A Strategy to Reduce the Effects of Implicit Bias in Discipline Decisions

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A 5-point Intervention Approach to Enhance Equity in School Discipline

Disproportionality represents one of the most significant problems in education today (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010, U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2013). The results of decades of research consistently show that students of color, particularly African American students (and even more so for those with disabilities), are at significantly increased risk for exposure to exclusionary discipline practices, including office discipline referrals and suspensions (e.g., Fabelo et al., 2011; Losen & Gillespie, 2012; Shaw & Braden, 1990). These differences have been found consistently across geographic regions and cannot be adequately explained by the correlation between race and poverty (Nolte-meyer & McLaughlin, 2010). Given the well-documented negative effects of exclusionary discipline on a range of student outcomes (American Academy of Pediatrics Council on School Health, 2013), educators must address this issue by identifying rates of discipline disproportionality, taking steps to reduce it, and monitoring the effects of intervention on disproportionality. Disproportionality in exclusionary discipline blocks us from the overall objective of promoting positive outcomes for all students.

Components of Effective Intervention to Prevent and Reduce Disproportionality

The existing research is clear that that no single strategy will be sufficient to produce substantive and sustainable change. Multiple components may be needed, but not all components may be necessary in all schools. We describe here a 5-point multicomponent approach to reduce disproportionality in schools.

1. Use Effective Instruction to Reduce the Achievement Gap

Because of the well-documented relation between academic achievement and problem behavior (McIntosh, Sadler, &

continued on next page

http://www.pbis.org/school/equity-pbis
A Unidimensional View of Bias

Racial Bias → Disproportionate Discipline
A Multidimensional View of Bias

Racial Bias

Vulnerable Decision Points
- Subjective Behavior: Hunger
- Vague Discipline System: Fatigue
- Unfamiliar with Student: Classrooms

Situation

Disproportionate Discipline

(Smolkowski et al., 2016)
SWIS Drill Down (www.swis.org)

Add demographic group of interest as a filter (click to “Include in Dataset”).

Click each graph and compare to overall patterns.
Neutralizing Routines for Reducing Effects of **Implicit Bias**

**Setting event**
- Child is new to program
- Fatigue

**Antecedent**
- Not following directions after requests (subjective behavior)

**Behavior**
- Remove child from setting

**Consequence**
- Child leaves setting (Escape social interaction)

**Self-assessment**
- “Is this a vulnerable decision point?”

**Alternative Response**
- Take 3 deep breaths and reteach
What makes for a good neutralizing routine?

1. If-then statement
2. Brief
3. Clear steps
4. Doable
5. Interrupts the chain of events
Neutralizing Routine Examples

• If this is a VDP…,
  – delay decision until I can think clearly
  – take three deep breaths
  – recognize my upset feelings and let them go
  – “I love you, but that behavior is not ok”
  – picture this student as a future doctor/lawyer
  – assume student’s best effort at getting needs met
  – model cool-down strategy (e.g., “turtle technique”)
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ECS
EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

PBIS
Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports
OSEP TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

Handouts: http://kentmcintosh.wordpress.com
Culturally Responsive Pyramid Model Practices

Dr. Rosemarie Allen, Metropolitan State University of Denver
The Pyramid Model

- PBIS for young children through age 5
- Matched with the developmental needs of young children
- Provides teachers, coaches, ECMH Consultants with researched-based methods to address behaviors of they view as problematic
- Promotes social emotional competence of children by intentionally teaching skills

(Fox & Hemmeter, 2009; Hemmeter, Fox, Jack & Broyles, 2007).
Multi Tiered System of Support

**Universal** level, where the needs of 80 percent of all children are met.

**Secondary** level children provides additional support to about 15 percent of the children.

**Tertiary** level that supports the 5 percent of children with persistent behaviors that are resistant to strategies implemented at the universal and secondary levels.

(Fox & Hemmeter, 2009; Hemmeter, Ostrosky & Corso 2011).
Foundation of the Pyramid Model

• Nurturing and Supportive Relationships

• High Quality Supportive Environment

• Culturally responsive practices are naturally embedded at the foundation of the Pyramid

(Fox & Hemmeter, 2009; Hemmeter, Fox, Jack & Broyles, 2007).
It is a relationship-based model that requires the development of positive relationships at all levels (Fox & Hemmeter, 2014).

