

Resource Guide

Reflecting on Racism and Bias in Early Childhood Settings: Critical Reflective Practice Guide for Coaches and Teachers

Introduction

In early 2021, police officers in Rochester, New York responded to a call to assist a family in trouble. Instead of helping, officers arrested and pepper sprayed a 9-year-old girl Black when she did not want to sit in a police car and be separated from her parents. An officer was recorded saying, “Stop acting like a child!” to which the girl replies, “I am a child”.

Black girls should be sacred, worthy, and loved, but as the above incident indicates, they are often treated in ways that are contradictory to these ideas. Unfortunately, this unfair treatment of Black girls also happens in educational settings. Take for example the story of 6-year-old Madisyn Moore who was handcuffed and placed under the stairs to “teach her a lesson” after she took candy from her teacher’s desk (Roussi, 2016). Often these drastic responses to Black girls are rooted in unconscious beliefs about race, gender, and childhood that lead to harmful assumptions about Black girls. Bias within the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECE) system leads to harmful disparities for children of color. For example, in 2014, Black girls represented 19% of the preschool population but accounted for 54% of preschool discipline cases (Civil Rights Data Collection, 2014). Although there is a need for overall systemic changes to address and eliminate disparities, it is also useful to address educators’ beliefs and values that are harmful to many children. Critical reflection on ideas about race, ethnicity, gender, and culture is necessary to becoming aware of and unlearning bias.

For many years ECE classrooms and programs adopted a colorblind approach to teaching that centered around the belief that every child is the same. Often topics like race, ethnicity, oppression and privilege are left unaddressed. Some educators may avoid these topics in hopes to avoid conflict or fear of sounding or appearing to be prejudiced. It can be a daunting task to learn a new skill especially when the previous behavior can potentially cause harm. This Resource Guide is intended to help educators become more self-aware in order to build a new skill set that provides education and care that is culturally responsive and anti-biased. This process begins with an understanding of bias that has been built into our systems and narratives, personal biases, and how these show up in daily interactions with young children and their families.

As the ECE profession moves toward a focus on mental health, it is time to center the practice of reflecting on how our beliefs about race, gender, and culture impact the children, families, and communities we serve. ECE professionals’ beliefs about how girls should behave often impact how they interact with the girls in their care. Researchers at the Georgetown Law School recently found that adults overwhelmingly believe that Black girls are less in need of nurturing and protection, and are more adult, than White girls their same age (Epstein, Blake, & González, 2017). These beliefs lead adults to interact with Black girls in ways that hold them unfairly responsible for behaviors that are beyond the realistic expectations for their

chronological age and developmental stage. Critical reflective practice can be a useful tool for mitigating anti-Black and gender bias by providing for more insight and understanding as to how our belief systems and socialization impact our daily practices.

Critical Reflection for ECE Teachers

What is critical teacher reflection?

Critical reflection is both an intellectual and emotional practice meant to identify and change behavior. Critical reflective practice moves beyond individual self-reflection to understanding your own identity within a social and political context. “Critical reflection attempts to look at reflection within moral, political, and ethical contexts of teaching. Issues pertaining to equity, access, and social justice are ascribed to critical reflection” (Howard, 2003, p#). This is not meant to be a shaming of beliefs but a revelation of why these are not working for children and families. As dedicated educators move through this process it is meant to ignite a process of change through reflection and ultimately bring about action.

Critical reflective practice provides educators with the tools to question the ways culture and bias impact teachers’ daily practices and children’s learning process. Critical reflective practice also builds the capacity of the educator to provide culturally responsive and anti-bias care. Critical reflective practice is a framework that begins with the building blocks of critical self-reflection. These building blocks allow educators to explore personal/professional beliefs, values, and biases; the impact of culture and power on relationships; the relevance of understanding the experiences of others (Hays, 2001). Asking and answering questions such as: Who am I? How does what I believe impact the children in my care? In what ways does how and what I teach impact the children in my care? Who is represented, underrepresented, misrepresented, and/or invisible? are ways to begin the critical reflective practice process and bring about important and sustainable change in the ways children are treated.

