



Facilitator’s Guide

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Stream from http://resourcesforearlylearning.org/educators_pd/

“Honoring Diversity” (Overview)

“Foster a Sense of Self”

“Celebrate Differences in Others”

“Teach About Fairness”

Introduction

This professional development training module is designed to help you lead educators in using best practices to understand and celebrate differences between and among individuals, and to help children learn appropriate ways to respond to unfairness when they encounter it. It is one of several modules developed for early childhood educators by the Department of Early Education and Care of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

This training meets the guidelines for Continuing Education Units (CEUs) as outlined by the Massachusetts Association for the Education of Young Children (MassAEYC).

For more information about this professional development training module, visit http://resourcesforearlylearning.org/educators_pd/.

About this Guide

This Facilitator's Guide provides instructions and narrative for delivering a video-based training for early childhood educators. You'll find an agenda, learning goals, preparation suggestions, talking points, activities, and handouts. You'll also find general tips and resources to help you facilitate the training. Use these materials with the accompanying videos to lead family child care and center- and school-based educators in an engaging, content-rich training.

Note: To access the videos referenced in this guide, go to http://resourcesforearlylearning.org/educators_pd/. Select "Honoring Diversity." Be sure you have access to the videos prior to and while leading this training.

Learning Goals

After participating in this training, educators will be able to:

- Summarize the best practices for creating a learning environment that honors diversity among children.
- Recognize how to foster each child's sense of individuality and sense of belonging to their classroom community.
- Identify strategies for helping children recognize how they are both alike and different from their peers.
- Describe how to teach the concept of fairness in concrete ways.
- Apply new knowledge to current practices.

Agenda

Introduction	15 minutes
Honoring Diversity	5 minutes
Foster a Sense of Self	15–20 minutes
Celebrate Differences in Others	15–20 minutes
BREAK (optional)	5–10 minutes
Teach About Fairness	15–20 minutes
Try It	15–20 minutes
Wrap Up	5–10 minutes
Total Time	90–120 minutes

Preparation

Before leading this training, you should:

- Watch the videos and get to know the best practices.
- Read through the training module. Become familiar with the talking points so that you can share them in a natural, conversational way.
- Obtain and test the technology you need to share the videos with participants and make sure you have a reliable Internet connection during the training.
- Gather any props or materials needed for the Try It activity.
- Rehearse and fine-tune your presentation to “make it your own.” Time yourself to make sure you are within the allotted time.
- Create a handout packet with copies of the following for each participant:
 - Self-Assessment
 - Learning Log
 - Try It
 - Best Practices
 - Standards
 - Training Evaluation
- Consider working with a partner the first time you lead this training. You can learn from and support each other when preparing, practicing, and facilitating. After the training, you can reflect on participants' evaluations together.

Facilitation Tips

Whether you're a new or experienced facilitator, these tips can help your training run smoothly.

- Arrive early to prepare the training room for optimal learning.
 - Place handout packets where participants check in.
 - Have pens or pencils and paper on every table.
 - Check your technology setup to make sure videos play without problem.
- Create a space that is inviting and comfortable.
 - Play soft music as people arrive.
 - Greet participants with a smile and a handshake. A personal introduction helps set the stage for collaboration and learning.
- Invite partner or small group discussion.
 - Before the training begins, invite educators to identify a partner. People learn best when they have a chance to talk about what they are learning or thinking.
 - Allow a few minutes for partners to introduce themselves to each other.
 - During the training, provide opportunities for partner interaction.
- Keep participants engaged.
 - Follow the “ten-two rule” as you present the training: Speak for no longer than ten minutes at a time and then provide participants at least two minutes of interaction or activity.
 - Avoid simply reading the talking points that have been provided. Become familiar with each point so that you can keep the training engaging, fluid, and conversational.

Icebreaker Ideas

When working with a group of educators who may or may not know each other, it's a good idea to provide a few moments to “break the ice.” This allows people to relax, laugh, move, and get to know each other (and you!). Below are just a few ideas you can use to begin a training session.

That's Me!

Read a statement aloud to the group. Ask participants to stand up, raise a hand in the air, and shout *That's me!* if the statement applies to them. It's fun to see which statements apply to all participants and which do not apply to any. Statements might include:

- *I teach at a family child care.*
- *I have worked with children for five years or more.*
- *I was born in Massachusetts.*
- *I write down the funny things that kids say.*
- *I laugh out loud at least once a day.*
- *I check Pinterest at least once a week.*
- *I have no idea what Pinterest is.*
- *I believe that there is no problem that good chocolate can't solve.*

You can come up with your own statements or invite a few participants to come up with statements. When they say their statement aloud, others (including you) can reply, *That's me!*

Weave a Web

Holding onto a ball of yarn, share your name and an interesting fact about yourself with participants. Keep the end piece as you toss the ball of yarn to a participant. Ask the participant to share his or her name and a personal fact, and hold onto the yarn as they toss the ball to another participant. Continue until everyone has had a turn and the "web" is complete.

