

Equity in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Webinar Series

Webinar 3: Culture, identity, history as sources of strength and resilience for African American Children and Families.

June 25, 2020

12:30pm – 2:30pm ET



CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR
Infant & Early Childhood
Mental Health Consultation
Growth. Advancement. Impact.

Facilitators: COE IECMHC



Lauren Rabinovitz

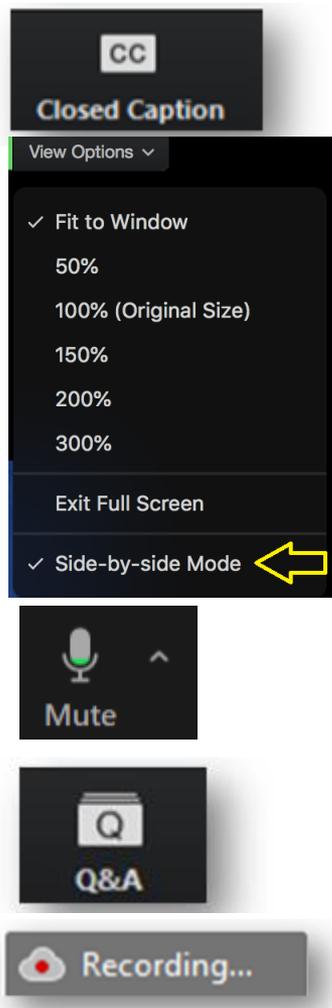
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Webinar Housekeeping



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Use the **Q&A feature** to asks questions to the presenters. You may also chime in and answer questions that have been shared with the group!

A recording of the webinar will be posted on iecmhc.org and e-mailed to all registrants next week. Thank you!

Center of Excellence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC)

Mission and Vision



The Center aims to grow, advance, and
impact the field of IECMHC

Areas of Focus:

Technical Assistance
Professional Development
Clearinghouse

www.iecmhc.org

What is your role?



- A. Mental Health Consultation (Consultant, Program Director, Supervisor, or Systems Leader)
- B. Early Childhood Education (Teacher, Practitioner, Program Director, or Systems Leader)
- C. Trainer or Coach
- D. Higher Education
- E. Federal, State, Local Government Employee
- F. Child and Family Advocate
- G. Funder
- H. Researcher/Evaluator
- I. Other

Facilitators: Children's Equity Project



Shantel Meek
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Indigo Cultural Center



Hakim Rashid
CEP Partner
Howard University

Children's Equity Project



- A multi-university initiative, housed at Arizona State University and led in partnership with experts at 15 universities and organizations across the country.
- We work at the intersection of research-policy-practice
- Our mission is to close opportunity gaps and ensure that all children, regardless of race, ethnicity, income, home language, and/or ability, reach their full potential.

Equity in IECMHC Webinar Series



How Did We Get Here?

April 30, 2020 at 12:30 PM

Culture, Identity, History as Sources of Strength and
Resilience for Tribal Communities

May 28, 2020 at 12:30 PM

**Culture, Identity, History as Sources of Strength and
Resilience for African-American Children and Families**

June 25, 2020 at 12:30PM

**Culture, Identity, History as Sources of Strength and
Resilience for Latino Children and Families.**

July 30, 2020 at 12:30PM

AGENDA



- **Session Goals**
- **Setting the Stage: Historical and Institutional Racism**
- **Social and cultural context**
- **Research to Practice - IECMHC Connection**
- **Where Do We Go from Here?**
- **Open Discussion: Q&A**

Today's Session Goals



- Examine issues of racialized inequities and bias in the early care and education experiences for African American children and families.
- Understand the historical, social, and cultural context of African American children and families that provide sources of strength and resilience.
- Identify ways to strengthen culturally responsive practice in IECMHC to reduce disparities and support children's healthy development and learning.

Further Framing Around Race and Racism



Race is NOT biological... It is a social construct, a classification of human beings, that is politically defined.

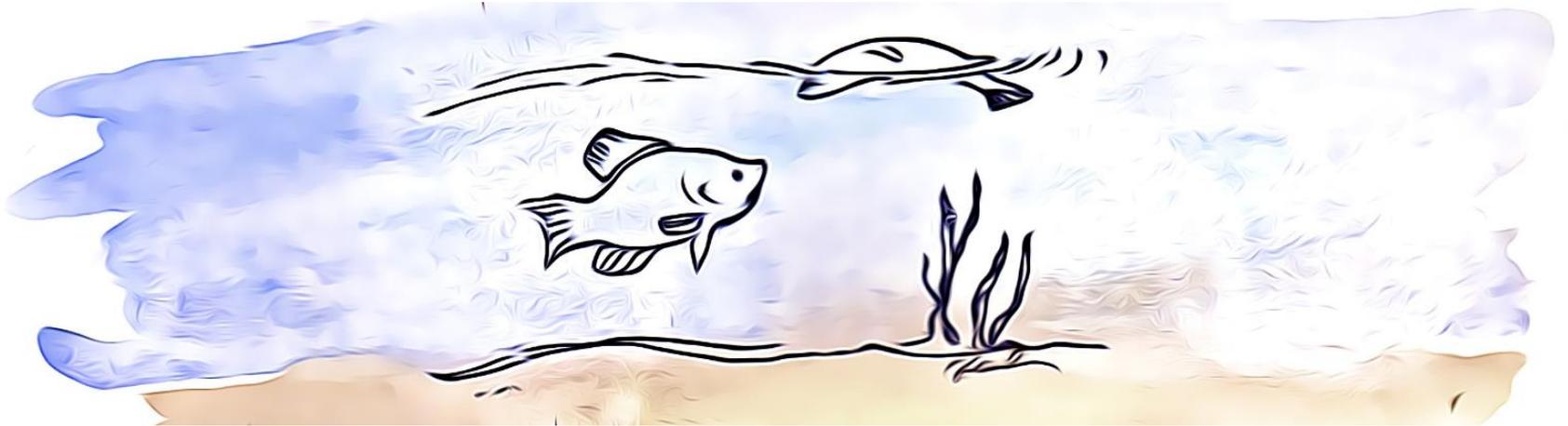
A Framing to Guide Our Conversation

THE GROUNDWATER APPROACH:

building a practical understanding
of structural racism

Source: Racial Equity Institute (REI), 2018

Fish in the Lake



Source: Racial Equity Institute; Artwork by Jojo Karlin (jojokarlin.com)

Further Framing Around Race and Racism (cont.)