How to use this Guide

A first step in developing a critical reflective stance is learning to consider your own identity, beliefs, assumptions and how they influence your current practices with children. To facilitate that process, this Resource Guide provides a set of reflective questions for each building block to...Following the Building Blocks Reflection, this Guide asks users to consider the real world implication of using a singular lens when interacting with Black girls and their families. Each case study is followed by guiding reflection questions and a reflective analysis that are designed to provide a review of the reflective process. Lastly, additional tools are provided to guide the user in reflecting in the moment and reflecting with others. The practices outlined in this Guide can be applied to many children, but this resource is intended to address the gap in interventions targeted for Black, Indigenous, and other girls of color. Questions that facilitate critical reflection are included in this resource.

Key Concepts

Often when early education professionals are asked to begin a new learning process it also comes with a new set of vocabulary. To lay a foundation of shared understanding this Guide provides a summary of terms that are often used in equity work and that will be used throughout this guide. For example, when engaging in self-reflection we often consider our **positionality** which is all the pieces that make up who we are both socially and politically; which may include race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability. There are also identity markers that grow and change as we develop like our professional identity, marriage status, parenting roles, among others.

In critical reflective practice, **race** is viewed as a socially constructed concept meant to separate and falsely rank people as inferior and superior. Scientists agree race has no biological foundation and technically there is one human race. Although this is true, we have inherited a racially biased hierarchy system that has had grim consequences particularly for Black, Indigenous, and people of color. Often certain groups -- namely Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian and Pacific Islanders -- have been treated as inferior and with less humanity than their White counterparts. This racially based bias has resulted in White people as a group being advantaged. In the U.S, skin color and hair texture have been major indicators of these groupings.

Gender is the social and often visual expression of masculine and feminine identities. Historically, women have experienced discrimination and bias based on the biased belief systems that view women and girls as inferior to boys and men. When someone occupies identities of both an oppressed race and gender, the intersection creates a unique experience based on societal stereotypes of both groups. For example, Black girls are more often disciplined for hairstyle choice (i.e., wearing braids, locs, and head wraps) than their Black male peers and their White female peers. Although they share identity markers with both groups, the intersection of being Black and a girl creates a unique experience of oppression. The concept of intersecting identities and oppressions is referred to as **intersectionality**.

Historical trauma refers to major events in history, such as the enslaving of African people, the violent colonization of Native American people, and the Holocaust, that have resulted in psychological and emotional trauma for these communities. This shared multigenerational trauma experienced by a specific cultural, racial, or ethnic group can also be caused by the perpetual destruction of culture such as when children and families are not permitted to speak in their native language at school. These historical, social, and political traumas need to be considered as we reflect on the current realities facing children in our care. Understanding the impact of our own positionality and the positionality of the children in our care is important to fully be able to create learning experiences that do not replicate inequities experienced in broader society.

Reflective Guide: The Building Blocks of Critical Reflection

The critical reflection process calls for educators, coaches, and all who care for children to consider the following elements in the reflection process: (1) Who I am and what I know; (2) Experiences and knowledge of others; (3) Literature and theories relevant to my work; (4) Relevant social and political context; and (5) My Own Behavior. The following table provides guiding reflection questions for each step of reflection .