Two Truths and a Lie

Ask participants to jot down two truths and one lie about themselves or their work with children. For example:

- *I speak Japanese.*
- *I am related to Davy Crockett.*
- *I have three sets of twins in my program this year.*

Form participants into small groups of three or four people. Have each person in the group read their statements aloud and ask the rest of the group to guess which statement is not true.

Four Corners

Post a word from a set of four related words in each corner of the room, such as:

- *lion, bear, eagle, deer*
- *desert, beach, mountain, city*
- *sushi, salad, enchilada, pizza*
- *hybrid, convertible, truck, Mustang*

Ask participants, *Are you a hybrid, convertible, truck or Mustang?* Direct participants to move to the corner of the room with which they most identify. Ask participants, now in small groups in their corners, to share with one another why they chose that corner and how it represents their interests, so that they can discover common attributes they may share. Have each small group pick one person to share the group's common attributes with the larger group. Repeat the process with another set of four words as many times as you like.

People Bingo

Photocopy and distribute the “bingo card” below. Invite participants to find people who match a fact listed on the card and have them sign off on that fact. Each person can sign off on only one fact. Explain that when a participant has obtained five signatures in a row (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally), he or she should shout *Bingo!* and introduce the people who signed his or her card to the rest of the group

People Bingo				
Has traveled outside the U.S.	Likes pineapple on pizza	Has lived in MA for more than 10 years	Knows how to juggle	Has never been on a plane
Can speak a foreign language	Has 3 or more brothers	Likes to camp	Has been scuba diving	Reads the Sunday paper
Likes to scrapbook	Has a summer birthday	FREE SPACE	Likes to garden	Can say the alphabet backwards
Likes math	Does crossword puzzles	Owens a cat	Has been to Alaska	Likes to run
Likes thunderstorms	Has watched a meteor shower	Is afraid of snakes	Knows how to sew	Can play basketball

Training

Introduction

(15 minutes)

Welcome Participants to the Training

- Introduce yourself and share your background and experience.
- Announce the length of the training (1½–2 hours) and note other logistics, such as break times, restroom location, and so on.
- Review the agenda and explain the structure of the training.
 - Participants will watch an overview video and then three short videos that explore best practices in creating a learning environment.
 - After each video, participants will briefly discuss the main points and reflect on what they have learned.
 - Participants will also have the opportunity to share and reflect on their own practices.
- Share the learning goals and objectives. Participants will:
 - Explore the best practices for creating a learning environment that honors diversity among children.
 - Discover ways to foster each child's sense of individuality and sense of belonging to their classroom community.
 - Identify strategies for helping children understand how they are both alike and different from their peers.
 - Examine how to teach the concept of fairness in concrete ways.
 - Apply new knowledge to current practices.
- Introduce the Learning Log.
 - The Learning Log includes questions to help participants identify best practices and distill the important points made in each video. The *viewing questions* reinforce ideas from the videos. The *reflection questions* help educators draw connections to their own experiences.
 - The Learning Log can also be used to jot down notes, questions, and ideas.
- Consider doing an icebreaker activity to get participants “warmed up” and ready to learn and interact. (See Icebreakers Ideas for suggestions.)

- Ask each participant to identify a partner to work with during the training and encourage them to share ideas. (You can offer small group discussions if you prefer.)

Complete the Self-Assessment

Educators grow and hone their skills by continually identifying their own strengths and training needs and reflecting on their own practices.

- Invite participants to complete the first half of the Self-Assessment to help them discover the skills they already possess and to identify those they would like to work on.
- Explain that toward the end of the training, participants will complete the second half of the Self-Assessment to measure their growth and learning.

Honoring Diversity

(5 minutes)

Introduce the Topic

Early childhood educators play an important role in a young child's life, not only by fostering developmental growth, but also by helping shape that child's identity and character. A major focus of that character building is teaching children to respect others—to celebrate our similarities and differences and treat each other with kindness and fairness. This is not something an educator can effectively address in an isolated lesson. Rather, it should happen every day, minute-to-minute, day in and day out—by continually fostering children's sense of self, helping children to recognize and honor our many differences (cultural, racial, ethnic, linguistic, and more), and developing an understanding of what it means to be fair and how unfairness hurts.

Introduce and View the Video

Introduce the overview video featuring Eleonora Villegas-Reimers, Associate Professor of Education at Wheelock College. Use this brief video to set the stage for a discussion about honoring diversity by fostering children's sense of self, celebrating differences, and teaching about fairness.