Racism came before race....

“Racism is the parent and race is the child.”

(quote from Ta-Nehisi Coates)

Setting the Stage: Historical and Institutional Racism



Reflection



#SayTheirNames...

Protests as unarmed black man dies after police officer filmed kneeling on his neck

Four Minnesota police officers fired after death of unarmed black man

11TH HOUR
Minneapolis officers fired after fatal arrest of unarmed black man

Another unarmed black man has died at the hands of police. When will it end?

Georgia Will Investigate The Killing Of An Unarmed Black Man

Four policemen fired after death of unarmed black man in US

White Georgia man, son charged with murder in shooting of unarmed black man

'How long before we strike back?': Ice Cube reacts to death of unarmed black man following arrest in Minneapolis

4 Minneapolis officers fired after death of unarmed black man

Mother of unarmed black man killed in Georgia speaks out: 'Ahmaud didn't deserve to go the way that he went'

Four officers fired after death of unarmed black man

An Unarmed Black Man Was Killed As Officer Kneels On His Neck For 8 Minutes

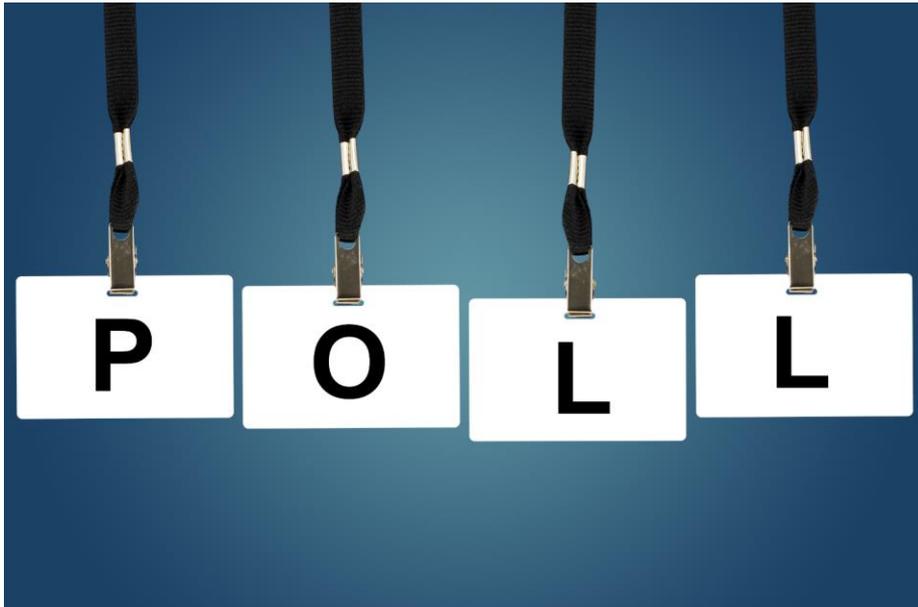
...elevate their individual humanity

Dehumanization of Black Lives



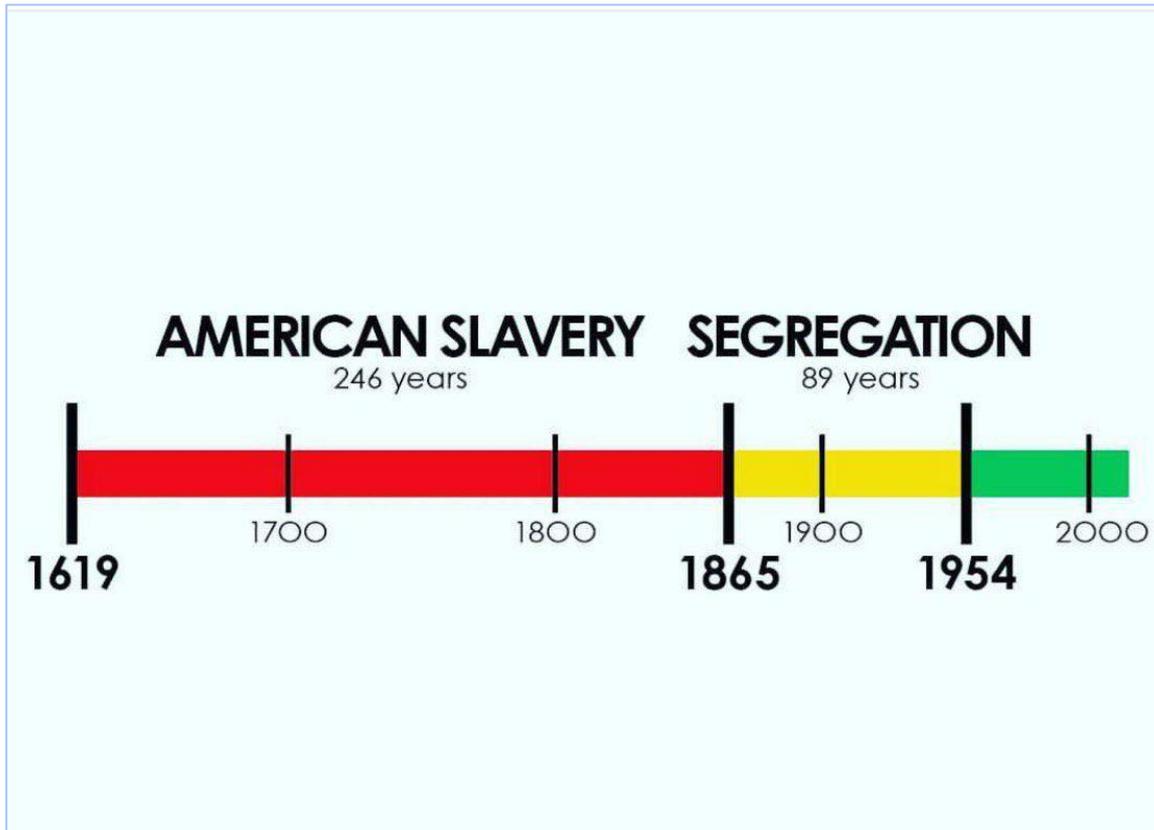
- Began with **opportunism** to hold power and wealth.
- Led to **slavery**.
- Resulted in the **creation of race** to create a wedge between classes in order justify the institution of slavery.
- Embedded into **practices, fictitious sciences, and policies** to hold onto the dehumanizing ideology.
- Led to **widespread prejudices and biases**.