Building Blocks of Critical Reflection	Purpose	Questions to Prompt Reflection
Who I am and what I know	To understand how your positionality influences the children you work with in either positive or negative ways.	Who am I? What do I believe? Does who I am and what I believe have ramifications for students? How do my values influence my responses to this event? How do my own values, experiences with oppression, or power influence my response to this event? What does my culture, family say about this topic?
Experiences and knowledge of others	To acknowledge the historical and modern roots of Race. To acknowledge Racial Trauma.	In what ways should I consider historical racial, gender-based, linguistic, or religious trauma? In what ways are stereotypes and negative discourse showing up in this interaction?
	To maintain curiosity about how children, families, and communities experience education.	In what ways have I considered the perspectives of the parents and the child? How is this evident in my response to this event and my interactions? Who is represented, underrepresented, misrepresented, and/or invisible? Consider language, culture, gender, or race. In what ways does intersectionality apply to this situation?
Literature and theories relevant to my work	To question the theories that you have been taught as an educator. Self-educate on	What does the child development theory I was taught tell me about this situation? Does this theory apply to all children? What other theories might help me understand what has happened? What teaching theory can be applied like Culturally Relevant Practices

	relevant cultural and linguistic knowledge.	and/or Anti-bias Education?
Social and political context	To consider societal expectations, bias, stereotypes, and policy context.	<p>Are there any written or unwritten expectations that are specific to race, gender, or language?</p> <p>Are there policies in my learning space that are sex-specific?</p> <p>Are there accommodations for gender non-conforming students?</p> <p>Do any policies target specific racial, ethnic, or religious groups? (such as dreadlocks, cornrows, hijabs, African prints)</p> <p>Can students be disciplined for not following the dress code?</p>
Self Check after an interaction		
My Behavior	Reflect on the ways your reaction or actions towards children may be influenced by bias.	<p>How does who I am impact my behavior?</p> <p>Is my reaction about behavior management or building/maintaining relationships with the children in my care?</p> <p>Have I used coded language like referring to certain behaviors as ladylike or considering certain hairstyles as “neat” or “kept”</p>

Real World Applications

Often conversations around anti-racist teaching are theoretical. The following examples are designed to provide real life situations and action steps for developing a reflective stance in order to implement anti-bias and anti-racist teaching. Many people of color have a pivotal educational experience in which they wished an adult responded more reflectively and with consciousness of the implications of race, gender, and bias. Consider the following vignettes based on real life experiences of children. Each vignette first describes the interaction, followed by specific questions for each step in the reflection process, and finally a synopsis is given of a potential reflective approach to the situation. Some vignettes end with a description of the real-life event that prompted the vignette in the words of the person who experienced it.

Controlling Black Girls Bodies

Naima is a quiet 7-year-old second-grader. She wears her hair in two afro puff balls and likes to wear overalls. One day her teacher Ms. Ramirez was finishing up directions for the next assignment and split the class into 5 groups. Naima was placed in the group with the kids who talk a lot because Ms. Ramirez said Naima would help them keep on task since she is so quiet. Naima moved tables to be with her group and realized she had to use the bathroom, so she raised her hand and asked to be excused. Ms. Ramirez said, “Naima, please wait until you are done working with your group before you leave the classroom”. Naima could not wait so she asked again, “Can I please use the bathroom”? Ms. Ramirez looked at her suspiciously and said, please work with your group first Naima then you may leave. One minute later Naima used the bathroom on herself in her chair in front of her peers. She put her head down on the table and cried. Naima went home and told her aunt, “Ms. Ramirez doesn't like me because I am Black. She only likes the Mexican kids. She thinks the Black kids only get into trouble”.

Building Blocks of Critical Reflection: Sample Guiding Questions

Who I am & What I Know?

What do I believe about children who ask to leave the classroom? How do my race, sex, gender, and upbringing impact my response? What does my family and culture say about how girls should behave and the expectations of them to be good? What does my culture and family say about how Black children behave? Does who I am and what I believe have ramifications for students? How do my own values, experiences with oppression, or power influence my response to this event?

Experiences and knowledge of others

How are the histories of Black women and girls being controlled impacting Jasmine's experience in my class? How can I learn more about the history of Black women and girls?

In what ways have I considered Naima's perspective? How have my beliefs about Naima's temperament caused me to not see her needs?