"Honoring Diversity"

(approx. 2 min)

Foster a Sense of Self

(15–20 minutes)

Introduce the Best Practice

To understand and respect others we must understand and respect ourselves. In their early years, children are just beginning to develop an identity of their own, and to recognize that they

are individuals separate from others. You may notice this as children shift from referring to themselves in the third person (“Jarrod’s truck!”) to the use of the pronoun I. (“I want that truck!”) It is vital that educators nurture this emerging sense of self-identity. Yet it is equally important to nurture a child’s sense of belonging in the group. By creating a welcoming environment that respects diversity and celebrates differences between and among individuals and groups, educators help children develop self-confidence, self-esteem, a sense of belonging, a positive social identity, and interpersonal skills.

- **Nurture children’s development of both individual and group identities.**
- **Nurture children’s awareness of their own strengths,** talents, and needs.
- **Help children develop strategies for getting help** when they need it.
- **Treat learning as a social act** and teach children skills to work and play with others appropriately.

Introduce and View the Video

Tell participants that in this video, they will see educators highlight opportunities and activities that celebrate individual and group identity.

Ask participants to look for effective strategies used by the educators in the video. Use these questions to guide their viewing:

- *How do the educators nurture positive self-identity and group identity?*
- *How are everyday activities and routines used as opportunities to support a sense of self?*



“Foster a Sense of Self”

(approx. 3 min)

Partner/Small Group Share

After viewing the video, get participants thinking, talking, and learning together.

- Invite participants to share with each other, in pairs or small groups, what they noticed as they watched. Challenge them to use the language stem *I noticed...* rather than *I liked....*
- Suggest that participants jot down notes, ideas, or questions in their Learning Log.

Review

Share and expand on key points covered in the video. Use the following questions and talking points in your discussion. Ask participants to offer examples from the video as well as to draw upon their own experiences.

Why is it important to develop a positive sense of self and social identity early in a child's life?

- Each child learns to recognize herself/himself as a unique and special individual.
- Understanding and respecting others requires that you first understand and respect yourself.
- Recognizing and celebrating diversity within a group relies on individuals having a positive self-identity and then a positive group identity.

How can educators continuously help children develop a positive sense of self?

- Create a warm, welcoming, and nurturing environment.
- Emphasize the special abilities and qualities of individual children by pointing out their talents and strengths. Being recognized for a talent or skill, such as singing a song, writing letters, or building a great block structure, will make a child feel good about himself or herself.
- Acknowledge children's accomplishments and progress. For example, in the video, Denise commends children for their abilities to aim ramps at targets, balance objects, and cooperate with others.
- Find opportunities for positive feedback in everyday activities and routines.
- Celebrate children's family's traditions, cultures, and languages through conversations and activities. For example,
 - In the video, Denise uses home visits to get to know children's families. She celebrates the family by posting photographs of family members and talking about how all families are different, yet each is special.
 - Encourage children to share their family's customs and language during class discussions.
- Teach children strategies and interactions about helping others. For example,
 - Suggest that children work together to perform routine tasks (*Who can help Maria put away the blocks?*)
 - Ask for volunteers to help you or others in the classroom.
 - Encourage children to ask for help from, and offer help to, one another.

How can everyday activities and routines be opportunities to develop a child's self and group identity?

- Welcome children each day to the group by singing songs or chants.

- Use small group meetings to have children tell what they know, what they are good at, what their interests are.
- Assign “jobs” (such as line leader, door holder) so children feel like a valuable member of the group.
- Give children a chance to express their thoughts, ideas, and opinions about books during read-aloud sessions.
- Listen to and talk about music and art from around the world, including children’s home cultures.
- Have books and other materials available that explore or represent different cultures and traditions, old and new.

View Again (optional)

Emphasize the key messages by showing the video a second time, if possible. Seeing the video again will give participants an opportunity to notice things they may have missed and to expand their learning.

Reflect

Help participants make the connection between what they have learned and what they do in their own programs. Ask them to answer the *reflection questions* in the Learning Log.

Celebrate Differences in Others (15–20 minutes)

Introduce the Best Practice

As children develop their self-identities, they should also be learning acceptance of themselves and others—that each of us are alike and each of us are different, and that we are all valuable in our own way. Educators can convey this message of acceptance by highlighting the ways in which children are alike and different from their peers. Help children see the richness in their diversity.

