



2021 Early Learning Conference *Creating Anti-Bias/Anti-Racist Early Childhood Spaces*

Presenter: Dr. Rosemarie Allen

Reflection and Planning for Professional Action

Reflection Questions

In the keynote presentation with Dr. Rosemarie Allen, we learned about the critical role of relationships in early learning spaces, and we considered several factors that can disrupt, harm, or get in the way of meaningful connections with children. The following questions provide an opportunity to reflect on the keynote presentation and how presented information can guide and inspire our interactions with children, families, and coworkers in our early learning spaces.



Dr. Allen described several examples of factors in the early learning environment that can disrupt the brain-heart connection so critical to learning. These elements and/or behaviors can feel unsafe or even hostile for children. If the environment feels hostile or unsafe, the body releases hormones which lead to fight, flight, or freezing behaviors. **What is an example of a teacher-led behavior in the early learning classroom that could feel unsafe for children?**

In addition to behaviors and environmental aspects that we can observe, there are other factors that can lead to unsafe learning environments for children. One key concern is **implicit bias**, defined as unconscious, mental processes that result in feelings and attitudes about people who we perceive to be different from ourselves.



Dr. Allen described several examples of areas where we might have implicit bias, or mental processes related to people we who perceive to be different from ourselves. **What are three examples of perceived differences that could be vulnerable to implicit biases?**

Dr. Allen referred to the **Ladder of Inference** in describing the process through which implicit biases are activated.

<p>THE LADDER OF INFERENCE</p> <p>I TAKE ACTIONS BASED ON MY BELIEFS</p> <p>I ADOPT BELIEFS ABOUT THE WORLD</p> <p>I DRAW CONCLUSIONS</p> <p>I MAKE ASSUMPTIONS (BASED ON THE MEANINGS I ADDED)</p> <p>I ADD MEANINGS (CULTURAL & PERSONAL)</p> <p>I SELECT "DATA" FROM WHAT I OBSERVE</p> <p><i>Peter Senge - from The Fifth Discipline</i></p> <p>* Our beliefs affect what data we select next time.</p>	<p>Using the steps along the Ladder of Inference, describe an example of a classroom/learning space interaction between an educator and a child that could lead to implicit biases.</p>
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	<p>To address the cycle of implicit bias, Dr. Allen noted, "Aware is halfway there," and she provided three steps to disrupt the influence of implicit bias. What are these three steps?</p>
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	<p>Dr. Allen shared about her own experience as Black mother of a son who was out late at night. She shared this as a way to demonstrate how a "Race Neutral" perspective is not antibias. In fact, she argued, a race neutral perspective is harmful to an anti-racism commitment. Please explore this idea: why does a commitment to antiracism require that we see and talk about race?</p>
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	<p>What are some of the daily acts of bias in early learning spaces? Why are these harmful to the heart-brain connection required for meaningful learning?</p>
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	<p>How does the idea of Cultural Humility help early learning educators to create safe spaces for children to grow, learn, and connect?</p>
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	<p>Applying new ideas into action is an ongoing process. Based on the presentation and your initial reflections, what stands out to you as one action you can take in order to ensure the healthy, heart-brain connection necessary for children's learning?</p>
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Planning for Professional Action

In her presentation, Dr. Allen noted that antiracism is a verb that requires ongoing reflection, learning, and action. Applying new ideas into action is an ongoing process. To get started, please consider the following ideas and what you currently understand about the concept (*What do I know?*). Next, consider why and how it matters to children and adults in your program (*Why does it matter?*) That is, what impact does this have on relationships, curriculum, and learning? Finally, take a moment to consider what you might need in order to take action (Examples might include time, resources, additional training, etc.).

Focusing on Learning Spaces

What do I know?	Why does it matter to those in my learning space?	What do I need in order to take action?
Implicit bias		
Daily acts of bias in early learning spaces		
Moving away from race-neutral ideology		
Talking about race with children		
Talking about race with families		
Talking about race with co-workers		

Focusing on Relationships

We have learned that there are elements within early learning spaces that can disrupt or harm our relationships with children. These relationships are critical for learning. Consider how you will begin to address and implement the key aspects of an antibias and antiracist learning environment in your own early learning setting.

Key aspect to an antibias and antiracist learning environment	Steps I can take to address this
Learning the names and the correct way to pronounce names of the children in my early learning space	
Including all children in classroom engagement, such as calling on children to share ideas or to answer questions	
Focusing on the strengths and contributions of the diverse families I serve	
Resisting stereotypes and assumptions about the families I serve	
Acknowledging children's ways of being based on strengths and contributions instead of labeling actions as defiant or challenging	
Acknowledging my own assumptions that might lead to implicit biases by taking steps to Notice, Wonder Why , and to use that information to Change Behavior	
Participating in community events and activities so that I have the chance to get to know the families I serve	
Creating opportunities to learn how children would respond to, "I wish my teacher knew..."	

Additional Resources:

NAEYC: [Understanding Anti-Bias Education: Bringing the Four Goals to Every Facet of Your Curriculum](#)

Teaching for Change: [Anti-Bias Education—Resources and Next Steps](#)

Learning for Justice: [Talking about Race and Identity in Early Childhood](#)

CLERC: [Children's Literature to Support Conversations about Race, Identity, and Anti-Racism](#)