsibilities as husbands, fathers, and providers, and the pattern would repeat from one generation to the next.
Counter-narratives rarely made visible or acted upon

- Strong kinship bond
- Strong work orientation
- Adaptability of family roles
- High achievement orientation
- Religious orientation
'Blaming the victim' is part of the narrative when discussing COVID-19 racial disparities.
Limitations to Current Knowledgebase
Research, practice, and policy need to consider the assets and strengths of minoritized communities.

**Asset-based**
- Needs driven
- Problems focused
- Externally focused
- What is missing that we must go find?
- Leads to depression, dysfunction, and learned helplessness

**Deficit-based**
- Strengths driven
- Opportunity focus
- Internally focused
- What is present that can be leveraged and built on?
- Leads to innovation and meeting the needs of the community
Why does our framing/approach to the research, policy, and practice matter?

• Shapes the question
  • Is there a comparative group? Who is the model and behaviors should they attain?

• The potential solution(s)
  • Is the solution top-down or reverse? Does it ever ask the community, families what is needed for the solution? Does it prescribe was is needed to meet a standard? Does it ignore context and history?

• The messaging
  • Does it maintain the pejorative narrative and oppression about a particular group?
Example...

Achievement Gap
Figure 1. Trend in fourth-grade 2017 NAEP reading average scores and score gaps between Black and White children

$536,313,851 million appropriated for ESEA from 2008-2019

***does not include state or local funds***

• Reduction in Black-White achievement gap by 0 point in reading

• Reduction in Black-White achievement gap by 1 point in math
Why is the achievement gap still with us?

- Graduate school, careers, job, economy driver
- Maintains the White supremacy and oppression of minorities and others
- Do we really want a solution;(-)?
Cultivating Anti-racist Early Childhood Research, Program, Partnership
Social Determinants of Early Learning (SDoEL)
Being an Antiracist

“To create an equal society, we must commit to making unbiased choices and being antiracist in all aspects of our lives.”

HTTPS://NMAAHC.SI.EDU/LEARN/TALKING-ABOUT-RACE/TOPICS/BEING-ANTIRACIST
Work must be RICHER!

- Re-educate about history
- Integrate rather than just desegregate
- Critique everything
- Humility of privilege
- Erase racism
- Re-vision new ways, approaches, theories, teams...

Our country will be enriched by limiting the dehumanization of people and eradication of racism and bias in all aspects of our world, including programming, policy, & research.
Re-educate about racism

- A journey of re-education and self-inquiry is necessary

- Can engage in multiple ways:
  - Asking for and engaging in this webinar!
  - Google resources – books, videos, audios
  - Social media engagement

- Live in the uncomfortable moments of guilt, shame, remorse, helplessness, anger, nonchalant, defensiveness, etc.
Integrate your team/networks

What is the racial, ethnic and cultural group of your research network, your department, your organization?

Who are you currently working with, are there leaders of color?

- BIPoC leaders should not be an add-on
- Who are your partners? Do you call on them to co-author, co-lead?
Critique everything you know and do

- Question EVERYTHING: from how you became part of the organization to the house you live in.
- What if you used critical race theory to look at your work, and even where you shop?
- Engaging in critical discourse with a multi-racial network is crucial for decolonizing your work.
Humility is how we should approach this journey

- Many leaders are brilliant and have good intentions!
- Be clear about our privilege and how privilege and profession have been weaponized to maintain racist frameworks, policies, programs, and institutions, as well as outcomes.
- Be ok with critiquing current knowledge, and be humbled and empowered
Erase systemic racism, white privilege and bias

- Expand process and teams that also shows the strengths and assets of BIPOC

- What is the purpose and value of your work and how much does it call attention to historical atrocities, injustices, and inequities

- Must make racism visible to eradicate it

- Must hold ourselves ACCOUNTABLE!!
Re-envision anti-racist programming, research, policy

• Examine whether your work is inclusive and anti-racist, as well as strengths-based

• Are there existing theories and approaches especially from BIPOC peers that have not been elevated in your work?

• Work on creating the condition to be anti-racist in all aspects of your life

• #IDontKnowIsNotAnOption
TAKE HOME POINTS

How to be anti-racist through being R.I.C.H.E.R.

FRANK PORTER GRAHAM CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE
It is still a journey to...being R.I.C.H.E.R.

- Rejection from editors to funders to policies that are race-neutral
- Continuing reading of Black scholars – past to present
- Challenging our biases and making institutional racism visible
- Like-minded scholars (e.g., RISER, NBCDI Fellowship, Black Caucus)
- Build diverse collaborations and social capital/networks
- There is no perfection but continual growth and reflection
- Have humility, remain honest, be authentic to self, and be BOLD and COURAGEOUS
Keep Moving Forward: Our Children Deserve Progress!

If you can't fly, then run,
if you can't run, then walk,
if you can't walk, then crawl,
but whatever you do,
you have to keep moving forward.
Which aspect of R.I.C.H.E.R. is most important for you?

- Re-educate about history
- Integrate rather than just desegregate
- Critique everything
- Humility of privilege
- Erase racism
- Re-vision new ways, approaches, theories, teams
THANK YOU!

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