Slavery in America



Slavery was a long time ago...
True or false?

Timeline of Slavery and Segregation in America



- The period of American slavery to segregation represents 88% of the timeline.
- The period to follow is marked by Jim Crow, mass incarcerations, and the continued fight for social justice and equality.

Monopoly Game



The “Monopoly” Activity as a metaphorical explanation of issues of racism, institutional racism, and White privilege.

The Monopoly Game story: “When the Rules are Fair, But the Game Isn’t”;
<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ727803.pdf>

Myth of Black Criminality



"The enduring view of African Americans in this country is as a race of people who are prone to criminality."

- Ta-Nehisi Coates

Myth of Black Criminality (cont.)

<https://stuartcenter.org/resource/enduring-myth-black-criminality-ta-nehisi-coates>



TA-NEHISI COATES
on
CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Reflection

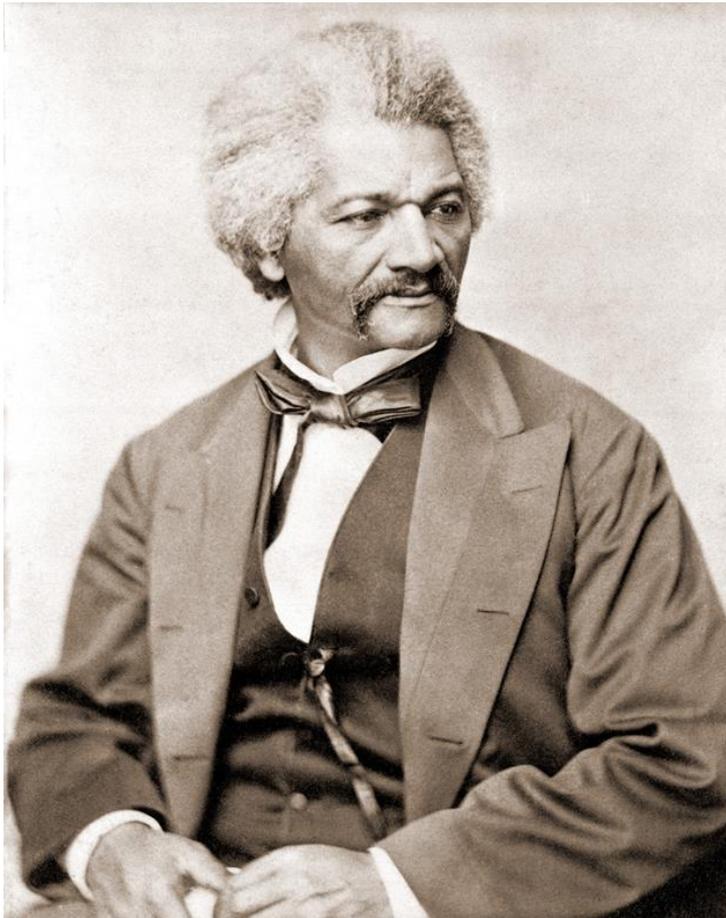


- What information presented was new for you?
- What may you have experienced personally and or professionally around the information that was shared?
- How might this show up in your perceptions of children?

Black Criminalization



Crime of Pursuit of Freedom



“I appear before you this evening as a thief and a robber. I stole this head, these limbs, this body from my master, and ran off with them.”

- Frederick Douglas

Crime of Pursuing Activities that Whites were Typically Free to Pursue



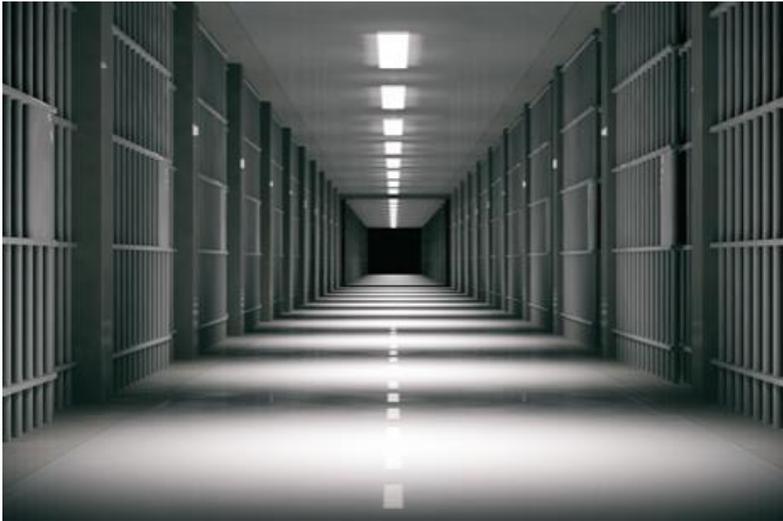
- Neglecting to step out of the way when a White person approached on the sidewalk.
- Looking at a White woman.
- Defending themselves from assaults.

Crime for Unemployment



- Black Code laws (1865-1866) circumscribed the lives of African Americans and included vagrancy laws punishable by arrest, involuntary hard labor, and imprisonment.
- Jim Crow would follow to legalize segregation and further strip African Americans of their freedoms.

The New Jim Crow



“Jarvious Cotton cannot vote. Like his father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great grandfather, he has been denied the right to participate in our electoral democracy.”

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness, Michelle Alexander

Racial Disproportionality in School Suspension and Imprisonment Rates

African American
Children **16%**

Of the student
population

33% Suspended

African American
Men **12%**

Of the U.S.
population

33% U.S. prison population

Are we okay with that?

Mass Incarceration



“High levels of incarceration cast a shadow of criminality over all black men, implicating even those (in the majority) who have remained crime free,”

Are we okay with that?

The Lake Effect: Impact on Learning Climates



Poll



How old do you think he is?

