

Equity in Action



NATIONAL CENTER ON
Afterschool and Summer Enrichment



TIPS FOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Creating a safe, welcoming space where children learn and thrive, and families feel supported is a hallmark of high-quality school-age child care. In your program, you are already taking many steps to be inclusive and equitable. This tip sheet can help you reflect on your current practices and offers additional ideas for pursuing equity in your work with children, families, and staff.

Equity

"Consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals."¹ And, "Youth have the tools, resources, and other supports they need to achieve desired outcomes."²

Diversity

"Variation among individuals, as well as within and across groups of individuals, in terms of their backgrounds and lived experiences."³

Inclusion

"Embodied by the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every... child and their family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society."⁴

WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Engaging Children with Diverse Backgrounds, Needs, and Abilities

Activities and Resources



Set up inclusive activities and routines. Include and celebrate differences throughout the program day, such as using greetings in multiple languages, and be mindful of individual needs (e.g., dietary restrictions, prayer time, learning supports).

Facilitate cultural exchanges. With the permission of parents, guide children in exploring the practices of cultures other than their own through

conversations and hands-on activities. Help children learn about diversity, equity, and inclusion through real-world examples.

Honor family heritages and traditions. Hold cultural events with music, games, food, and dress to celebrate the special occasions and experiences unique to the children in your program.



Share materials from diverse authors and artists. Ensure racially and ethnically diverse authors, artists, and characters are represented in the

books, teacher materials, and other media on display so that children see themselves in the learning resources.

- 1 The White House. (2021, January 20). Executive order on advancing racial equity and support for underserved communities through the federal government. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government/>
- 2 Curry, J. S. (2017, Fall). Equity and inclusion: An action agenda for youth development professionals. *Afterschool Matters*, 26, 1-7. https://www.niost.org/pdf/afterschoolmatters/asm_2017_fall/ASM_Fall2017.pdf
- 3 National Association for the Education of Young Children. (n.d.). *Definitions of key terms*. <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/equity/definitions>
- 4 National Association for the Education of Young Children. *Definitions of key terms*.

Practice

See your work through a social justice lens. Lift up the children you serve by elevating kindness and character, and directly confronting racism, prejudice, or any words or behaviors that diminish the rights

of others. Teach social justice through modeling, storytelling, and collaborative projects.

Aim for equity in relationships. Strive for an equal give and take between children and children and adults. Help children reflect on their unique skills,

interests, and strengths, and empower them to take leadership in their groups while ensuring the voices of quieter, more reserved students are also heard.



WORKING WITH FAMILIES

Engaging Families around Equity and Inclusion

Communications and Supports

Create opportunities for listening to families.

Facilitate dialogue and two-way channels of communication between program and home through regular in-person and online exchanges or through more accessible means, such as text messaging.



Provide information and supports.

Share details about how your program promotes equity and inclusion, such as with staff development in equitable practices, family representation in governance, and financial assistance. Adapt and amend these supports based on feedback from families.

Practice

Build bridges to participation. Support family engagement in your program's activities with culturally competent



outreach. Welcome families in the languages they speak during the times they are available for events and listening sessions that are relevant to their interests.

Connect to the wider community.

Get to know the communities where your families live and work to expand your understanding of their priorities, needs, and culture. Involve community liaisons and trusted advocates and meet at homes or in community spaces, such as community centers, libraries, houses of worship, parks.

WORKING WITH STAFF

Engaging Staff and Building Capacity in Equity and Inclusion

Professional Learning and Resources

Develop skills and capacity. Organize professional learning opportunities in equitable instructional practices, such as implicit bias training, to build workforce competencies in equity. Focus on resilience for staff members of color especially.



Offer a diverse collection of resources. Provide teacher materials, books, and other media whose authors and characters are gender inclusive, racially and ethnically diverse, and representative of different abilities to ensure a

wide range of viewpoints in learning resources.

Practice

Build equity into organizational culture. Put structures in place to support and retain staff who are representative of the communities you serve, such as opportunities for professional learning, advancement, and self-care that recognize systemic inequities.

Use equitable language. Include and empower staff using strengths-based framing and descriptions that reflect how they self-identify—for example, ask staff for their pronoun preferences. Avoid language rooted



in racist stereotypes or colonialism that diminishes people's identity and experiences.

Understand bias. Do [research](#)¹ and test yourself using an implicit bias tool to learn when you and your staff might be subconsciously influenced by stereotypes and responding to children and families with bias.

Lead by example. Take specific steps to advance equity, such as recruiting for diversity and adopting anti-bias curriculum. Understand that program leaders acting as change agents serve as powerful role models for staff and students.

¹ Perception Institute. (n.d.). *Implicit bias*. <https://perception.org/research/implicit-bias>