Literature and theories relevant to my work:

Developmental theory tells me that children by age 7 can should be able to hold their urine for multiple hours. Does this western view of child development apply to all children? My teacher education program taught me to restrict children's ability to use the bathroom to only their free time. Does this western view of teacher education apply to all children? What other literature or theories will provide me with different viewpoints about child development? What does literature on culturally responsive teaching say about classroom management?

Social and political context:

Do most 2nd grade classrooms have bathrooms? What does that tell us about what is valued and expected in early elementary grades? Does this place an emphasis on time use that is not suitable for all children/cultures? How have I addressed racial and ethnic differences in my class? Have I been culturally reflective in my classroom culture? Have I been anti-bias in the ways I teach and treat children in my classroom?

Critical Reflective Analysis:

As a Mexican woman, Ms. Ramirez often feels like she is being taken advantage of. As a child, I was taught that it was important to follow directions and for girls to be compliant. Ms. Ramirez wants to be viewed as a good teacher who has control over her class. She feels that if her students are always going to the bathroom the principal might give her low marks on her review. She learned from her master teacher during pre-service work that children who ask to use the bathroom are trying to get out of doing their work. Often children are not allowed to use the bathroom in class as teachers believe they are trying to get out of doing assignments or are looking to get into trouble.

In Her Own Words

Naima- "I was in second grade and she was Hispanic. And I asked her if I can work with the other kids. Cuz she just had me like in a different group...Cuz I didn't do nothing wrong or nothing. And then I asked her, if I can go use the restroom and she was like no you can't do nothing. I'll never forget that day I asked to use the bathroom and she was like no I cannot use the restroom. So, I was just sitting there, sitting there, then I asked her again can I use the restroom she said no. So, then I had an accident, and then everybody was making fun of me and stuff. And then I had to move my color down to red...But I was innocent. I was just shy. And I wasn't like outspoken like I am now. So, like I was just I was like shy inside the box shy but at

home it was a whole different other me. And ever since then, I've spoken and learned that I should speak up for myself.

Hard Histories

Hard histories begin with the American legacy of the enslavement of African people and include the forced migration of Native people from their land. If not approached sensitively, competently, and developmentally appropriate classroom discussions on this topic may do more harm than good. Black children's sense of self can be impacted if they are constantly being taught that their cultural heritage begins with powerlessness. Hard histories may spark children's curiosity in ways that teachers do not intend. White children are at a high risk of developing an inflated sense of self if they are consistently presented with materials in which people from their cultural heritage were in positions of power. It is important for teachers to identify if their lesson is developmentally appropriate, sensitive to the impact it may have on children of color, and if the message needs to come from them or another trusted source. Consider the following real world example of a teacher attempting to address hard history in a third grade classroom.

Mr. Tooms planned an in-depth lesson about friendship for his emerging third-grade class. Since it was the beginning of the year, he wanted the children to learn what it takes to be a good friend. He chooses a book that tells the story of an unlikely friendship between a northern and southern soldier during the civil war written by an award-winning children's book author. As he is reading the story a white girl with wavy blonde hair raises her hand and points to the only African American girl in the class and asks, "So you're telling me, if we lived in that time, I would OWN that girl over there?" Mr. Tooms looks surprised and responds, "It is not nice to say that girl over there. We have to use each other's names if we are going to be friends". Kendall turned to Ariel and said, "So would I own Ariel if we lived back then". Mr. Tooms looked away and continued reading the story. He does not address Kendall's question any further. Ariel looks to the ground with tears in her eyes.

Building Blocks of Critical Reflection: Sample Guiding Questions

Who I am & What I Know-

Who am I? In what ways does my identity (race, gender, class) impact my reaction to the example? What do I believe about the topics/concepts children are able to understand? How do my own experiences with privilege and power influence my response to Kendall? What has my family taught me about discussing the period of enslavement? Does who I am and what I believe have consequences for Ariel or Kendall?