- **Help children understand how they are different and alike**—in skin color, body size and shape, hairstyles or textures, home languages, clothing, foods, holidays, and so on.
- **Prompt children to express their thoughts and ideas about differences** through planned conversations using pictures, questions, or books. Show diverse cultures, languages, and traditions; girls or boys or men and women in nontraditional roles; or differently-abled children and adults demonstrating strengths and abilities. Explore universal themes with images of children of different cultures.
- **Give children the appropriate language to talk about differences in a respectful way.** When children make hurtful or insensitive comments about others, model language

that acknowledges the difference in an open and honest way, while deflecting negative connotations. For example, when a child asks, *Why does Joseph have a weird arm?* Respond, *Everyone has differences in their bodies. Joseph has a different arm. It's not okay to say that Joseph has a weird arm because that hurts his feelings. It is okay to say that Joseph has a different arm.*

- **Respond to expressions of dislike or bias immediately** with positive, kind, and explanatory language. For example, *Yes, David wears glasses. He is lucky because he can see better when he has them on. Or, Marisol knows the words to that song in Spanish. Let's ask her to teach us the words she knows.* When a hurtful statement is made, do not confront the child who said it to make him or her feel uncomfortable. Gently correct the statement. The child will learn more appropriate ways to express his or her opinions or observations.

Introduce and View the Video

Tell participants that in this video, they will see the experiences children have as they learn about human differences and how this focus on celebrating diversity requires careful and deliberate planning from educators.

Ask participants to look for effective strategies used by the educators in the video. Use this question to guide their viewing:

- *How do the educators help children see how they are alike and also how they are different?*



"Celebrate Differences in Others" (approx. 4 min)

Partner/Small Group Share

After viewing the video, get participants thinking, talking, and learning together.

- Invite participants to share with each other, in pairs or small groups, what they noticed as they watched. Challenge them to use the language stem *I noticed...* rather than *I liked....*
- Suggest that participants jot down notes, ideas, or questions in their Learning Log.

Review

Share and expand on key points covered in the video. Use the following questions and talking points in your discussion. Ask participants to offer examples from the video as well as to draw upon their own experiences.

Why is it important for educators to take note of and talk openly about diversity?

- Children are concrete thinkers. They recognize when a peer looks different, speaks another language, or is differently-abled.

- By talking about differences openly, educators can teach children how to acknowledge and celebrate them.
- A frank discussion of differences, when carefully planned and skillfully taught, can help children see diversity as valuable and important.

How can educators model appropriate responses to issues of human differences?

- Use language that acknowledges the child's observation. For instance, if a child says "Carlos talks funny," respond, *Carlos is learning to speak English. Saying that he "talks funny" can hurt his feelings. Maybe you could help Carlos learn some more words in English and he could help you learn some words in Spanish.*
- Choose words that help children see differences as "normal" human characteristics so that they learn how to treat those differences with respect. *(Everyone has differences. Isabelle has a different way of walking. It's not okay to say that Isabelle walks funny because that hurts her feelings. It is okay to say that Isabelle walks differently.)*

What is the long-term benefit of teaching about diversity?

- Children learn to see and appreciate the similarity and the diversity of humans in their world.
- Children will grow to be more accepting of their own and others' differences.
- Celebrating diversity helps children recognize and reject bias against race, language, culture, gender, abilities, and so on.

View Again (optional)

Emphasize the key messages by showing the video a second time, if possible. Seeing the video again will give participants an opportunity to notice things they may have missed and to expand their learning.

Reflect

Help participants make the connection between what they have learned and what they do in their own programs. Ask them to answer the *reflection questions* in the Learning Log.

Break (optional)

(5–10 minutes)

Teach About Fairness

(15–20 minutes)

Introduce the Best Practice

Children need to learn about fairness and recognize how and when being unfair is hurtful. This lays a foundation for developing empathy and sensitivity that will, in turn, help prevent bullying. But fairness can be a difficult concept for very young children because it is abstract. Young children are often egocentric thinkers, and tend to see the world from their own perspective. So when they say “That’s not fair,” it’s because *they* don’t like the outcome. Educators can teach children that fairness involves thinking of others, too. Help children to recognize unfairness, develop language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.

- **Listen for unfair comments, behaviors, or actions** and address the behaviors honestly, directly and immediately. For example, *It makes Lauren feel sad when you tell her she cannot play with you. Or, All the children in our class can share these toys. It is not okay for you to tell someone they cannot play.*
- **Help children develop appropriate responses** when they experience themselves or others being treated unfairly. For instance, *Tell Mindy how that makes you feel. Say, “That makes me feel sad when you do that.”*
- **Give kids the language they need** to talk about unfairness. Ask children to express their ideas about fairness and sharing. Prompt children to talk about their feelings when they are treated unfairly. Discuss words or phrases that children can use to express their feelings and guide others to correct unfair behaviors. For example, *When we have our morning meeting, how can we make sure everyone gets a chance to share? Who has an idea how we can do that?*
- **Teach fairness as a basic classroom rule** to help children feel safe.

Introduce and View the Video

Tell participants they will see how the educators handle feelings and incidents that seem unfair.

Ask participants to look for effective strategies used by the educators in the video. Use these questions to guide their viewing:

- *What strategies do the educators use to teach about fairness and make it more understandable for young children?*
- *How do the educators help children respond when conflict arises?*



"Teach About Fairness"

(approx. 4 min)

Partner/Small Group Share

After viewing the video, get participants thinking, talking, and learning together.

