



# Standing Up to Implicit Bias

## Caregivers will learn

- What implicit bias is and why it is important in child development.
- How to support their child in standing up to bias.
- How to create spaces for children to ask and explore questions about bias.
- How to help children build awareness and confidence to stand up to bias.

## Key Messages

- Implicit Bias is...
  - Definition for adults: Unfairly showing favoritism over one thing vs. another. We start to learn this when we are very young. It operates subconsciously, which means that we are not always aware of the bias that we have and how it impacts us. Bias affects our behavior and the way we think. It does not mean we are bad; it means we are human.
  - Definition for children: When you favor ideas or people over another.
- Bias can show up in all sorts of places like our behavior, the way we speak, the words we choose to say, children's books, craft activities, music, etc.
- Children start noticing differences about race, ethnicity, abilities, gender, etc. during their early years. They start noticing the positive and negative biases of adults around them. It is important to help children process and answer their questions about bias.
- Caregivers play a role in raising their children to have an anti-bias and anti-racist lens when they are young.
- Be a role model. When the children see adults around them challenging bias, it shows that it is important. They will be more likely to stand up to bias in their lifetime if they see others around

## For more information click links below

[How Can I Prevent Gender Bias in Young Children?](#)

[NAEYC Anti-Bias Resources](#)

[Preventing Gender Bias](#)

[Talking to Young Children about Bias and Prejudice](#)

### Children's Books

[Lee and Low Books](#)

[Mahogany Books](#)

[Social Justice Children's Books](#)

[Rainbow Booklist](#)

[We Need Diverse Books](#)

### Tools for Selecting Children's Books

[Guide for Selecting Anti-Bias Children's Books](#)

[Selecting and Rating Titles for Social Justice Books](#)

### Cultural Considerations

Standing up to implicit bias

them doing it, too. Call out bias when you see it. Ask your child what differences they notice like how someone may have been treated or how someone made another person feel based on differences, etc.

- It is important to process and address children’s bias. When a child asks a question or makes a comment, rather than telling them, “That’s not nice,” or “You shouldn’t say that,” check in with them and learn to understand where these biases are coming from. Ask questions, such as “That’s interesting, can you tell me more about that?” or “Why do you think that?”
- Always respond with factual answers, such as “Adam is learning to speak English. That is why he sounds a little different than you,” or “Ashley has a dis/ability named <insert name here>, which just means we need to find a way to change the game to make sure she can play with us.”
- When a person is hurt because of a child’s bias, it is not enough for the child to only apologize to that person. They also need to check-in to see if the person is okay. It is also important for the adult to check-in with the person who was hurt, especially if they are a child. It needs to be done in a timely manner as they are often left with powerful emotional scars.

includes challenging cultural bias. Your group may have a lot of perspective on this topic and personal experiences. Facilitate and foster conversations on this subject and respect the views of participants.

### Other Tips

As a facilitator, you are not expected to be an expert on this topic. Serve as a resource for participants to connect them to information. Offer support as needed while they navigate teaching their children about implicit bias. Remind them bias does not mean they are bad, it means they are human.

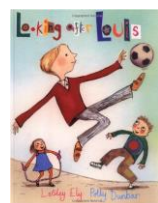
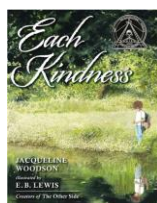
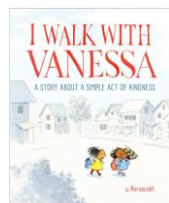
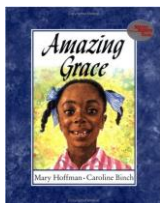
### School-Readiness Connection

Children can be more prepared to recognize and challenge bias when they are in the school classroom if standing up to bias has been encouraged at home during their early years.

## Coordinated Group Activity

### Story Time

1. Share the Key Messages with caregivers and explain to everyone that you will be reading a book together that will help us think about how everyone is special. Talk about how we need to say something when we see someone is not being nice to someone because they are different.
2. Read or tell the story. Choose from one of the books below or bring another book of your choice. Visit your local library for books in other languages and for more children’s literature written by authors of color.



- *Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman
- *Bronterina* by James Howe
- *Each Kindness* by Jacqueline Woodson
- *I Walk with Vanessa* by Kerascoët
- *Jacob's New Dress* by Sarah and Ian Hoffman
- *Looking After Louis* by Lesley Ely
- *Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match/Marisol McDonald no combina* by Monica Brown
- *My Name is Bilal* by Asma Mobin-Uddin
- *One* by Kathryn Otoshi
- *Spaghetti in a Hotdog Bun* by Maria Dismondy
- *Strictly No Elephants* by Lisa Mantchev
- *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni
- *We March* by Shane Evans
- *Wings* by Christopher Myers

3. Discuss: When are times when a child might stand up to bias? For example, what can we do when someone on the playground makes fun of someone who looks or sounds different? What can we do or say when our friends decide to play a game, but one friend is not able to participate because they are in a wheelchair or has crutches?