Experiences and knowledge of others- In what ways has this teacher considered the perspectives of the children in the classroom? How is Ariel impacted? How are other children in the classroom impacted by this event? What might the children have learned from what I said and did not say? How does discussing the period of enslavement impact the learning experience and connection between the Black and White children?

Literature and theories relevant to my work- What does developmental theory tell me about the themes presented in the book? Children in this age group are intimately focused on who they are in relation to others. What does the literature on anti-bias/anti-racist teaching say about discussing complex moments in history? How can I frame the civil war and the period of enslavement in a way that cares for the identity/esteem of all children?

Social and political context- Do most of the books in my class that have Black characters center on Black people's struggle. Are White characters mostly shown in positions of power? What does this say about who is valued in the US, in my classroom? Do any books in my class or lessons focus on Black people's agency or joy?

Critical Reflective Analysis:

As a White teacher, Mr. Tooms overlooked the potential shift in power dynamics that may have occurred in his classroom after reading about the period of enslavement. He tried to take a racially complex book and focus on a neutral theme like friendship. Black children's sense of self can be impacted if they are being taught that their ancestors were consistently at the whim of their White counterparts. White children are at a high risk of developing an inflated sense of self if they are consistently presented with materials in which their ancestors were in positions of power. Bettina Love cautions educators to consider the spirit murder of young Black children who are overlooked and underrepresented in classroom curriculum. Developmental theory indicates this book may be advanced for first-month third graders. The anti-Bias approach encourages educators to directly establish their position that slavery in all forms is wrong and the people carrying it out were not being fair or kind they were being mean. When teaching about Black history it is necessary to include stories of Black agency, joy, and resistance to teach an accurate perspective.

In Her Words

"I felt called out and got really hot when Kendall pointed to me. I am the only black kid in my class so I wish Mr. Tooms would have stood up for me. When I went home, I asked my mom and grandma if we would all be slaves if there had never been the civil war. They seemed shocked and upset. Now I feel like all the other kids think they are better than me. Kendall still tries to boss me around.

Adultification

Adultification is the assigning of adult-like characteristics to a child. For Black girls, adultification most often involves adults applying stereotypes and beliefs about Black women onto Black girls. This means Black girls are often not given the opportunity to make mistakes that children often make. For Black girls, these stereotypes mean more suspensions based on dress code violations, being relegated to helper roles in the classroom, receiving less academic and emotional support in school.

Ms. Williams, a White woman, makes small talk with Ms. Johnson, who also is White, about her student named Jasmine. Jasmine is a 6-year-old first grader with shoulder-length braids with colorful beads on the ends. Ms. Williams explains, I am very impressed that she helps out mom by feeding and taking care of her preschool siblings. Of course, all that responsibility doesn't give her much time to concentrate on [schoolwork]."

Building Blocks of Critical Reflection: Sample Guiding Questions

Who I am & What I Know

What do I believe about the responsibilities of children and the role children play in the family?
Do I believe that these roles are different for children of different ages, gender, race/ethnicity?
What are my early memories of receiving messages about girls' and boys' of different races' independent behaviors? How do these beliefs impact my perception of Jasmine?

Experiences and knowledge of others

Have I considered the collective racial trauma Jasmine and her family might experience?
In what ways have I considered the perspectives of Jasmine and her caregivers in this situation?
How is this evident in my response?

Literature and theories relevant to my work

What does social and psychological developmental theory suggest about children Jasmine's age?
How can I consider the theories of intersectionality and Black Girlhood pedagogy to understand this interaction?

Social and political context

In what ways are societal stereotypes showing up in my comments and perceptions about Jasmine as a Black girl? Are there barriers to support families at my school or in my community?
In what ways is support accessible to families?