- Invite participants to share with each other, in pairs or small groups, what they noticed as they watched. Challenge them to use the language stem *I noticed...* rather than *I liked...*
- Suggest that participants jot down notes, ideas, or questions in their Learning Log.

Review

Share and expand on key points covered in the video. Use the following questions and talking points in your discussion. Ask participants to offer examples from the video as well as to draw upon their own experiences.

Why is it difficult for children to understand the concept of fairness?

- Very young children are concrete thinkers. Fairness is an abstract concept.
- Children are naturally egocentric, so they tend to think of themselves first. They will identify a situation or action that works against them as unfair, but will have a more difficult time identifying an action they perform as unfair to others.

What strategies can be used to teach about fairness, and make it more understandable for young children?

- Have children brainstorm and role-play solutions such as trading toys, sharing, and playing together.
- Be attuned to children's interactions and be ready to respond immediately to incidents of unfairness.
- Identify and point out fair and unfair behaviors.
- Encourage a safe and secure atmosphere in which children feel free to express their feelings and ask questions.
- Make the idea of fairness concrete. Use images to inspire conversations about fairness.

How can educators help children respond appropriately when conflict arises?

- Address unfair behaviors honestly, directly, and immediately.
- Give children the language they need to talk about unfair treatment. Discuss words or phrases that children can use to express their feelings and guide others to correct unfair behaviors. As Cary says in the video, "It's really the teacher's job to find those little moments during the day and give support to the kids so they know what words to say."

View Again (optional)

Emphasize the key messages by showing the video a second time, if possible. Seeing the video again will give participants an opportunity to notice things they may have missed and to expand their learning.

Reflect

Help participants make the connection between what they have learned and what they do in their own program. Ask them to answer the reflection questions in the Learning Log.

Try It

(15–20 minutes)

The Try It activity helps educators plan how to apply new ideas to their own early childhood program. Ask participants to work with a partner and direct their attention to the Try It handout in their packets.

What Would You Do?

Have participants read the three scenarios on the handout and answer the questions that follow. Follow up with a Think-Pair-Share activity.

- Assign one question to each pair for in-depth discussion. Ask participants to:
 - **Think** about the question: *What is the unfair behavior described?*
 - **Pair** up with their partner to discuss: *What steps will you take to respond to each scenario?*
 - **Share** their thinking with the larger group: *What language would you model to help children:*
 - *Appreciate and acknowledge cultural diversity?*
 - *Value individuality and self-identity?*
 - *Express their feelings about being treated unfairly?*
 - *Recognize the hurtful behavior?*

Wrap Up

(5–10 minutes)

- Invite participants to complete the second half of the “Self-Assessment” and then measure their growth and learning.
- Ask participants to look over their notes from the training and jot down three things that they want to remember from today in their Learning Log.
- Invite partners or small groups to meet and share their three “keepers.” Then ask a few participants to share their “keepers” with the larger group.
- Thank participants for attending.
- Encourage them to fill out and return the Training Evaluation.

Glossary

cultural diversity: the different beliefs, religions, languages, family heritage, socio-economic background, and ethnicities in a group

ethnicity: a societal grouping based on place of origin of a person and his/her ancestors

linguistic diversity: the many different home languages spoken in a group

race: a societal grouping based on physical and biological characteristics that people share



Self-Assessment

Name: _____

Date: _____

Before the training: Place a ✓ in the box that best represents your current comfort level.

After the training: Place a ✓ in the box that best represents your new comfort level.

1 = Very uncomfortable 2 = Uncomfortable 3 = Neutral 4 = Comfortable 5 = Very comfortable

	Before					After				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
General I am comfortable with my ability to . . .										
Create an environment that encourages young children to see themselves as individuals separate and distinct from their peers.										
Support a learning environment in which children see themselves as part of a cohesive group.										
Foster a Sense of Self I am comfortable with my ability to . . .										
Nurture children’s development of their individual <i>and</i> group identities.										
Nurture children’s awareness of their own strengths, talents, and needs.										
Enable children to develop skills that help them work and play collaboratively and appropriately with one another.										
Celebrate Differences in Others I am comfortable with my ability to . . .										
Help children recognize and value differences and similarities in themselves and others.										
Give children the appropriate language to talk about differences.										
Discuss differences openly and frankly, responding promptly to expressions of bias.										
Teach About Fairness I am comfortable with my ability to . . .										
Teach children to recognize unfairness, and to reinforce that unfairness is hurtful.										
Help children respond to stereotypes and misconceptions that affect children’s ability to work and play well together.										
Supply and model the language children need to talk about unfairness appropriately.										



