



Think Babies Michigan

Recommendations for Implicit Bias Training in the Early Childhood Workforce

April 2021

Implicit Bias Training Workgroup Charge

Think Babies Michigan, formally known as the Michigan *Prenatal to Three Policy Collaborative*, is working to ensure that Michigan is a top state to have and raise a baby. One of the Collaborative's priorities is to ensure that race, income or zip code does not determine a child's destiny in Michigan. As a part of that strategy, the Think Babies Michigan Implicit Bias Training Workgroup was established to begin laying the groundwork for the following policy priority from the Think Babies Michigan Policy Agenda:

Require that all state department employees and local providers (i.e. healthcare, education, childcare) who serve and interact with families and young children participate in implicit bias training.

This document recommends a plan to require and adequately resource implicit bias training for all early childhood employees and contractors at all levels for consideration by state agencies (such as the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), the Governor's office and other policymakers to implement.

The members of this workgroup want decision makers to know...

The impact of bias and inequity is reflected in so much data at a system level across service delivery sectors (e.g. health, mental health, early care, child welfare, etc). What isn't necessarily captured is the impact on individuals, and that this contributes to an intergenerational transition of trauma and behaviors reflecting feelings of invisibility, rage, anxiety and hopelessness. We do need to acknowledge that experiences of inequity create stressors for families that will impact young children.

Inequity affects everyone in our community. Baseline implicit bias training is the first step in assuring that staff working with young families have the knowledge and skill set needed to support access to resources that improve the health, social connection and ultimately life trajectory of Michigan's children.

Implicit bias legitimately holds people back, causes harm, and is real.

When community and program leaders understand that bias exists and how to support employees and residents in a way that honors everyone, educators and the workforce can be more effective and more productive.

When everyone caring for young children, in Michigan's health, education and child care delivery systems, understands the power of implicit bias, we can work collaboratively together to reduce it's impact on the families we serve.

Extensive research shows that the first five years of a child's life is when the brain develops most rapidly and has a crucial impact on success in school and life. It follows that the quality, positive or negative, of early experiences have a dramatic impact on self-esteem and academic achievement. Providing education and active skill building for the early childhood workforce to assure that all children are treated in a fair and equitable manner is the best opportunity and best return on investment to produce healthy, capable and successful adults.

IMPLICIT BIAS TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS

Definitions

Who is the early childhood workforce?

The early childhood workforce includes:

- physical health
- infant and early childhood mental health
- child welfare and social services
- early identification and intervention
- coaches, trainers and consultants and
- early learning and care in homes and in centers, licensed and license-exempt

What is Implicit bias?

Implicit bias is a tendency or inclination in our outlook that results in negative judgment without question. There's no consideration for alternative points of view. An inclination is often an involuntary tendency or urge to act or feel in a particular way.

(Michigan Department of Health and Human Services(MDHHS)/Webster)

What is Racialized Implicit Bias?

Racialized implicit bias is a tendency or inclination in our outlook that results in negative judgment of Black, Indigenous or people of color without question. An inclination is often an involuntary tendency or urge to act or feel in a particular way.

(MDHHS/Webster)

What is Racism?

Racism involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices.

(Racial Equity Tools Glossary)

Foundations

- Training on implicit bias should be offered more than once each year and as a starting point toward continuous learning.
- Employees who have completed implicit bias, racial equity or DEI training within the last year may be deemed to have met the minimum requirement, subject to approval and verification.
- Additional training above and beyond training on implicit bias will be necessary to build knowledge and skill to advance racial equity and inclusion and should be offered in a series.
- Implicit bias training should be reinforced and supplemented with
 - ✓ self-assessments
 - ✓ coaching and

- ✓ reflective practices.
- Supports should be made available to enable reflective supervision and accountability, including:
 - ✓ Concrete examples of strategies and everyday actions
 - ✓ Tools to plan and track workplace culture change and
 - ✓ Tools for performance management and other monitoring.
- Degree and certificate programs that prepare people to enter the early childhood workforce and provide professional development should develop and require at least one credit course on implicit bias.
- All degree and certificate programs that prepare people to enter the early childhood workforce and provide professional development should incorporate implicit bias and racial equity content.

Training Characteristics

- Make implicit bias training relevant to
 - ✓ Each setting (for example, family/friend/neighbor care AND licensed childcare) and
 - ✓ Real experiences folks have in those settings.
- Implicit bias training should be live or interactive to ensure accountability, completion and learning.
- Live training opportunities should be offered by:
 - ✓ trainers from diverse backgrounds and experiences and
 - ✓ trainers with a commitment to the aims of implicit bias training.
- Implicit bias training programs should include:
 - ✓ hands on and reflection activities
 - ✓ ongoing opportunities for facilitated dialogues
 - ✓ communities of practice and
- Employers should offer opportunities to practice new skills and apply new knowledge.
- Remove language barriers to learning when English is a second language and for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Implicit bias training programs should commit to continuous quality improvement in order to respond to various learning styles and training preferences such as length and format.

Adequate Resources for Training

- Funding should make training available at low or no-cost for all types of providers, staff, directors and administrators, and contractors.
- Incentives should be offered to complete the training.

Accountability

- Family, parent and guardian feedback should be included in accountability and reporting activities (i.e., anonymous surveys or incorporating into existing feedback opportunities).
- Performance measurement, evaluation and other monitoring should be used to assess progress made on goals.

- Early childhood professionals who are new applicants and applicants for renewal of licensing will need to complete implicit bias training and ensure all staff and volunteers complete training.
- Implicit bias training should be required for
 - ✓ Certifications
 - ✓ Accreditation
 - ✓ Contract compliance
 - ✓ Eligibility for Medicaid/health insurance reimbursements
- Develop an implicit bias training quality indicator for Great Start to Quality ratings.
- Award Great Start to Quality points for early adopters of implicit bias training.
- Include requirements for implicit bias professional learning and infrastructure when there are opportunities to update state plans for federal programs (i.e. Medicaid, CCDBG, Early On).
- Mandate reporting of observations or experiences that result from bias.

Over the next year, Think Babies Michigan Collaborative Members will seek to work with all policymakers and influencers to implement these recommendations to help make Michigan a top state to have and raise a baby.

RESOURCES

Toolkits

<https://www.iecmhc.org/resources/coe-equity-toolkit>

<https://www.racialequitytools.org>

Workplace Culture Change and Performance Management/Monitoring

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0011000014548900>

<https://www.teacherleadershipinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Cultural-Proficiency-Framework.pdf>

Training

www.eracce.org

<https://ethnicdiversity.org>

<https://greatlakesequity.org>

<http://indigoculturalcenter.org>

<https://www.michigan.gov/minorityhealth>

www.mphi.org/our-teams/center-for-health-equity-practice