- a. 3 years old
- b. 4 years old
- c. 5 years old
- d. 6 years old
- e. 7 years old

Adultification of Black Boys



Even when teachers have knowledge of child development they view Black boys as older, as less innocent, as criminal, and more culpable than their White peers

Goff, et al, 2014; Wright & Counsell, 2018

They
overestimate the
age of black
boys by up to
4.5 years

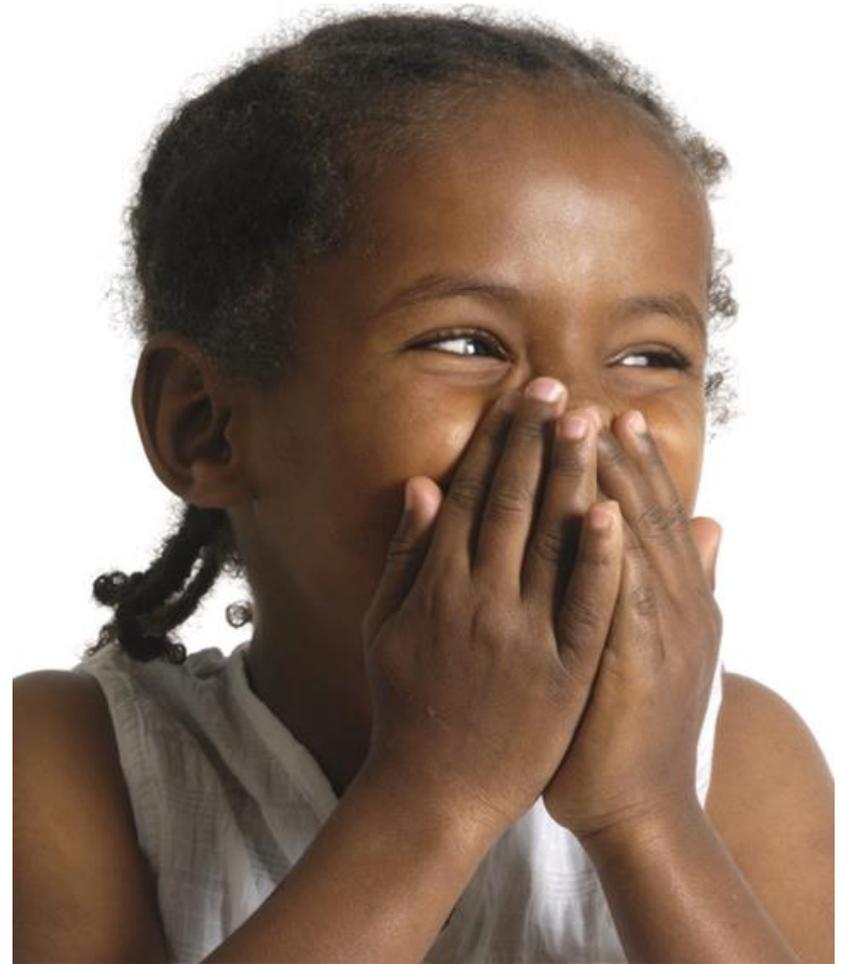
Goff, et al, 2014;
Wright & Counsell,
2018



Black Girls

As early as 5 years old Black Girls are seen as:

- Needing less nurturing and comfort
- More independent
- More sexualized criminal, than their White peers



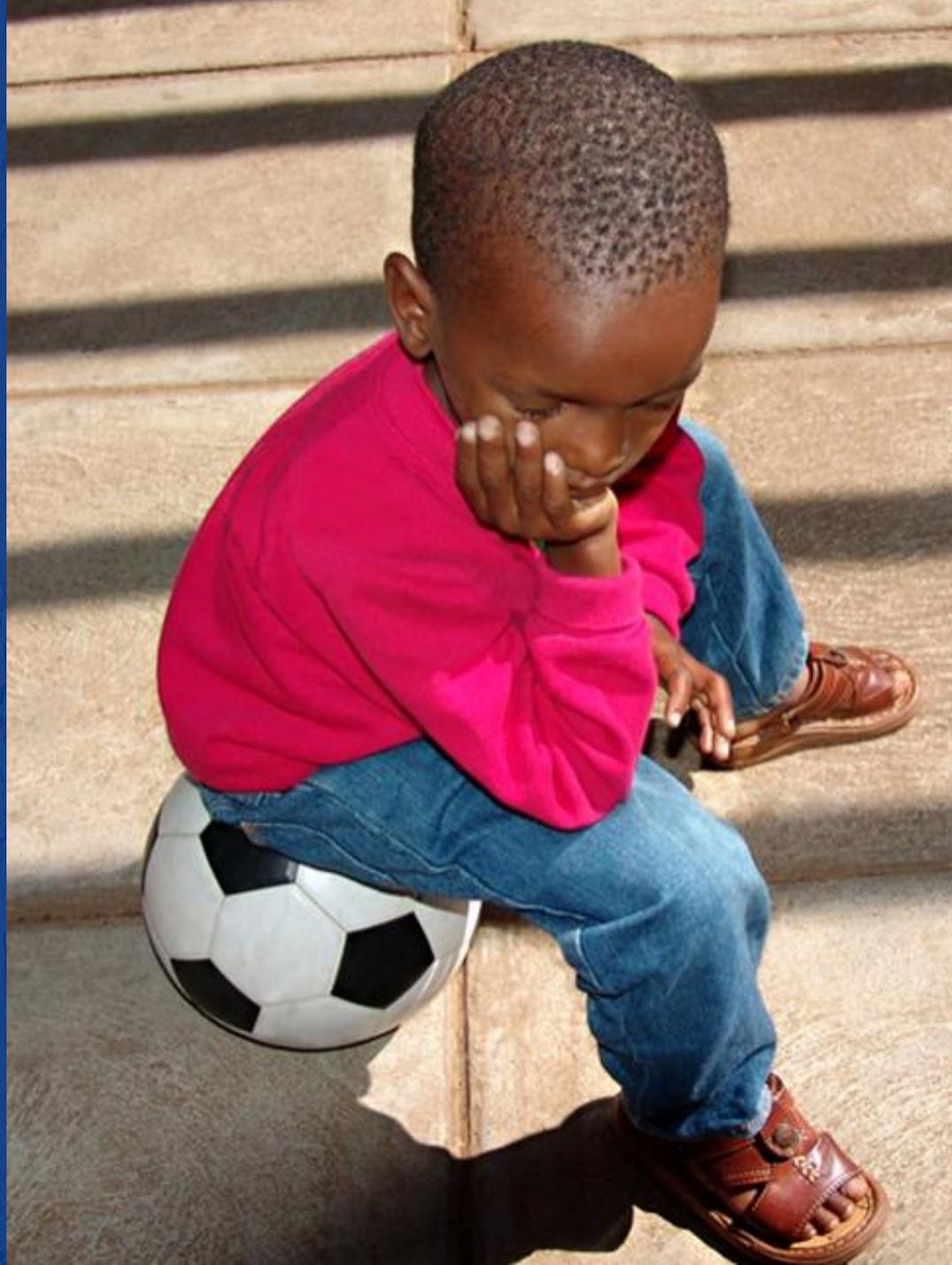
It is well documented that children are suspended and expelled early and often