Learning Log

Foster a Sense of Self

View

In the video:

- *How do the educators nurture positive self-identity and group identity?*

- *How are everyday activities and routines used as opportunities to support a sense of self?*

Reflect

In your program:

- *How do you nurture self-identity and group identity?*

- *What did you learn that you will put into practice in your learning environment?*

Notes

Celebrate Differences in Others

View

In the video:

- *How do the educators help children see how they are alike and also how they are different?*

Reflect

In your program:

- *What strategies do you use to discuss individual differences among children in your learning environment?*

- *What did you learn that you will put into practice in your learning environment?*

Notes

Teach About Fairness

View

In the video:

- *What strategies do the educators use to teach about fairness and make it more understandable for young children?*

- *How do the educators help children respond when conflict arises?*

Reflect

In your program:

- *How do you teach about fairness?*

- *What did you learn that you will put into practice in your learning environment?*

Notes



Try It

What Would You Do?

How would you handle unfair, hurtful, or unaccepting comments in your program?

Read the three scenarios and answer the questions with each, below.

1. You are reading aloud a book about children of a different culture. As you discuss the book, a child says, "They don't have nice clothes like we do." Another says, "That's a funny-looking house."

How will you answer the comments?

How might a pre-reading discussion better prepare children for this cultural experience?

2. A boy says, "No girls in the block corner. Girls can't build big towers."

What will you say to the boy?

What will you say to the girls?

Try It (CONTINUED)

What might you discuss at circle time following this incident?

How will you solve the problem?

3. In one of the learning centers, a child comments, "Her hair is ugly. It's not pretty like mine."

What would you say to the child?

What would you say to the recipient of the comment?

What might you discuss at Circle Time following this incident?



Best Practices

Early childhood educators play an important role in a young child's life, not only by fostering developmental growth, but also by helping shape that child's identity and character. A major focus of that character building is teaching children to respect others—to celebrate our similarities and differences and treat each other with kindness and fairness. This is not something an educator can effectively address in an isolated lesson. Rather, it should happen every day, minute-to-minute, day in and day out—by continually fostering children's sense of self, helping children to recognize and honor our many differences (cultural, racial, ethnic, linguistic, and more), and developing an understanding of what it means to be fair and how unfairness hurts.

Foster a Sense of Self

To understand and respect others we must understand and respect ourselves. In their early years, children are just beginning to develop an identity of their own, and to recognize that they are individuals separate from others. You may notice this as children shift from referring to themselves in the third person ("Jarrod's truck!") to the use of the pronoun I. ("I want that truck!") It is vital that educators nurture this emerging sense of self-identity. Yet it is equally important to nurture a child's sense of belonging in the group. By creating a welcoming environment that respects diversity and celebrates differences between and among individuals and groups, educators help children develop self-confidence, self-esteem, a sense of belonging, a positive social identity, and interpersonal skills.

- **Nurture children's development** of both individual and group identities.
- **Nurture children's awareness** of their own strengths, talents, and needs.
- **Help children develop strategies** for getting help when they need it.
- **Treat learning as a social act** and teach children skills to work and play with others appropriately.

Why is it important to develop a positive sense of self and social identity early in a child's life?

- Each child learns to recognize herself/himself as a unique and special individual.
- Understanding and respecting others requires that you first understand and respect yourself.
- Recognizing and celebrating diversity within a group relies on individuals having a positive self-identity and then a positive group identity.

How can educators continuously help children develop a positive sense of self?

- Create a warm, welcoming, and nurturing environment.
- Emphasize the special abilities and qualities of individual children by pointing out their talents and strengths. Being recognized for a talent or skill, such as singing a song, writing letters, or building a great block structure, will make a child feel good about himself or herself.
- Acknowledge children's accomplishments and progress. For example, in the video, Denise commends children for their abilities to aim ramps at targets, balance objects, and cooperate with others.
- Find opportunities for positive feedback in everyday activities and routines.
- Celebrate children's family's traditions, cultures, and languages through conversations and activities. For example,
 - In the video, Denise uses home visits to get to know children's families. She celebrates the family by posting photographs of family members and talking about how all families are different, yet each is special.
 - Encourage children to share their family's customs and language during class discussions.
- Teach children strategies and interactions about helping others. For example,
 - Suggest that children work together to perform routine tasks (*Who can help Maria put away the blocks?*)
 - Ask for volunteers to help you or others in the classroom.
 - Encourage children to ask for help from, and offer help to, one another.

How can everyday activities and routines be opportunities to develop a child's self and group identity?

- Welcome children each day to the group by singing songs or chants.
- Use small group meetings to have children tell what they know, what they are good at, what their interests are.
- Assign "jobs" (such as line leader, door holder) so children feel like a valuable member of the group.
- Give children a chance to express their thoughts, ideas, and opinions about books during read-aloud sessions.

