



# Helping Early Educators Un-Learn Implicit Biases through Professional Development Activities

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# Agenda

- Introductions
- Activity
- Why is this an issue?
- Overview of implicit bias
- Impact of implicit bias on educational practices
- General strategies to reduce bias in
- Small Group Activity

# Activity

- Complete the implicit bias test:  
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- Discussion:
  - How did you feel when you were taking the test?
  - Did the results surprise you? How so?
  - How many of you think you have implicit bias now?



Studies spanning 40 years show that African American children are up to four times more likely to be suspended than White students

(Bradshaw et al., 2010; Children's Defense Fund, 1975; Milner, 2013; Skiba et al., 2011).



- 5,000 preschoolers were suspended at least once and nearly 2,500 were suspended a second time.
- ***African Americans:*** 18 percent of the preschool population, but 48% of suspensions
- ***Boys:*** 49% of the preschool population, but 82% of all suspensions
- ***Children with disabilities:*** disproportionately suspended

(United States Department of Education, 2014).



The New OCR (2016)  
*Patterns of racial and gender  
disproportionality:*

- ***African American boys:*** 54% of the preschool population, but 78% of those suspended
- ***African American girls:*** 20% of preschool female population, but 54% of girls suspended from preschool
- ***African American preschoolers:*** 3.6 times more likely to be suspended than their White peers



# What is Implicit Bias?

- Activated involuntarily (i.e., individual not aware of biases)
- Pervasive and robust
- Does not necessarily align with our declared beliefs
- Malleable, but can be unlearned and replaced with new mental associations

(Beattie, et al., 2013; Blair, 2002; Blair, Ma, & Lenton, 2001; Clark & Zygmont, 2014; Dasgupta, 2013; Dasgupta & Greenwald, 2001; Devine, 1989; Graham & Lowery, 2004; Greenwald & Krieger, 2006; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998; Kang, 2009; Kang & Lane, 2010; Kang, et al., 2012; Kang & Lane, 2010; Nosek, Smyth, et al., 2007; Rachlinski, Johnson, Wistrich, & Guthrie, 2009; Ross, Lebrecht, Tanaka, & Tarr, 2013; Rudman, 2004)



# Implicit Bias in Education

- Implicit bias exacerbates inequalities and creates a “vicious cycle” of racially disproportionate practices
- Research on school-age children has identified concerning trends that show how implicit bias effects **teachers’ instructional practices, interactions with students, school discipline, and special education eligibility and placement decisions.**





# 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



**Michael I. Norton**





# Need for Professional Development

- These attitudes and implicit biases are malleable (Kang & Banaji, 2016) and under the control of individuals, which suggests that supports are needed to change the impact of implicit bias on the educational experiences of Black children.



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Examining data  
to identify  
disparities

02

Having  
conversations  
about race

03

Designing  
interventions  
to address  
implicit bias

04

Multi-  
component  
implicit bias-  
reducing  
intervention

05

Improving  
teacher  
preparation  
and education

# Professional Development Strategies

# Examining data to identify disparities

## Preparation – Plan to Succeed

- Define purpose and the issue
- Identify who needs to be involved
- Timelines
- Identify relevant questions
- Identify relevant data
- Generate hypotheses

## Evidence – Dig Into Data

- Analyze the data
- Develop methods and materials for displaying the data

## Action – Contribute to Success

- Celebrate success
- Develop & implement improvement plans
- Evaluate progress

## Inference – Interpret & Share With Others

- Share data materials
- Check support for hypotheses
- Connect inferences with root causes



# Having Conversations about Race

- Facilitates discussions about race within educational settings
- Use of de-biasing strategies (e.g., taking perspective of another, stereotype replacement)
- Issues with a colorblind perspective
- Conditions that need to be in place for self-reflection and unlearning of biases to be successful include **intention, attention, and time.**





# Having Conversations about Race

- Promote reflection about ways to lessen racial inequality and unequal treatment in everyday practices and interactions
- Provide readings and dialogue related to the history of racial inequity in schools, and the factors that lead to lack of educational opportunities for minority groups
- Ask educators hard questions

# Designing Interventions to Address Implicit Bias

- High-quality professional development activities help teachers:
  - develop more supportive relationships with students;
  - create bias-free classrooms and schools;
  - implement problem-solving approaches to discipline;
  - encourage students' participation in school activities;
  - recognize the importance of families; and
  - facilitate community engagement.



# Multi-Component Implicit Bias Reducing Intervention

- Multi-faceted prejudice habit-breaking intervention
- Provides teachers and administrators with a toolkit of strategies that are practiced on a weekly basis to reduce biases
- Before the intervention, all teachers and school personnel take the Black-White Implicit Association Test (IAT) to prompt self-reflection about biases.
- Five strategies then are provided.
- Examples are given about how they might be used in everyday situations.



# Multi-Component Implicit Bias Reducing Intervention

Strategy	Description
<b>Stereotype replacement</b>	Teachers recognize that their response is based on stereotypes. They label the response, reflect on why it occurred, and determine how to avoid the response in the future.
<b>Counter-stereotypic imaging</b>	Individuals keep positive exemplars accessible to challenge a stereotype.
<b>Individuation</b>	Individuals work to prevent stereotypic inferences by gaining information about individuals.
<b>Perspective-taking</b>	Individuals take the perspective of another person within the stereotyped group to reduce the occurrence of group-based evaluations.
<b>Increasing opportunities for contact</b>	Individuals seek out opportunities to interact positively with out group members.

Figure 1. Implicit Bias Habit-Reducing Strategies (Devine et al., 2012)

# Small Group Activity

- General Strategies:
  - Choose at least three strategies and create steps for implementing them
  - Create an action plan for changing attitudes within your classroom, program, school, district, or state
- Multi-component Implicit Bias Reducing Interventions
  - Think about each of these strategies and how you can use them to reduce implicit bias within your classrooms, program, school, district, or state
  - Create steps for implementing each strategy and create an action plan.

# Large Group Discussion

- Share ideas/thoughts/action plan with the larger group

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