Gilliam, 2006; US Department of Education, 2014



**Black children
and boys much
more likely to be
excluded from
their educational
settings.**

Gilliam, 2006; US Department of
Education, 2014



Black students are 18 percent of K-12 enrollment and they are:

- 35 percent of those suspended once,
- 46 percent of those suspended more than once and,
- 39 percent of all expulsions (Lewin, 2012).



Children who are suspended are:

- 10 times likely to end up in the juvenile justice system.
- More likely to drop out of school,
- At risk for disengaging from the learning process,
- And are likely to be suspended again and again.





Implicit Bias

A critical factor that contributes to the disproportionate discipline of Black children is implicit bias.

Racial Bias

- Implicit bias is the mental process resulting in feelings and attitudes about people based race.
- It is an unconscious process and we are not consciously aware of the negative racial biases that develop over the course of our lifetime.
- Implicit bias supports stereotypes.





We cannot
address racial
bias if we don't
talk about race.

Why Don't We Want to Talk About Race?



“We have become so politically correct that we don't know what to say and when to say it. We don't know what to say to anyone anymore.”

Lee Jones, Florida State University.

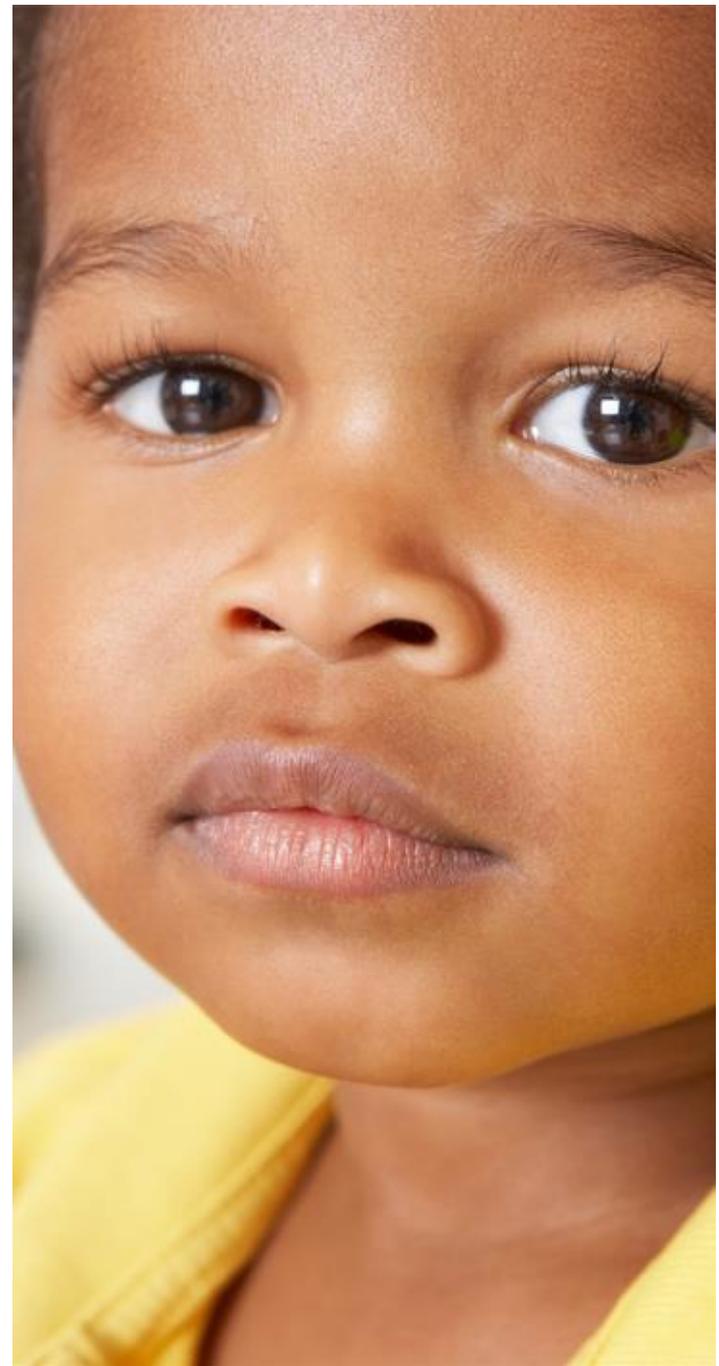
What Does This Look Like in Early Childhood Classrooms?



Daily acts of bias in early childhood classrooms.

Mispronouncing
certain children's
names that are not
traditionally "white"
names.

Iruka, Curenton, Durden, &
Escayg, 2020



Favoring White children over Black children.

Iruka, Curenton, Durden, &
Escayg, 2020



Calling on White
children while
ignoring Black
children.

Iruka, Curenton, Durden, &
Escayg, 2020



Assigning Black children roles that are subservient and stereotyped.



Misinterpreting children's actions and 'ways of being' as defiant



Racism in Early Childhood Programs



- Racism exists.
- What do we do about it?

The Essence of Antiracism



The **ACTION** that must follow both emotional and intellectual awareness of racism.

What Does Anti-Racist Mean?



- Racism is not neutral
- You're either racist or anti-racist
- Allowing racism to exist is a passive racist
- Confronting racial inequities is anti-racist
- There is no such thing as "not racist"

Undoing Racism

“The only way to undo racism is to consistently identify it, and describe it and then dismantle it”

Ibram

Kendi, 2019



Colorblind?

When we fail to see race, we fail to see racism, and that creates passive racists (Kendi, 2019)





Racist

Not who you are but what you do, or fail to do.

Systemic Manifestations in Early Childhood Systems and Policy



Systemic Manifestations



The conditions for institutional racism in early care and education are alive and well.

Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (2019). Racial Wage Gaps in Early Education Employment

Systemic Manifestations (cont.)



Manifestations of this system get played out through individuals, how we interact with each other and ultimately the policy arena.

Response to Systemic Manifestations



Manifestations:

- Pay inequity
- Feeling invisible
- Isolation
- Deprived of opportunities
- Required to produce more
- Decisions Questioned

Response:

- Multiple Jobs
- Outspoken
- Formed Support Groups
- GI Bill
- Strong Work Ethic
- Provide Options

Sources of Strength and Resilience



Sources of Strength and Resilience: Culture, Identity, and History



African American families need a deep reservoir of cultural knowledge:

1. African American history did not begin with slavery.
2. Africa is the birthplace of civilization.
3. European culture is rooted in African civilization.

Cultural Amnesia and Identity



Without this foundational knowledge only a sense of cultural inferiority can result as prevailing myths continue to be perpetuated.

Sources of Strength and Resilience: Family



“African American children and adolescents who learn that others have negative perspectives on African Americans but who have these messages mediated by parents, peers, and other important adults are less likely to have negative outcomes and more likely to be resilient in adverse conditions.”

American Psychological Association, Task Force on Resilience and Strength in Black Children and Adolescents. (2008). Resilience in African American children and adolescents: A vision for optimal development. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/pi/cyf/resilience.html>

Sources of Strength and Resilience: Spirituality



“African American spirituality is born of the pride and the pain, the horror and the hope of a people whose eyes have always been watching God, and whose hands stayed firm on the plow as they fought their way to freedom....”

Hayes, D. (2012). Forged in the Fiery Furnace: African American Spirituality. Ortis Books. Maryknoll, NY: p. 4

Critical Themes in the Resilience of Black Children and Their Families

1. Critical Mindedness
2. Active Engagement
3. Flexibility
4. Communalism



American Psychological Association, Task Force on Resilience and Strength in Black Children and Adolescents.(2008). Resilience in African American children and adolescents:A vision for optimal development. Washington, DC: Author.Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/pi/cyf/resilience.html>

Culturally Responsive Practice



- Understanding the broad contours of culture - beliefs, values, attitudes, practices, interpersonal relations, sense of history.
- A recognition of diversity within the African American Community.
- A culturally responsive, relevant, and strength-based curriculum, programming, assessment and evaluation.
- A culturally diverse workforce.
- Culturally sensitive and responsive Mental Health Services.

What ECE Programs Should Be Doing to Support Black Families in This Moment?

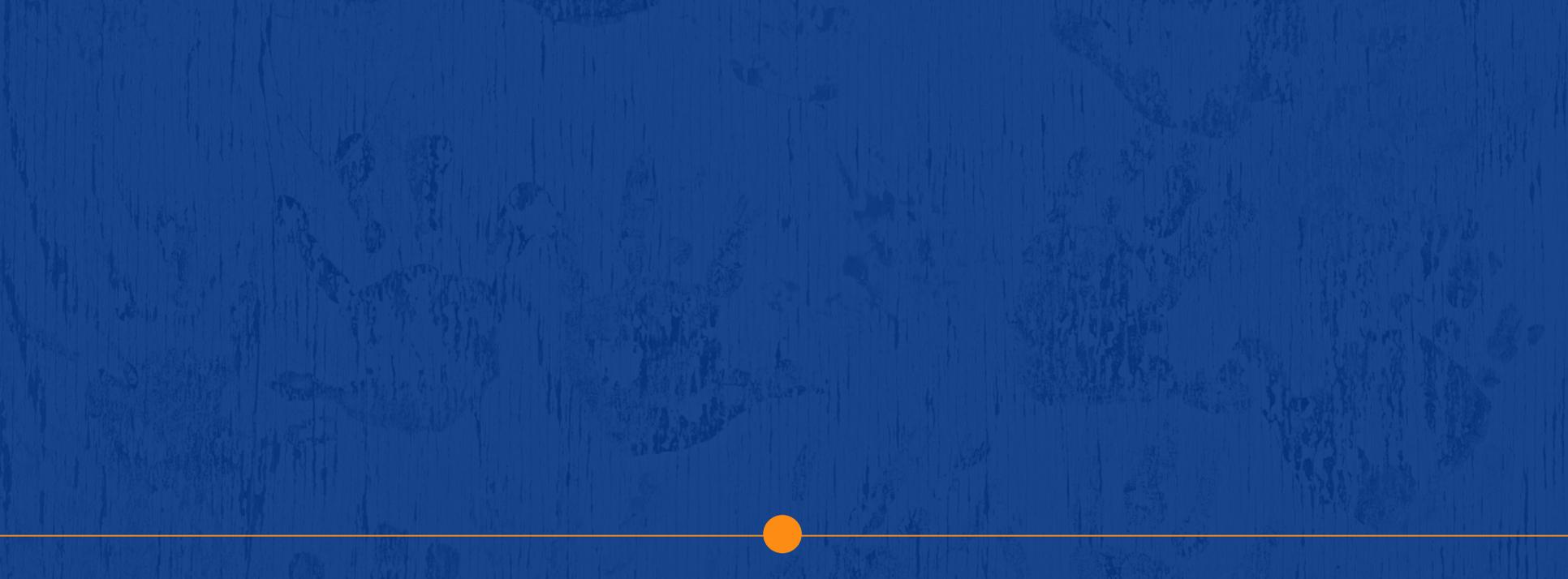
- Black History – it's more than February
- Provide anti-Bias and racism professional development for all staff
- Utilize resources in communities of color
- Provide a space for Black families to dialogue about issues impacting their communities and ways to offer supports and resources.

Research to Practice Connecting to IECMHC



There is emerging evidence that IECMHC is a promising disrupter of bias and disparities.





**Arizona's Statewide
Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
Consultation (IECMHC) intervention -
Smart Support**

Arizona's Smart Support IECMHC Program: Main Findings

- 799 Teachers
- 1,028 Children
- Evaluation conducted over 4 years
- Data collection: baseline, 6 months, 12 months

The entire sample showed significant growth for positive outcomes and significant declines in negative outcomes.

Findings: Racial and Gender Disparities



Black boys started with lower scores on almost every outcome variable.