- Listen to and talk about music and art from around the world, including children's home cultures.
- Have books and other materials available that explore or represent different cultures and traditions, old and new.

Celebrate Differences in Others

As children develop their self-identities, they should also be learning acceptance of themselves and others—that each of us are alike and each of us are different, and that we are all valuable in our own way. Educators can convey this message of acceptance by highlighting the ways in which children are alike and different from their peers. Help children see the richness in their diversity.

- **Help children understand how they are different and alike**—in skin color, body size and shape, hairstyles or textures, home languages, clothing, foods, holidays, and so on.
- **Prompt children to express their thoughts and ideas about differences** through planned conversations using pictures, questions, or books. Show diverse cultures, languages, and traditions; girls or boys or men and women in nontraditional roles; or differently-abled children and adults demonstrating strengths and abilities. Explore universal themes with images of children of different cultures.
- **Give children the appropriate language to talk about differences in a respectful way.** When children make hurtful or insensitive comments about others, model language that acknowledges the difference in an open and honest way, while deflecting negative connotations. For example, when a child asks, *Why does Joseph have a weird arm?* Respond, *Everyone has differences in their bodies. Joseph has a different arm. It's not okay to say that Joseph has a weird arm because that hurts his feelings. It is okay to say that Joseph has a different arm.*
- **Respond to expressions of dislike or bias immediately** with positive, kind, and explanatory language. For example, Yes, David wears glasses. He is lucky because he can see better when he has them on. Or, Marisol knows the words to that song in Spanish. Let's ask her to teach us the words she knows. When a hurtful statement is made, do not confront the child who said it to make him or her feel uncomfortable. Gently correct the statement. The child will learn more appropriate ways to express his or her opinions or observations.

Why is it important for educators to take note of and talk openly about diversity?

- Children are concrete thinkers. They recognize when a peer looks different, speaks another language, or is differently-abled.
- By talking about differences openly, educators can teach children how to acknowledge and celebrate them.
- A frank discussion of differences, when carefully planned and skillfully taught, can help children see diversity as valuable and important.

How can educators model appropriate responses to issues of human differences?

- Use language that acknowledges the child's observation. For instance, if a child says "Carlos talks funny," respond, *Carlos is learning to speak English. Saying that he "talks funny" can hurt his feelings. Maybe you could help Carlos learn some more words in English and he could help you learn some words in Spanish.*
- Choose words that help children see differences as "normal" human characteristics so that they learn how to treat those differences with respect. *(Everyone has differences. Isabelle has a different way of walking. It's not okay to say that Isabelle walks funny because that hurts her feelings. It is okay to say that Isabelle walks differently.)*

What is the long-term benefit of teaching about diversity?

- Children learn to see and appreciate the similarity and the diversity of humans in their world.
- Children will grow to be more accepting of their own and others' differences.
- Celebrating diversity helps children recognize and reject bias against race, language, culture, gender, abilities, and so on.

Teach About Fairness

Children need to learn about fairness and recognize how and when being unfair is hurtful. This lays a foundation for developing empathy and sensitivity that will, in turn, help prevent bullying. But fairness can be a difficult concept for very young children because it is abstract. Young children are often egocentric thinkers, and tend to see the world from their own perspective. So when they say "That's not fair," it's because *they* don't like the outcome. Educators can teach children that fairness involves thinking of others, too. Help children to recognize unfairness, develop language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.

- **Listen for unfair comments, behaviors, or actions** and address the behaviors honestly, directly and immediately. For example, *It makes Lauren feel sad when you tell her she cannot play with you. Or, All the children in our class can share these toys. It is not okay for you to tell someone they cannot play.*
- **Help children develop appropriate responses** when they experience themselves or others being treated unfairly. For instance, *Tell Mindy how that makes you feel. Say, "That makes me feel sad when you do that."*
- **Give kids the language they need** to talk about unfairness. Ask children to express their ideas about fairness and sharing. Prompt children to talk about their feelings when they are treated unfairly. Discuss words or phrases that children can use to express their feelings and guide others to correct unfair behaviors. For example, *When we have our morning meeting, how can we make sure everyone gets a chance to share? Who has an idea how we can do that?*
- **Teach fairness as a basic classroom rule** to help children feel safe.

Why is it difficult for children to understand the concept of fairness?

- Very young children are concrete thinkers. Fairness is an abstract concept.
- Children are naturally egocentric, so they tend to think of themselves first. They will identify a situation or action that works against them as unfair, but will have a more difficult time identifying an action they perform as unfair to others.

What strategies can be used to teach about fairness, and make it more understandable for young children?

- Have children brainstorm and role-play solutions such as trading toys, sharing, and playing together.
- Be attuned to children's interactions and be ready to respond immediately to incidents of unfairness.
- Identify and point out fair and unfair behaviors.
- Encourage a safe and secure atmosphere in which children feel free to express their feelings and ask questions.
- Make the idea of fairness concrete. Use images to inspire conversations about fairness.

