In response to the recent events surrounding the death of George Floyd, and in recognition of the multiple Social Justice issues that have existed in our nation, I would like to highlight for families the curriculum supporting **Anti-Bias Education** that the ELC adopted a year ago. We have not had much time to establish the curriculum, but have begun to discuss ways to learn and enact the curriculum at the ELC; this is in addition to our development and learning curriculum, The Creative Curriculum.

Let me introduce what the **Anti-Bias Curriculum** means for families, children and staff.

An important responsibility of families and Early Childhood Educators is to help prepare children with the attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary to live and work successfully in a complex, diverse world.

“Children begin to notice differences and evaluate others at a very early age. By the age of three, children begin to show signs of being influenced by societal norms and biases and may exhibit "pre-prejudice" toward others on the basis of gender or race or being differently abled (Derman-Sparks, p. 2).

In fact, some psychologists say that children are "culturally programmed" by the age of three.

**Anti-bias curriculum** embraces an educational philosophy as well as specific techniques and content. It is value based: Differences are embraced; oppressive ideas and behaviors are to be questioned. It sets up a creative tension between respecting differences and not accepting unfair/unequitable beliefs and acts. It asks teachers and children to confront/question confusing/ troublesome issues rather than covering them up, or taking a “we don’t talk about this” approach.

An anti-bias perspective is integral to all aspects of daily classroom life. **Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools For Empowering Young Children** is not a recipe book. Using its principles and methodology, teachers (and families who choose to use the book) must recreate anti-bias curriculum in their setting in relation to specific groups of children and families, and issues that may not “fit” into the dominate culture.

Therefore, developmental information about children, illustrated by their comments, questions, and behavior, supplements suggested activities so that the teacher can understand the "why" as well as the "what" and "how" of the activities. It is not always easy to implement anti-bias curriculum on a regular basis, whenever the appropriate moment pops up. Few early childhood educators have been prepared to talk with children about race, ethnicity, and disabilities. The situation is similar to the discomfort adults felt in the past when responding to the question "Where do babies come from?" Now many more early childhood teachers know how to address that question. Like children, grown-ups must learn by doing: by making mistakes, and thinking about it, and trying again. Anti-bias teaching requires critical thinking and problem solving by both children and adults. And, because at heart, **Anti-Bias Curriculum** is about social change, it may meet with resistance -from other teachers, from parents, from administrators-and from one's own ambivalences and discomforts.

Nevertheless, it is worth the hard work. Through Anti-Bias Curriculum, teachers enable every child to achieve the ultimate goal of early childhood education: the development of each child to her or his fullest potential.

If you have question, concerns or ideas you might like to share about how the ELC could support a more equitable environment or about the Anti-Bias Curriculum, please feel free to contact me, Diana Morello-DeSerio 330 240-3980 or [dmorello@udel.edu](mailto:dmorello@udel.edu)

One example I have from leading a Co-hort of teachers through a year long journey of becoming an Anti-Bias teacher is from Ms. Mary:

Mary had asked each child to paint a paper “leaf” for their fall name tree. As the children were settling in for nap, one bi-racial child was watching intently to discover how the bulletin board display was transforming. Ms Mary was placing leaves at random to try to balance the leaves on each side of the paper tree. The child said, Ms Mary, why are you doing that? Ms. Mary said, I am placing the leaves so we can see our names we wrote on the leaves. The child paused and said no, why are you doing that, and Ms. Mary said, what do you mean? The child said, you have all the brown children’s names on one side of the tree and the white children’s names on the other. Mary said she stepped back and she said at that exact moment, immediately, the work we had been doing in our Anti-Bias Education journey came right to her; she could just shrug it off, or she could address the child’s concern. She decided to be the Anti-Bias Educator she was working on becoming- Ms. Mary said, I have. I didn’t even realize this until you pointed it out, thank you for sharing this observation with me, how did that make you feel when you noticed? The child responded, “ I was just wondering why?” Ms Mary said, I didn’t realize, I was arranging the leaves so they looked as if they were falling from the tree. Would you like to help me place them? The child was excited to help and they went on to be open and ask question of each other throughout the year.

References Freire, P. (1970). Pedagogy of the oppressed. New York: The Seabury Press.

Phillips, C. B. (1987). Foreword. In B. Neugebauer (Ed,). Alike and different: Exploring our humanity with young children (pp. 5-6). Redmond, WA: Exchange Press.

Derman-Sparks ( ). Anti-Bias Curriculum Find the rest