Reflective Analysis

As White women, the teachers in this situation may have been taught to accept that Black children often have responsibilities that do not match the appropriate expectations of their biological age or developmental stage. In Ms. Williams' perspective, Jasmine is socially mature and implies that this social maturity leads to her poor academic performance. Black girls have been expected to assume domestic responsibilities at home and at school in ways that mirror and differ from girls of other races. Unfortunately, this reality has been accepted as normal instead of being viewed as the result of an unjust system that forces parents to rely on their children for help with caregiving. (Black Girlhood in the Nineteenth Century-Wright). Ms Williams is operating from a standpoint that many White teachers use called the "If Only" mentality. This mentality asks, "If Only" parents or children changed then teachers and schools could do their jobs (Miller, 2010). Instead, a mentality based in institutional responsibility is necessary, situations would be approached with the questions 1) how are institutions contributing to this problem; and 2) how can I use resources to help correct this wrong? Ms. Williams finding out about Jasmine's experience at home can present an opportunity to offer support to this family that is free of judgement and to ask what do they need.

Invisibility: Doing Schools

Sometimes Black girls act in ways that earn them favor among their peers and teachers. This may look like being overly helpful to teachers or students, not speaking up when in unfair situations, and suppressing emotions while in the classroom. These behaviors are the result of socialization at home and school that teaches girls, particularly Black girls that in order to be liked or to avoid being targeted for punishment they need to be seemingly invisible. This is harmful because when girls behave in ways that they think are appropriate for school they mask their true feelings, opinions, and experiences. The pressure for girls to hold in their feelings may lead to negative effects on their mental health and social relationships.

"Ms. Angela says, Jasmine is an average student, but oh, what a helper. She always keeps her eyes on things, picks things up, helps out other [students] who don't understand work or are having some problem. She is always asking, "What can I do to help?"

Building Blocks of Critical Reflection: Sample Guiding Questions

(1) Who I am & What I Know

(2) Experiences and knowledge of others

(3) Literature and theories relevant to my work

What does social and psychological developmental theory suggest about children Jasmine's age?
How can I consider the theories of intersectionality and Black Girlhood pedagogy to understand this interaction?

(4) Social and political context

In what ways are societal stereotypes showing up in my comments and perceptions about Jasmine as a Black girl?

(5) My Behavior

Reflective Analysis

Putting it into Practice

In the space below write a brief summary of the event/interaction. Remember to write what was said without judgment.

Use the table on page # as your guide and write reflection questions for each step that are unique to the interaction above. In the section titled “Personal Reflection” write your response to the questions you created.

Building Blocks of Critical Reflection	Purpose	Questions to Prompt Reflection	Personal Reflection
Who I am and what I know	Challenge how your positionality influences your children in either positive or negative ways.		
Experiences and knowledge of others	Acknowledge historical & modern roots of Race. Acknowledge Racial Trauma.		
	Maintain curiosity about how children, families, and communities experience education.		

Literature and theories relevant to my work	Question the theories that you have been taught as an educator. Self-Educate on relevant cultural and linguistic knowledge.		
Social and political context	Consider societal expectations, stereotypes, and policy context.		
My Behavior	Reflect on the ways your reaction or actions towards children may be influenced by bias.		

Reflecting “On the Spot”

The previous section described how to reflect on a situation after it occurred and the following section provides guidance to reflect on the spot. The practice of reflecting on the spot may at first feel like a heavy lift but will become more routine as it is integrated into daily practice. Although it can be challenging, it is important to reflect on actions and interactions throughout the day for skill building towards an intentionally inclusive learning space. The building blocks of reflection outlined in the previous section, require dedicated time to process and are necessary steps to taking a critical reflective approach. When reflecting on the spot, here are brief questions and principles to use to check in with yourself, the children in your care, and the interaction that occurs. Below are brief questions and principles to guide you in the moment of reflection:)

1. Pause and step back
 - a. How am I feeling? What was my initial thought/reaction? What are my cultural expectations?
2. Remain Curious
 - a. How might this child understand what is going on? How is the child impacted by this situation?
3. Always respond
 - a. If you do not know what to say, explain that you want to talk with the child or parent but first must think about what to say. Get back to the child or parent with your response the next day.
4. Follow Up
 - a. It is okay to follow up if a situation warrants further activities with all children.