How can educators help children respond appropriately when conflict arises?

- Address unfair behaviors honestly, directly, and immediately.
- Give children the language they need to talk about unfair treatment. Discuss words or phrases that children can use to express their feelings and guide others to correct unfair behaviors. As Cary says in the video, “It’s really the teacher’s job to find those little moments during the day and give support to the kids so they know what words to say.”

Glossary

cultural diversity: the different beliefs, religions, languages, family heritage, socio-economic background, and ethnicities in a group

ethnicity: a societal grouping based on place of origin of a person and his/her ancestors

linguistic diversity: the many different home languages spoken in a group

race: a societal grouping based on physical and biological characteristics that people share

View the self-paced video workshop at <http://resourcesforearlylearning.org/educators>.



Standards

This professional development training module is aligned to Massachusetts standards and guidelines.

Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

Center and School Based:

- **Curriculum and Learning 1A: Curriculum, Assessment, and Diversity: Level 2**
Materials reflect the language and culture of the children in the classroom, their communities, and represent the diversity of society; Staff demonstrate language and literacy skills either in English or the child's language that provide a model for children.
- **Curriculum and Learning 1A: Curriculum, Assessment, and Diversity: Level 3**
Program uses progress reports, appropriate screening tools, formative assessments, and information gathered through observation to inform curriculum planning, and use results to monitor each child's progress across developmental domains.
- **Curriculum and Learning 1B: Teacher-Child Relationships and Interactions: Level 2**
All staff receive orientation and ongoing formal professional development and supervision in how to support positive relationships and interactions through positive, warm and nurturing interactions.
- **Curriculum and Learning 1B: Teacher-Child Relationships and Interactions: Level 3**
Staff engage children in meaningful conversations, use open-ended questions and provide opportunities throughout the day to scaffold their development of more complex receptive and expressive language, support children's use of language to share ideas, problem solve and have positive peer interactions.
- **Curriculum and Learning 1B: Teacher-Child Relationships and Interactions: Level 4**
Staff utilizes teaching strategies that ensure a positive classroom environment, engage children in learning and promote critical thinking skills.

Family Child Care:

- **Curriculum and Learning 1A: Curriculum, Assessment, and Diversity: Level 2**
Materials reflect the language and culture of the children in the family child care home, their communities, and represent the diversity of society.
- **Curriculum and Learning 1B: Teacher-Child Relationships and Interactions: Level 2**
Educator has participated in formal professional development on how to support

positive relationships and interactions with children through positive, warm and nurturing interactions.

- **Curriculum and Learning 1B: Teacher-Child Relationships and Interactions: Level 4** Educators engage children in meaningful conversations, as age and developmentally appropriate, use open-ended questions and provide opportunities throughout the day to scaffold their language to support the development of more complex receptive and expressive language, support children's use of language to share ideas, problem solve and have positive peer interactions; Educators utilize teaching strategies that ensure a positive learning environment, engage children in learning and promote critical thinking skills.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

Guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Practice:

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning B.2** Teachers continually gather information about children in a variety of ways and monitor each child's learning and development to make plans to help children progress.
- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning E.4** Teachers provide experiences, materials, and interactions to enable children to engage in play that allows them to stretch their boundaries to the fullest in their imagination, language, interaction, and self-regulation as well as to practice their newly acquired skills.
- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning F.2** To stimulate children's thinking and extend their learning, teachers pose problems, ask questions, and make comments and suggestions.
- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning F.3** To extend the range of children's interests and the scope of their thought, teachers present novel experiences and introduce stimulating ideas, problems, experiences, or hypotheses.
- **(3) Planning curriculum to achieve important goals A.1** Teachers consider what children should know, understand, and be able to do across the domains of physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development and across the disciplines, including language, literacy, mathematics, social studies, science, art, music, physical education, and health.
- **(3) Planning curriculum to achieve important goals D.1** Teachers plan curriculum experiences that integrate children's learning within and across the domains (physical, social, emotional, cognitive) and the disciplines (including language, literacy, mathematics, social studies, science, art, music, physical education, and health).

Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy

Speaking and Listening Standards for Pre-Kindergarteners:

- **Comprehension and Collaboration MA.1** Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners during daily routines and play.
- **Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas MA.6** Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas.



Training Evaluation

Thank you for your participation. Please indicate your impressions of the training below.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The training met my expectations.					
I will be able to apply what I have learned.					
The trainer was knowledgeable.					
The training was organized and easy to follow.					
Participation and interaction was encouraged.					
The handouts were pertinent and useful.					

1. How would you rate this training overall?

Excellent *Good* *Average* *Poor*

2. What was most beneficial to you in this training?

3. What suggestions do you have to improve this training?