### Orange Activity



Materials: oranges (of different shapes, sizes, with bruises, dents, smooth skin, bumpy skin, etc.) and a bowl.

Give each child an orange. Ask them to not peel the orange yet.

Discuss: What do their oranges look like? Are some larger or smaller? Are some smooth or bumpy? Do some have dents or bruises? Or some different in color?

Let children and caregivers peel their orange. Have everyone place their peeled orange in a bowl. Once everyone's orange is in the bowl, pass it around and ask everyone to find their orange. Many will not be able to because the oranges will look very similar.

Discuss: Why is it hard to find their exact orange? What happened after the skin was peeled off? Talk about how people are the same on the inside like oranges are.

Virtual tip: if you are facilitating a live virtual group, you can adapt this

exercise and ask participants to see what type of fruit or object they may all have in their home and use this item for the activity instead. Encourage them to show each other on their screens what their item looks like. Ask them if they can see the difference between the items on the screens or not. Discuss with them the similarities of the item chosen, etc.

### Child-Directed Play Activity

#### Infant

Create infant spaces such as a play and tummy time areas with a blanket. Provide toys, pictures, and board books appropriate for babies that represent a variety of people, clothing, foods, etc.

#### Toddlers and Pre-K

##### Flower Activity



Materials: flowers; cups for vases; string; water.

Take the children and caregivers on a walk or outside to an area where they can pick flowers like a park. Another option is to do this ahead of time or to purchase flowers. Let the children choose the flowers that they like. Encourage them to choose flowers that look new or different to them. Let them make a bouquet by tying the flowers with the string or placing them in a cup with water. Encourage them to play with the flowers freely without any instruction so that they can enjoy and appreciate the variety of the flowers in a fun way.

Discuss: Ask children what they think about the flowers. Encourage them to touch and smell the flowers. Ask them what they notice. You can ask: Are they the same size? Are they the same smell? Are they the same color? Explain to them that like people are like flowers. All flowers are beautiful. Even though they are different from one another, they also have similarities, and can still happily be in the same bouquet. People are also different, have similarities, and everyone can still be friends with one another.

Virtual tip: if you are facilitating a live virtual group, you can choose flowers for this exercise or something else like leaves or rocks, etc. Have participants go and collect these items during the KPL group session or beforehand. Ask them to bring their item to share with the group virtually. Facilitate the same type of discussion described above.

## Pre-K

### Challenging Bias Activity

Materials: Coloring pages that challenge stereotypes; pen; paper.

Wait for a natural moment when superhero dramatic play or conversation comes up. Notice the characters they are playing, who are playing which parts, and some of the actions being performed. Humanize these characters to show more than one side to them as research shows that counterexamples need to be highlighted and elevated to eliminate bias. Challenge gender stereotypes through open-ended conversations. Ask questions about what indicates male vs. female and what indicates these certain superheroes. Record and transcribe the conversation and share with caregivers. Follow up with a discussion and counter gender-stereotypes such as through analyzing coloring pages that shows Superman in a dress, Wonder Woman as a soldier, and even introducing Doctor Endless, a new character who is genderqueer. These 'teachable' moments that happens during play can help adults deconstruct stereotypes, bias, and encourage children to critically think without having to halt play and limit creativity.

Discuss: Why do you think only certain people can play certain roles? Is that fair? What do you think would happen if we were all girls? Could we then play this game? Are there different rules for how boys are supposed to play? Where else in the world does it say you have to play like this or act a certain way?

### Caregiver Relationship-Building

Invite caregivers to share about the things that they do to guide their child's learning about challenging bias.

### Caregiver Leadership

Invite a caregiver volunteer to read the book during today's Kaleidoscope Play and Learn session to the group. Offer the opportunity for caregivers to help lead the flower or challenging bias activity or even for them to set up the infant area.

### Home Activity

Similar to the Pre-K activity above, encourage caregivers to observe their child's play and find ways to counter stereotypes and bias through follow-up discussions.

### Check in for the Following Week

Ask caregivers to share some stories about times when they showed their child to stand up to bias. What was it like?

**We are grateful for CiKeithia Pugh, Lupita Torrez, and Mike Browne for their anti-racist and anti-bias child development expertise and suggestions for this lesson guide. We also appreciate the children's book recommendations contributed by Maren Ostergard and Susan Anderson-Newham.**