Walter Gilliam, national expert on preschool suspensions, explained: “I’ve never seen a suspension or expulsion where the teachers and parents knew and liked each other.”
Culturally responsive practices places the child at the center of all teaching and learning

(Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994)
Culturally responsive practices affirm and sustain the cultural capital the child brings into the classroom environment.

Culturally responsive practitioners use the culture of the child as the foundation for teaching and learning.

Children’s cultural identity is developed, fostered and embraced in culturally responsive classrooms.

(Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994)
Cultural congruence between the child’s home and school is the cornerstone of culturally responsive practices (Joseph & Strain, 2010; Monroe, 2010).

Developing a child-centered, culturally relevant, affirming and supportive environment decreases the incidents of challenging behaviors in early childhood settings (Bal, Thorius & Kozleski, 2012; Fox & Hemmeter, 2009; James, 2013; Powell, Dunlap & Fox, 2006).
Culturally Responsive PBIS

Several states that have incorporated culturally responsive practices in SWPBIS models are experiencing success in decreasing the disproportionate number of children of color being suspended from school (Eber, et al., 2010; Lane, 2011; Southern Poverty Law Center SPLC, 2010).

These states have:

• high fidelity use of PBIS,
• district level support,
• positive relationships between staff, children, and families,
• families in decision-making positions in PBIS efforts,
• regular discourse regarding race, bias, privilege, and power and,
• a system for reviewing data points that drive discussions about race and equity (Eber, et al., 2010)
Effective implementation of culturally responsive practices requires professional development activities that include knowledge of:

- implicit bias and its impact on decision making,
- culturally responsive practices and how to implement the practices in the classroom,
- the role of critical reflection in challenging assumptions, as well as interpreting, understanding and reframing experiences

(Brookefield, 1995; Delpit, 2012; Gay, 2002; Mezirow, 2003).
The Pyramid Model coupled with culturally responsive approaches reflects best practices for reducing preschool suspensions and racial disparities in early childhood disciplinary practices.
Alignment of Culturally Responsive Practices and the Pyramid Model

**Level 1**
- **Pyramid Model:** Building relationships with families is a prerequisite for promoting social emotional competence in children. (Joseph & Strain, 2010)

**Level 2**
- **Pyramid Model:** Teaching children problem solving skills, appropriate expression of emotions and specific praise for engaging in desired behaviors (Hemmeter & Fox, 2009).

**Level 3**
- **Pyramid Model:** Collaborative approach in developing an FBA and the use of data to determine the effectiveness of the intervention (Brown, Odom, & McConnell).

**Culturally responsive practices** are meaningful, positive, culturally affirming relationships between families, staff members and children. Issues of power, privilege and difference are acknowledged and addressed. (White, et al., 2005; Edwards & Raikes, 2002; Gay, 2002)

**Culturally responsive practices include intentional teaching of culturally relevant social skills**, raising student expectations and acknowledging the positive behaviors of children in the context of their culture (Ladson-Billings, 1994)

**Culturally responsive practices ensures collaborations with families and community members and a system for reviewing data points that drive discussions about race and equity** (Eber, et al., 2010).
There has been substantial research on the importance of culturally responsive practices in addressing disparities in disciplinary practices, some of which has been conducted independently of PBIS efforts (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Sugai, O’Keeffe, & Fallon, 2012; Vincent, Randall, Cartledge, Tobin, & Swain-Bradway, 2011).

There is also considerable scholarship on transformational learning principles that lead to long-term, substantive changes in the way teachers view children of color (Durden, Escalante & Blitch, 2015; Mezirow, 1998).

Research on de-biasing activities show promise for countering the automatic and unconscious responses of implicit bias (Devine, Forscher, Austin & Cox, 2012).

