



**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA)**

Facility ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Definitions:**

- **Diversity:** Diversity is defined as the practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, etc.
- **Equity:** Justice according to natural law or right; impartiality; fair, for example, when all people achieve success by being provided the appropriate resources.
- **Inclusion:** A process that cultivates an environment that values collaboration, flexibility, and equity; diversity and equity in action; purposeful intent of incorporating various voices, in particular, voices that have been silenced.
- **Accessibility:** The practice of ensuring that a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use. The person with a disability must be able to obtain the information as fully, equally and independently as a person without a disability.

**Why Best Practices Are Important: Principles of Child Development and Learning:**

- The following list is from Alanis, I., and I.U. Iruka, eds. with S. Friedman. 2021. *Advancing Equity and Embracing Diversity in Early Childhood Education: Elevating Voices and Actions*. Washington, D.C.: NAEYC.
  1. Early childhood is a uniquely valuable and vulnerable time in the human life cycle.
  2. Each individual child, family member, and early educator is unique.
  3. Each individual belongs to multiple social and cultural groups.
  4. Learning is a social process profoundly shaped by culture, society, interactions, and language.
  5. Language and communication are essential to the learning process.
  6. Families are the primary context for children’s development and learning.
  7. Learning, emotions, and memory are inextricably interconnected in brain processing networks.
  8. Toxic stress and anxiety can undermine learning.
  9. Children’s learning is facilitated when teaching practices, curricula, and learning environments build on children’s strengths and are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate for each child.
  10. Reflective practice is required to achieve equitable learning opportunities.

Education, programming, and positive behavior management techniques that are mindful of DEIA best practices support the elimination of bias and discrimination in child care.

## DEIA Best Practices Tips and Strategies:

- Adapted from Alanis, I., and I.U. Iruka, eds. with S. Friedman. 2021. *Advancing Equity and Embracing Diversity in Early Childhood Education: Elevating Voices and Actions*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.
1. Do I recruit and retain staff who are committed to DEIA?
    - Ensure DEIA is present in recruiting, training/onboarding, and public relations materials.
    - Use retention strategies that ensure all staff feel included and engaged in decision-making.
    - Create equitable policies in staff and family handbooks and contracts.
    - Develop a program culture committed to authentic engagement with empathy and without judgment.
    - Use a variety of methods to communicate the value of staff (ex. ask, listen, encourage feedback, implement changes, acknowledge, respond, and show appreciation for staff).
    - Adapt and be responsive to staff regarding time, transportation, preferred communication, and language.
  - 2) Do I include questions about DEIA when interviewing and hiring?
    - Ask: "What does DEIA look like in a child care program?"
    - Assess interviewees' responses to various DEIA scenarios.
    - Assess interviewees' openness to enhancing DEIA in the child care program.
  - 3) Do I foster relationship/team building and collaboration among staff whenever possible?
    - Relationship/team building and collaboration are built into the budget.
    - Relationship/team building and collaboration are built into the schedule.
  - 4) Do I engage staff in ongoing critical thinking and self-reflection (anti-bias articles, reviewing children's books and materials/activities, facilitating conversation between colleagues, etc.)?
    - Use a DEIA lens to review children's books and materials/activities.
    - Engage in reflective activities and explore implicit bias and its potential impact in the child care program.
    - Discuss with staff how to create a culture where staff are comfortable having conversations that explore areas of oppression, discrimination, and bias.
    - Share current anti-bias ideas in the program and community.
  - 5) Do I integrate anti-bias education into staff meetings and professional development?
    - Engage teachers, staff, and yourself in reflection and education about attitudes, knowledge, practices, and understanding of equity issues.
    - Discuss information that focuses on areas of bias, discrimination, and systemic injustices, and discuss solutions for overcoming such challenges.
    - Intentionally participate and/or create professional development opportunities that focus on addressing DEIA and the impact on child care.
    - Help staff to identify strengths and challenges and help to create goals that expand their skills.
    - Provide leadership opportunities and empower emerging leaders to take on responsibility, implement social justice projects, and/or develop professional development opportunities.
  - 6) Do I provide opportunities for families and staff to interact and learn about the strength, knowledge, and expertise children and families bring to programs?