Making the unconscious, conscious

It is important to understand that some practices that we take for granted in ECE are based on beliefs and values that do not align with our own and ultimately do not benefit the children in our care. Below is a list of practices in need of critical reflection in order to develop a more equitable and inclusive learning environment. Many preschool and elementary school educators are taught to use these practices and often use them habitually. Some of these practices can have harmful consequences for children whose cultures do not maintain the same values. Questioning these common practices can help identify these potential mismatches. Here is a list of some common early childhood practices. As you work through the reflection process, it is important to add to the list any that you have come across and become aware of.

Common ECE practices and Ideologies to Question

1. Proficiency in a set amount of time

2. Grouping students by age
3. Teachers as keeper of knowledge/all-knowing figures
4. Banking systems,
5. Length of school day/year,
6. Standing straight in line,
7. Focus on body control/regulation as a substitute for social-emotional development
8. Expecting quiet classrooms during circle time or individual work time
9. Restricting the number of times a child can use the restroom
10. Leaning on girls more than boys to help give reminders of class rules, help other students with work, or to keep adults updated on children's social activities.
11. _____

Promising Practices to Facilitate Critical Reflection

Critical reflection is a learned skill. Many educators need explicit instruction accompanied with guided practice and patience to develop their skill set. While individual reflection may be useful when beginning the process as new ideas arise, it is beneficial to have a dedicated partner, group and guide to support in this process. There are a number of ways this tool can be utilized to facilitate the learning process.

Reflective Supervision

Reflective supervision offers a safe space to reflect on a range of emotions about children, families, and interactions with colleagues. Both individual supervision and small group supervision provide empathy and support for reflective practices. If approached with an equity lens, with the goal of rooting out bias, professionals can explore personal beliefs, power dynamics in the adult child interactions as well as in supervisory relationships. Some aspects of approaching reflective supervision with an equity lens outlined by the Center for Mental Health include the following:

1. Reflect on the History of Race
2. Talk about Race
3. Addressing Implicit Bias
4. Understanding Systemic Racism

While open discussion can be a powerful tool for change, some additional practices to reflect on sensitive and complex topics are also useful. For example, Race Reflecting Journaling (Milner 2003) has been used with teachers to allow a private reflection to process issues of racial differences through writing. Teacher educators and mental health consultants have also used reflective questionnaires to increase self-awareness and to introduce conversations about race and gender.

It can be a daunting task to commit to reflecting and questioning your beliefs about concepts we have learned to accept. This process takes time and self-compassion to develop these critical reflective practices. Self-reflection is an ongoing process with no specific endpoint and may become easier as you practice stepping outside of your own interpretations to understand new ways of thinking. Critical reflective practice is necessary to learn prior to implementing anti-bias, anti-racist pedagogy, or culturally responsive teaching. This process is meant to create learning experiences and outcomes that are equitable for children, particularly girls, who are often overlooked. When critical self reflection occurs, early learning spaces have the potential to be safe and enjoyable for all children.

Additional Resources

Black Girlhood

<https://pushoutfilm.com/>

Culturally Responsive Teaching

<https://hardhistory.jhu.edu/>

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/>

Culturally Responsive Mental Health Consultation

More Reflection Questions

<p>My Personal Pedagogy</p>	<p>Why do I teach the way I do?</p>	<p>Do scoring rubrics give inherent advantages for certain ways of knowing and expression? Am I considering different ways of knowing when completing DRDP?</p> <p>What is the racial breakdown of students who are referred for behavioral intervention or special needs services? Do I allow culturally based differences in language, speech, reading, and writing to shape my perceptions about students' cognitive ability? Is there an equitable distribution of girls in leadership classroom roles (narrator school performances,) Are consequences for behaviors that do not align with guidelines for our learning space clear?</p>
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