

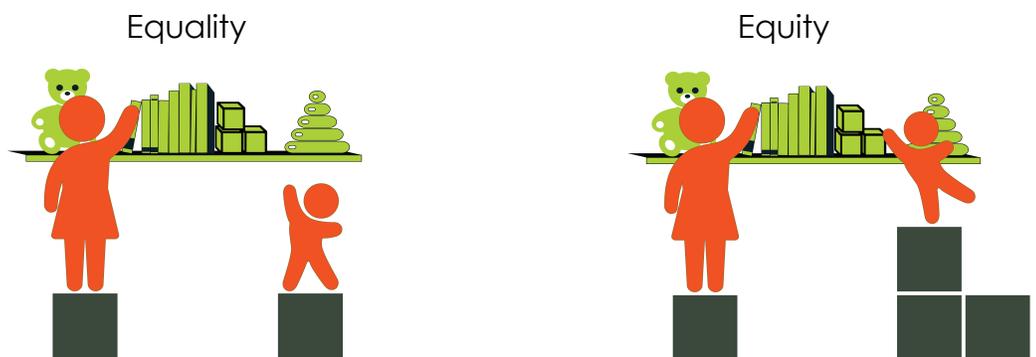


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APPLYING AN EQUITY LENS AND GUARDING AGAINST BIAS USING THE CHILD©: A TOOL FOR CONSULTANTS

When providing feedback to teachers, the consultant is advised to document specific behaviors that were observed during the observation. This worksheet is a tool to assist early childhood mental health consultants to detect potentially discriminatory behaviors in the classroom using the CHILD© observation scale.

Let's first define what we mean by *equity* and *bias* in the context of early child care and education (ECCE). **Equity** refers to how providers apply strategies to address disparities. Potential sources of disparities/inequities include, to name a few: *race/ethnicity* (e.g., African Americans vs. European Americans), *sex* (girls vs. boys), *language* (e.g., English language learners vs. non-English language learners), *religion* (e.g., Muslims vs. Christians), *family structure* (e.g., children of single parents vs. children of two-parent households), *ability* (e.g., children with special needs vs. typically-abled children), *social class* (e.g., children from low-income vs. high-income families), and *behavior* (e.g., compliant children vs. externalizers vs. internalizers). Remember that equity and equality are not the same. A "fair" teacher spends an equal amount of time and provides an equal amount of support to all children regardless of their individual needs. Not all children, however, benefit from this "blanket approach". For instance, English language learners need to be provided with additional scaffolding because of a language barrier; or children with special needs may not be able to perform a particular activity without additional support. An "equitable" teacher knows which children need special attention and provides them with the right amount of scaffolding. This is best depicted in the picture below:



Bias is a loaded term. Many early childhood providers believe they are unbiased. Although explicit bias and outright racism do exist in some cases, there are subtler forms of bias still at play. Here, we refer to *implicit bias* among early childhood providers. Implicit bias, in contrast



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to explicit bias, pertains to the unintentional attitudes and beliefs we hold about certain groups of people. Implicit bias is a learned response (e.g., via subtle messages from media) that is triggered automatically, without conscious effort. Implicit biases influence the way we make decisions about children so it is important that we are mindful of these biases. For instance, a teacher may appraise Black children’s disruptive behaviors as more severe than other children’s, prompting the teacher to suspend these children without objectively justifying the decision. It is important to note that implicit biases are an inherent human quality—everyone possesses them. What is important is to be mindful of them and adjust our actions accordingly.

On the next page, we provide you with a worksheet that can be used to document instances where ECCE providers may be promoting equity or potentially demonstrating instances of bias in the classroom—both of which are teachable moments.



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CHILD DIMENSION	EQUITY QUESTIONS	CONSULTANT NOTES / EVIDENCE
<p>DIRECTIONS & RULES/ SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING</p> <p>DR-5: Staff sets and enforces clear rules and behavior expectations.</p> <p>DR-6: Staff encourages positive behavior.</p> <p>SEL-7: Staff capitalizes on opportunities to talk about feelings.</p> <p>SEL-8: Staff promotes children's social problem-solving skills.</p> <p>SEL-9: Staff facilitates positive relationships between children.</p>	<p>(+)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the teacher provide rules/behavioral expectations/scaffolding that are fair and take into consideration children's backgrounds? When there is social conflict, does the teacher listen to both sides? Does the teacher facilitate inclusion of socially withdrawn children in activities? <p>(-)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are some rules applicable only to certain groups of children but not others? Is the teacher particularly reactive to certain groups of children? Does the teacher focus attention only on children from the majority race? Does the teacher create clearly demarcated groups (e.g., based on race/ethnicity)? 	
<p>STAFF AWARENESS</p> <p>SAw-10: Staff physically circulates around children.</p> <p>SAw-11: Staff notices children's overt and subtle signals for assistance.</p>	<p>(+)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the teacher attend to both overt and subtle behaviors? Does the teacher reach out to quiet, shy, socially withdrawn children? <p>(-)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the teacher focus mostly on sociable children or children who are demonstrating overtly disruptive behaviors? 	



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CHILD DIMENSION	EQUITY QUESTIONS	CONSULTANT NOTES / EVIDENCE
<p>STAFF-CHILD INTERACTIONS</p> <p>SCI-16: Staff speaks to children with dignity and respect.</p> <p>SCI-17: Staff engages children in friendly conversations.</p> <p>SCI-18: Staff exhibits warmth and affection toward children.</p> <p>SCI-19: Staff attends to children equitably.</p>	<p>(+)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the teacher use language or provide activities that celebrate a child's race, nationality, religion, or other family background?• Does the teacher demonstrate authentic interest in a child's family background or home life and listen to the child's expression of emotions?• Does the teacher demonstrate authentic warmth, affection, and attention to all children, not just children who are clearly the "favorite"? Does the teacher notice children who are otherwise quiet and withdrawn? <p>(-)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the teacher use language that is racist/sexist or does the teacher mock a child's religion, appearance, intellectual or physical ability?• Does the teacher have a clear "favorite"? Is it evident that there is an identified "problem child"?	



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CHILD DIMENSION	EQUITY QUESTIONS	CONSULTANT NOTES / EVIDENCE
<p>INDIVIDUALIZED & DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PEDAGOGY</p> <p>IDAP-20: Staff provides appropriate individualized support and feedback.</p> <p>IDAP-21: Children’s interests, motivations, and personal experiences/backgrounds drive the direction of activities and lessons.</p> <p>IDAP-22: Staff promotes children’s verbal self-expression.</p> <p>IDAP-23: Staff encourages children’s creative self-expression.</p> <p>IDAP-24: Staff provides children with rich and engaging activities.</p>	<p>(+)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the teacher provide support that addresses specific needs of children?• Does the teacher give a voice to children from minority backgrounds?• Does the teacher encourage children (e.g., English language learners) to express themselves freely both verbally and creatively? Does the teacher demonstrate genuine interest in what these children have to say? <p>(-)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the teacher apply inconsistent strategies that favor some children over others?• Are activities mostly focused on “typical” activities and games that appear to leave out certain children?• Does the teacher dismiss or stifle certain children’s attempts at verbally/creatively expressing themselves?	