- Create safe spaces for families and staff to engage in conversations where all parties are seeking to understand, teach, and grow.
  - Create a space where families and staff are comfortable sharing their history and skills.
  - Provide opportunities for everyone to learn from each other with respect.
  - Take the time to meet families in the community, build relationships, and learn about the equity issues and discrimination they encounter.
- 7) Have I formed an equity inclusion team that includes staff, families, and others who have direct involvement with my program?
- This is more than creating a “diversity committee” that plans “diversity events/activities.”
  - Create a team that is continuously reflecting on areas for growth within the child care setting.
  - Create a team that is comfortable asking crucial questions and seeking solutions.
  - Discuss program policies and practices that may need to be developed and/or updated through a DEIA lens.
  - Include outreach to community elders, leaders, advocacy organizations, etc.
  - Engage staff and families to develop a mission statement that includes DEIA and regularly review the mission statement to ensure continued relevance and adherence to DEIA best practices.
- 8) Do we create opportunities for families and staff to come together to create action plans and goals for children?
- Develop routine “check-ins” with families and staff (i.e., weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc. depending on the program and children’s needs).
  - At the check-ins, discuss a variety of activities that are occurring at the program and at home (i.e., family vacations, day care program field trips/activities, family traditions, program lesson plans, etc.).
  - Coordinate with families and staff to determine children’s short- and long-term goals and develop individualized lessons/activities to support those goals.
  - Ask families to update the “All About My Child” form as needed.
  - Make it fun! Find fun and creative ways to engage families in this practice. For example, coordinate a family-led “Family Fun Day” where staff and families can come together in an informal setting and participate in activities together.
- 9) Have I developed plans and procedures relating to behavior management in accordance with OCFS regulations and all other applicable rules and regulations?
- Ensure that staff follow the program’s behavior management plan.
  - Ensure that families are given a copy of the program’s behavior management plan.
  - Speak with families prior to children’s enrollment to ensure the program’s behavior management plan and the families’ philosophies regarding behavior management are aligned.
  - Gather information from families about what practices work best for their children and their children’s individual needs (refer to the “All About My Child” form).
  - Ensure that staff are trained on models that support children’s social, emotional, and behavioral development (ex. Pyramid Model Training).
- 10) Do I provide materials in children’s home languages to support activities with children?
- Utilize the DEIA Toolkit’s “All About Me” form to start to gather information about children’s home languages and culture (link below).
  - Include books, block accessories, labels, puzzles, etc. that represent families in the program as well as the larger community. Refer to the “Adding DEIA Ideas” Toolkit materials for examples (link below).

11) Do I encourage families to utilize child care assistance and other community resources?

- Provide families with guidance on how to obtain services within the community.
- Timely complete the child care provider portion of community services paperwork (if any) to assist families in obtaining services.

12) Do I ensure that staff are trained on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)? Refer to the link to ACEs training below.

- Direct staff to trainings on ACEs.
- Identify your own and your staff's adverse childhood experiences.

## **Additional DEIA Resources**

### **Websites**

- NYS OCFS Division of Child Care Services (DCCS) - <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/>
- NYS OCFS DCCS Regulations - <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/regulations/>
- NYS OCFS Division of Child Care Services (DCCS) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) Toolkit - <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/deia-toolkit.php>
- NYS OCFS Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) Training - <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/cwcs/aces.php>
- Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Pyramid Training Model Fact Sheet - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/mental-health/article/pyramid-model-promoting-social-emotional-development-infants-young-children>
- New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council (NYS ECAC) Pyramid Model - <http://www.nysecac.org/contact/pyramid-model/general-information>
- SUNY Professional Development Program (PDP) Early Childhood Education and Training Program - <https://www.ecetp.pdp.albany.edu/findtraining.aspx>
- Local NYS Departments of Social Services - <https://ocfs.ny.gov/directories/localdss.php>
- Local Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies - <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/referral-agencies.php>
- Early Care and Learning Council - <https://earlycareandlearning.org/>
- Quality Stars NY - <https://qualitystarsny.org/>
- NYS Network for Youth Success - <https://networkforyouthsuccess.org/>
- NY Works for Children - <https://www.nyworksforchildren.org/>
- NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council (NYS ECAC) - <http://www.nysecac.org/>
- NYS ECAC - The Early Care and Learning Guidelines - <https://www.ccf.ny.gov/files/7813/8177/1285/ELG.pdf>
- NYS ECAC - The Core Body of Knowledge - <https://www.earlychildhoodnyc.org/pdi/cbk.php>
- Council of Children and Families - <https://www.ccf.ny.gov/>
- National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC) - Anti-Bias Resources - <https://www.naeyc.org/taxonomy/term/106/>
- National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC) - Equity Resources - <https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/initiatives/equity>
- Council of Children and Families - <https://www.ccf.ny.gov/>
- National Black Child Development Institute - [www.nbcdi.org](http://www.nbcdi.org)
- Erikson Institute - <https://www.erikson.edu/>
- New York Association for the Education of Young Children (NYAEYC) - <https://nyaeyc.org/>

## Articles/Books/Media

- Exchange Content Hub - <https://hub.exchangepress.com/tag/diversity-equity-inclusion/>
- Graceful Leadership in Early Childhood Education - <https://www.redleafpress.org/Graceful-Leadership-in-Early-Childhood-Education-P1919.aspx>
- Doing the Right Thing for Children: Eight Qualities of Leadership - <https://www.redleafpress.org/Doing-the-Right-Thing-for-Children-Eight-Qualities-of-Leadership-P1127.aspx>
- Leading for Change in Early Care and Education - <https://www.tcpress.com/leading-for-change-in-early-care-and-education-9780807758359>
- Leading Anti-Bias Early Childhood Programs: A Guide for Change - <https://www.tcpress.com/leading-anti-bias-early-childhood-programs-9780807768525>
- Maurice Sykes: Building Leadership, Equity and Social Justice in Early Learning - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-s1JMSzabvA>