Teachers' Initial Perceptions of African American Boys

Top 5 adjectives to describe African American boys:

- Aggressive, Cruel, Manipulative, Self-destructive, Volatile

Teachers gave higher endorsements of statements like:

“This child’s behaviors interfere w/ ability to teach effectively.”

“This child’s behaviors are not likely to improve significantly.”

“Sometimes I hope this child will be absent.”

Teachers' Initial Perceptions of African American Boys (cont.)

Other findings at baseline for Black boys (teacher-rated)

- High conflictual relationships
- Rated as lower in initiative
- Rated higher in 'struggling with controlling his behavior.'

Racialized gaps were closed...



Arizona's statewide IECMHC intervention – Smart Support – was particularly effective at ameliorating racial disparities for African American boys

(Shivers, Farago, Gal-Szabo, under review)

Closing the Gap: What improved over 12 months?

In comparison to other White boys – who were also ‘focus children’ for consultation

Teachers of Black boys had more growth over time in the areas of:

- Teacher-Child Closeness
- Teacher-Child Conflict
- Perception of Child’s Risk of Expulsion (approaching statistical significance)

More findings from AZ: Consultative Alliance

A strong **Consultative Alliance** predicted a positive change in the following outcomes:

- Attachment (boys of color only)
- Lower negative classroom emotional environment
- Teacher-child closeness
- Teacher self-efficacy

Only when:

- Consultant shared same ethnic heritage as teacher

OR

- Consultant had 'expertise' in equity topics (cultural responsiveness, anti-bias education, undoing racism, etc.)

(Davis, Shivers, & Perry, 2018)

Questions

There is emerging evidence that IECMHC has an impact on racialized disparities in child outcomes for African American boys despite the fact few of us have explicit conversations about racism.

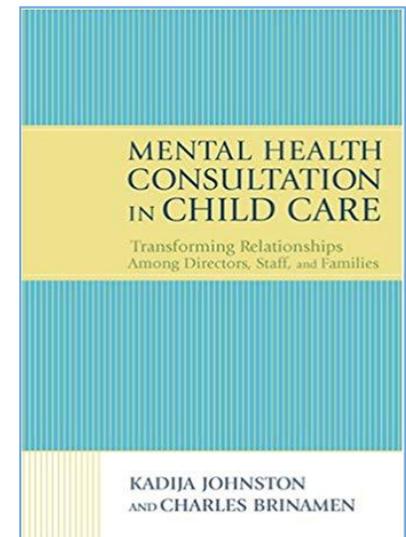
- How do we understand IECMHC's impact?
- What are the mechanisms of change?
- How can we build upon and enhance IECMHC's impact on anti-Black racism?

Why is mental health consultation a promising disrupter of bias?

- Trusting, ongoing relationships
- ‘Leaning in’ with teachers
- Holding their gaze – ‘I see you’ (parallel process)
- Curiosity about the meaning of children’s behavior
- Self-awareness
- Presence in the here and now
- Perspective-taking
- Emotion-regulation
- Empathy which supports compassionate action

The Consultative Stance: 10 Elements (Kadija Johnston & Charles Brinamen, 2006)

1. Mutuality of endeavor
2. **Avoiding the position of sole expert**
3. Wondering instead of knowing
4. **Understanding another's subjective experience**
5. **Considering all levels of influence**
6. Hearing and representing all voices – especially the child's
7. The centrality of relationships
8. **Parallel process as an organizing principle**
9. Patience
10. **Holding hope**



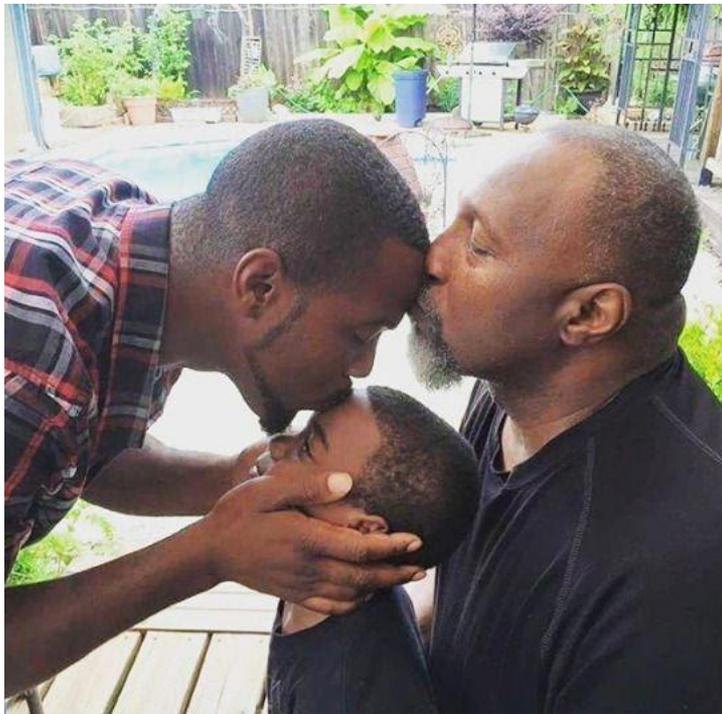
The logo for Black Lives Matter, featuring the words "BLACK", "LIVES", and "MATTER" stacked vertically in a bold, white, sans-serif font, each word enclosed in a white rectangular box, all set against a black background.

**BLACK
LIVES
MATTER**

“...we’ve committed to struggling together and to imagining and creating a world free of anti-Blackness, where every Black person has the social, economic, and political power to thrive.”

Black Live Matter, What We Believe. Retrieved from <https://blacklivesmatter.com/what-we-believe/>

Freedom, Love, Justice and Black Children



“Justice is what LOVE looks like in public.”

~Cornell West

What does LOVE look like in the early childhood classroom?

- Meeting developmental needs
- Holding vision for Black children as part of a community
- Seeing potential where deficit has been seen in the past

~ Na'ilah Suad Nasir (2019)

Systemic strategy: Building our capacity to address anti-Black bias



Individual/personal level
Interpersonal
Institutional / Systemic

An orange circle is positioned on the left side of a thin orange horizontal line that spans the width of the slide. The background of the slide is a light green color with a subtle, textured pattern.

“In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr

How do we reduce bias through IECMHC?

Awareness (mindfulness) and compassion practices (at the personal, interpersonal, and systemic levels) that are central components of reducing bias:

1. Teaching and learning about race (including whiteness)
2. Actively working to surface our anti-Black bias
3. Acknowledging privilege and power
4. Learning about historical conditions that have contributed to the ongoing operation of anti-Black bias and privilege in our lives

Themes from Multi-State IECMHC Surveys: Challenges to equity implementation

- How do I integrate equity principles in my day-to-day work?
- Hard to talk about race and bias
- Lack of leadership/organizational support to continue conversations and address in the work
- Our own biases, blind-spots and privilege gets in the way of prioritizing these issues
- Staff are reluctant and resistant

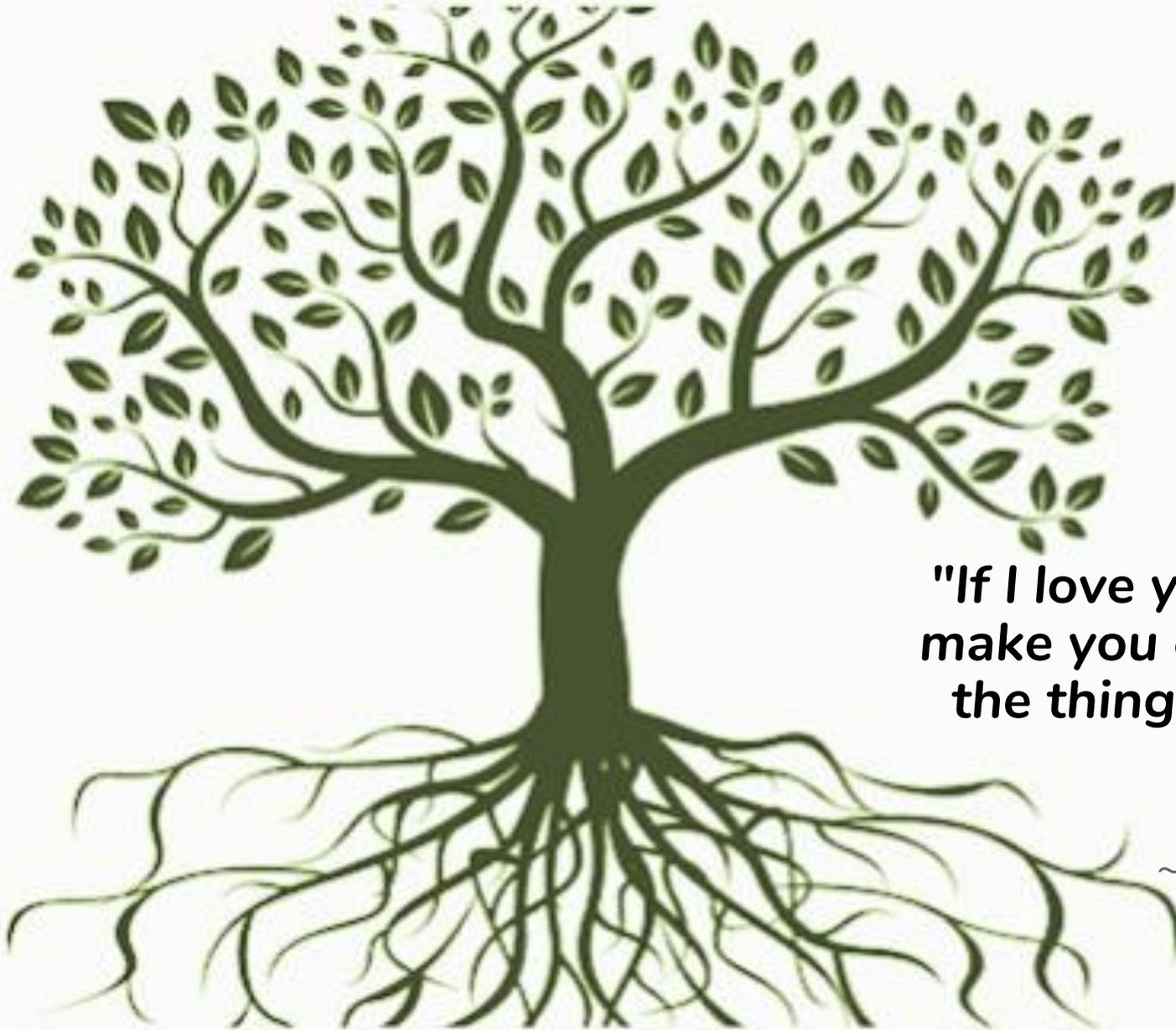
Themes from Multi-State IECMHC Surveys: Challenges to equity implementation (cont.)

- How do we tailor strategies and content for specific communities?
- Hard to recognize in the moment that the conflict/issue might be related to race or culture
- Feelings of hopelessness / insurmountable issue
- Fear on entering into or leaning into these conversations.

Systemic Racial Equity Challenges in IECMHC



- Workforce diversity
- Workforce preparation and ongoing support
- Supporting IECMHC supervisors in holding space to talk about race
- Building IECMHC organizational internal capacity to lead
- IECMHC State and national leadership capacity to lean in and hold



**"If I love you, I have to
make you conscious of
the things you do not
see."**

~James Baldwin

Where do we
go from here?

Recommendations

- Ensure social emotional curricula are culturally responsive, strengths-based, have an explicit anti-racist approach, and are social justice focused.
- Ban harsh discipline
- Measure and address disparities in children's positive and negative experiences in early childhood settings.
- Collect demographic data, disaggregate, and engage in a continuous process of examining and addressing disparities via policy, professional development and resources

Recommendations (cont.)

- Ensure anti-bias training is a required training for all staff, coaches, and administrators, and a core focus of ongoing coaching and consultation.
- Program and Policy Leaders must periodically review employment and program practices to ensure they are culturally sensitive and reflect best practices-- specifically addressing pay and opportunity inequities.

Don't Forget!



How to use a QR Code:

- Open your camera on your SmartPhone or Tablet.
- Point your camera at the code as if you were going to take a picture (but don't snap a picture).
- Once your camera is able to focus on the image, it will prompt the associated content on the top of the phone which you can then tap.

**Please complete the survey that will pop-up at the end of this webinar.
Thank you!**

Open Discussion and Q&A

Open Discussion



Join us for a 30 minute Q&A immediately following the end of the webinar.

Open Discussion Q&A



THANK YOU!
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