These strategies when implemented together, show promise for reducing the number of children suspended and expelled from preschool.
The Pyramid Equity Project will develop tools, materials, and procedures to explicitly address implicit bias, implement culturally responsive practices, and use data systems to understand potential discipline equity issues. These practices will be implemented within the Pyramid Model for Promoting the Social Emotional Competence of Infants and Young Children (Fox, Dunlap, Hemmeter, Joseph, & Strain, 2003).
Culturally Responsive Pyramid Model Practices Course
The purpose of this course is to promote the social emotional development of young children using culturally affirming and culturally responsive strategies embedded in the Pyramid Model. Issues of implicit bias, privilege, and disproportionality in the early childhood suspensions are explicitly addressed, using a racial equity lens. This journey towards racial equity begins with being self-aware. Once biases are recognized, de-biasing activities can take place. Evidence-based practices, such as the Pyramid Model, are most effective when providers are aware of implicit and explicit racial bias and work DAILY to reflect, act, and grow. Aware is halfway there!

Last (but not final) Step: Ensure Equity: Use evidence-based practices embracing all children

Next Step: Take Action: Actively engage in de-biasing activities

1ST Step: Self Reflection: Identify and acknowledge personal biases

EQUITY JOURNEY
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PYRAMID COURSE OBJECTIVES, REQUIREMENTS, AND LAYOUT

COURSE OBJECTIVE:
In order to implement culturally responsive practices using the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children (Fox, Dunlap, Hemmeter, Joseph & Strain 2003), learners will identify personal biases, work on reducing their biases and reflect on interactions with diverse populations. Learners will also reflect on culturally responsive practices through cultural humility, placing themselves in the position of ‘student’ as they gain an awareness of the culture and values of the children and families they serve.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Participants in this course should be familiar with the Pyramid Model, specifically the Universal and Secondary Practices. To learn more about the Pyramid Model, please go to the Center for Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) website: http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/ to access training materials.

COURSE LAYOUT
There are 10 sections in this course.

(Tabs are located on the left side of the page)

- INTRODUCTION
- Section I: BRIEF SNAPSHOT OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC DISPROPORTIONALITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD
- Section II: IMPLICIT BIAS AND ITS IMPACT ON DISPROPORTIONALITY
  - Section II-B MICROAGGRESSIONS
- Section III: IMPLICIT BIAS AND ITS IMPACT ON CHILDREN
- Section IV: STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING IMPLICIT BIAS
  - Section IV-B APA PATHWAYS TO A BETTER AMERICA
- Section V: OVERVIEW OF PYRAMID MODEL
- Section VI: CULTURAL HUMILITY
- Section VII: DEVELOPING MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS
- Section VIII: CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICES
- Section IX: CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PYRAMID MODEL PRACTICES
- Section X: DESIGNING SUPPORTIVE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS
- REFLECTION


References:


Supporting the School Readiness and Success of Young African American Boys Pilot Project

Lisa Gordon
Center for Culturally Responsive Practice

September 28, 2016
The mission of the Center for Culturally Responsive Practice (CCRP) at Bank Street is to build and coordinate the capacity of communities to support children and families through the collaborative development of culturally responsive strength- and evidence-based systems, programs, and practices.

The Center supports educators to simply, but effectively embrace diversity. Working nationally with Head Start regions, city school districts, and state education departments, the Center has developed actionable, evidence-based programs that create real change linked to measurable outcomes.

**How does it work?**
More than training, and deeper than typical professional development, CCRP takes individuals and their organizations on a journey to:

- **Create** a safe environment for "courageous conversations" to explore issues of race, cultural and social class from a personal and professional level.
- **Develop** a deeper understanding of key cultural concepts and theories related to culturally responsive pedagogy and practice.
- **Embrace** this change emotionally as well as intellectually through self-reflection – leading to a paradigm shift from deficit to strength-based thinking, attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors.
- **Build** opportunities for family and school partnerships to directly engage parents in learning opportunities and experiences.
- **Establish** action plans to implement key strategies into program practice, policies, and goals. Change programs, curricula, systems, and policies – because once an individual truly makes this paradigm shift they are inspired to change the organizations where they work.
School Readiness of Young African American Boys Pilot

Purpose:

To provide input and feedback on a Culturally Responsive Strength-based Framework™ to support the school readiness of young African American boys, in order to ensure the authenticity and applicability to Early Head Start/Head Start and the early care and education community.

Culturally Responsive Strength-based Framework™

- Focuses on increasing the knowledge, and changing the attitudes, dispositions, and skills and practices of adults.
- Explores and examines key research, concepts and theories on culture and race and the historical, social, and learning contexts.
- Creates a \textit{paradigm shift from a deficit to strength-based approach}.
- Infuses culturally responsive practice into programming by promoting change at the personal, instructional, and institutional level.
Institutional Level Change

“The greatest outcome for our leadership team was the paradigm shift from a deficit to a strength-based mind set. It has helped us to realize that we have wrapped all our interventions in addressing behavioral concerns around deficits – seeking to ‘fix’ students by addressing their shortcomings, learning gaps, and behaviors”

- Elementary School Principal
Pilot site Response to Intervention (RTI) culturally responsive, strength-based supports*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strength/Interest</th>
<th>Intervention/Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>Participate on debate team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaming</td>
<td>Participate in the chess club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>Engage in art therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>Work on jump shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>Work on pass</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Resulted in a 20% reduction in referrals over prior year
Preliminary Findings

Incidents 2014-2016

- Class Disruptions
- Fighting
- Physical Aggression
- Defiance
- Skipping
- Bullying
- Property Destruction
- Intimidation
- Threat/Assault
- Harassment/Intimidation
- Inappropriate Sexual Behavior
- Profanity
- Weapons
- False Information
- False Fire Alarm
- Dress Code
- Tardiness
- Bomb Threat
- Vandalism
- Possession of Fireworks/Lighters
- Electronic Device
- Arson

Incident Type

2014-2015 Incidents
2015-2016 Incidents
Pilot Implications to Address Implicit Bias

- Institutional Level: Establish the buy-in of leadership to affect systemic change.
  - Establish and communicate a position statement about implicit bias.
  - Be explicit and intentional in addressing issues of race and equity.
  - Deeply examine data to determine areas of inequity.
  - Establish a cross-functional team of key stakeholders to champion efforts.
Pilot Implications to Address Implicit Bias (cont.)

- Instructional and Personal levels: Advance knowledge and awareness of culture and the effects of racial and cultural bias on children’s development.
  - Create safe environments to engage in courageous conversations about race beginning at the personal level.

- Instructional and Personal Levels: Engage in the process of self-reflection to support and sustain change.
  - Support reflection overtime with targeted focus on adult practices and interactions with children and families.
Pilot Implications to Address Implicit Bias (cont.)

- Institutional, Instructional and Personal levels: Implement culturally responsive practice.
  - Focus on relationships
  - Demonstrate high expectations for learning
  - Value social and emotional development
  - Focus on play and active learning
  - Implement developmentally appropriate curriculum and instruction
  - Strengthen home-school partnerships
Contact Us

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Reducing Implicit Bias in Preschool Expulsion through Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

Presentation by Deborah F. Perry, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Evaluation
Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development
September 28, 2016
What is ECMHC?

• Teams mental health professionals with people who work with young children and their families to improve their social, emotional and behavioral health and development.

• Builds the capacity of providers and families to understand the powerful influence of their relationships and interactions on young children’s development.

• Consultants conduct observations, facilitate screening and develop individualized strategies to identification of children with and at risk for mental health challenges as early as possible.
Access to Support Associated with Decreased Expulsion Rates

Mechanisms of Change

Essential Components of Mental Health Consultation

Reduced Expulsions
Theory of Change

Mental Health Consultant Partners with ECE Providers

Forms Alliances | Builds Trust

IECMHC Builds Capacity of ECE Providers

Increased Knowledge & Skills | Increased Reflective Functioning

Changes in Providers’ Beliefs, Attitudes and Behaviors

Reduced Implicit Bias → Expulsions
How does it work?

• Research on “debiasing” supports IEMCHC mechanisms of change:
  – Self-discovery in a non-threatening environment
  – Increased perspective taking
  – Individuation versus categorization
  – Self-regulation
  – Increased empathy

Future directions for the Center of Excellence for IECMHC

- Publish Toolbox with Equity as a central focus
- Disseminate strategies for making implicit bias a focal point for training and supervision for mental health consultants
- Develop tools for IECMHC programs to articulate an equity agenda
For more information contact:

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• Center of Excellence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation