



Understanding Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy for Young Children and Ourselves

CLI TSR Summer Institute 2022

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About Me: Natalie Flores, Ed.M.



- ***Education Outreach Manager at Children's Learning Institute***
 - Lead the Education Advisors Team
- ***Former ECE Classroom Teacher***
 - Served in birth-2nd grade classrooms
- ***University Lecturer (CUNY; CAL STATE)***
 - Specialize in courses grounded in ECE curricula & assessment; Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy; policy & practice.

Agenda

Self-Focused (Sections 1-2)

Welcome: Objectives & Group Icebreaker

Section 1: Definition and Purpose of CSP in ECE

Section 2: My Multicultural Self Reflection Activity & Share Out (Discussion)

Practice-Focused (Sections 3-4)

Section 3: Affirming Identities with CSP (Lecture & Discussion)

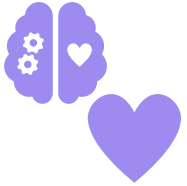
Section 4: Tangible Resources for the ECE teacher

Closing: Door prizes!

Norms & Expectations



We are here because we chose to be here



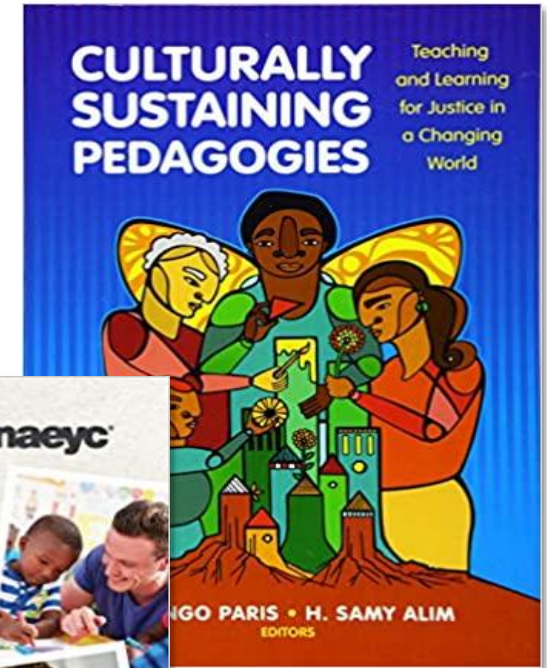
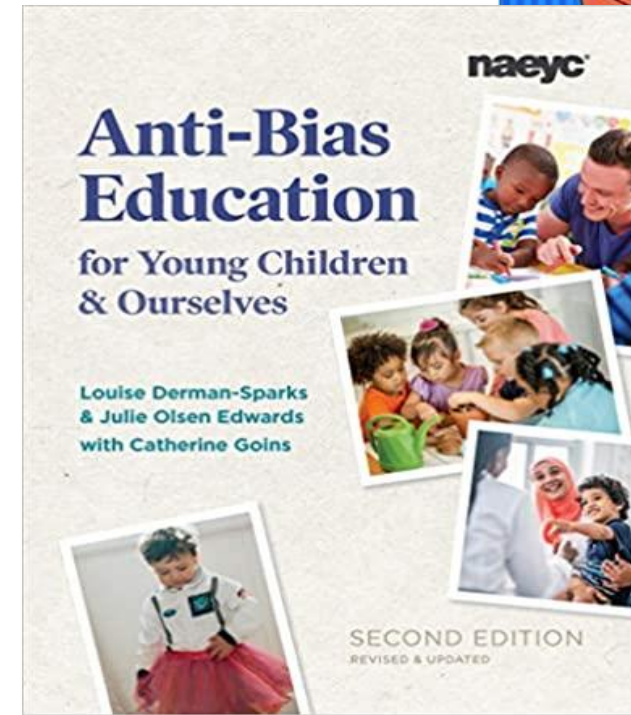
We are receptive: open hearts, open minds



We hold opinions based in respect and anti-harm

Objectives

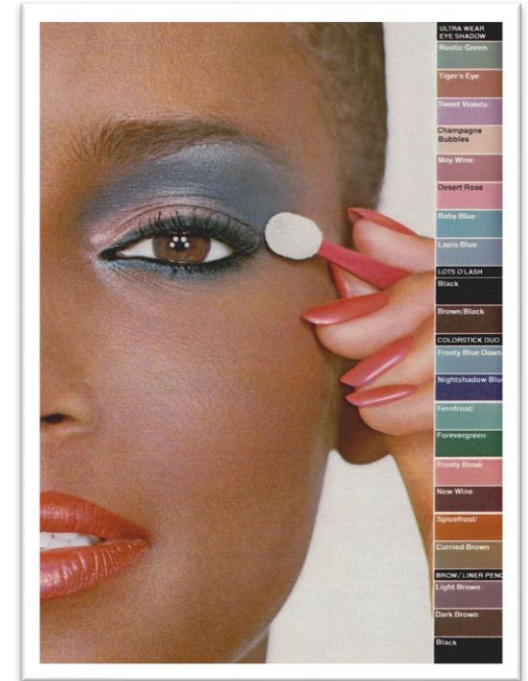
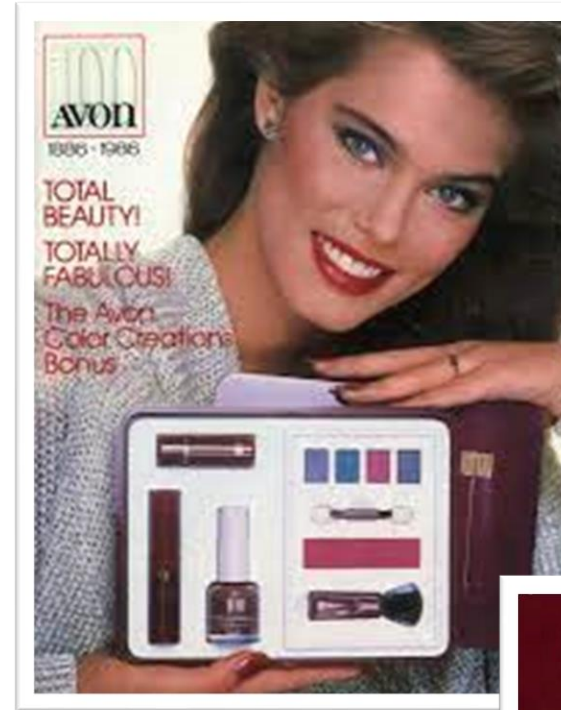
- Define and make meaning of CSP
- Leverage CSP to help us affirm identities in our classroom community (including our own identities)
- Understand the connections between CSP and evidence-based practices



Welcome and Icebreaker

When I say “go”...

- **First:** Introduce yourself to your table neighbors.
- **Second:** Reflect on and share your favorite childhood literacy activity
 - Literacy activities can include reading, writing, storytelling, singing, and drawing



Section 1: Definition and Purposes for CSP in ECE Settings

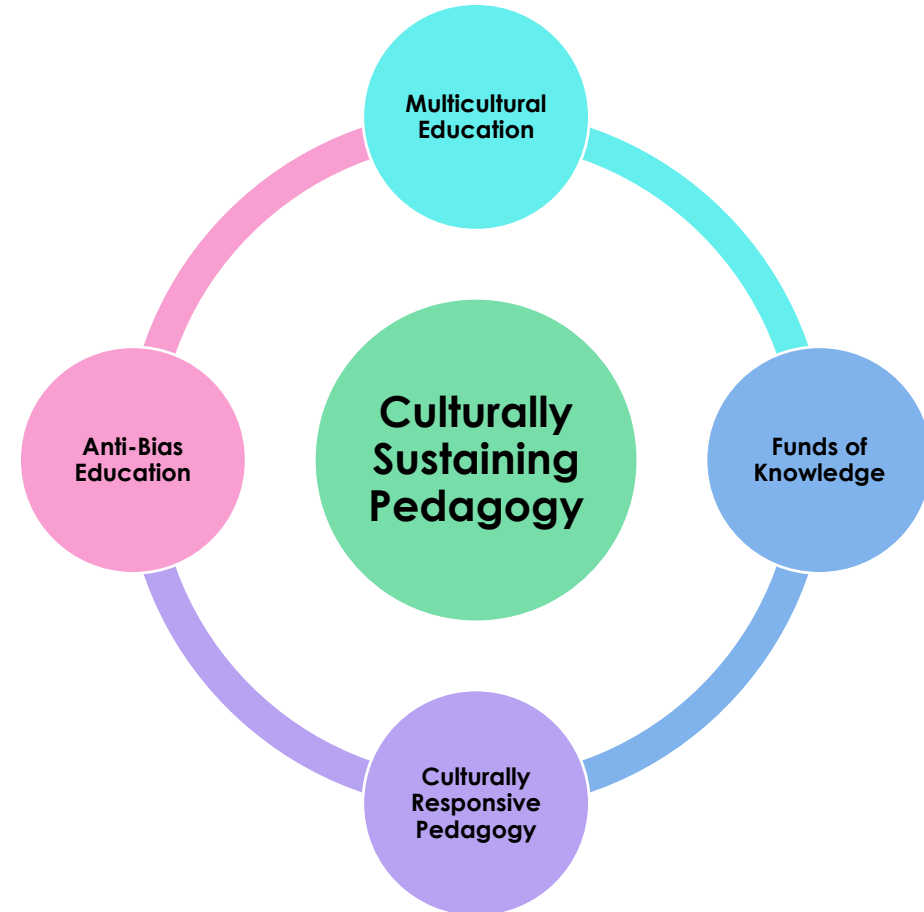
Part 1: Introduction

- **Bias:** To feel or show inclination against/for someone or something.
- **Prejudice:** Preconceived opinion (thought) about someone or a group of people – a pre-judgement.
- **Discrimination:** Unjust treatment (action) of someone or a group of people based on prejudices.
- **Oppression:** Systemic, unjust treatment toward someone or particular groups of people.

Part 1: Introduction

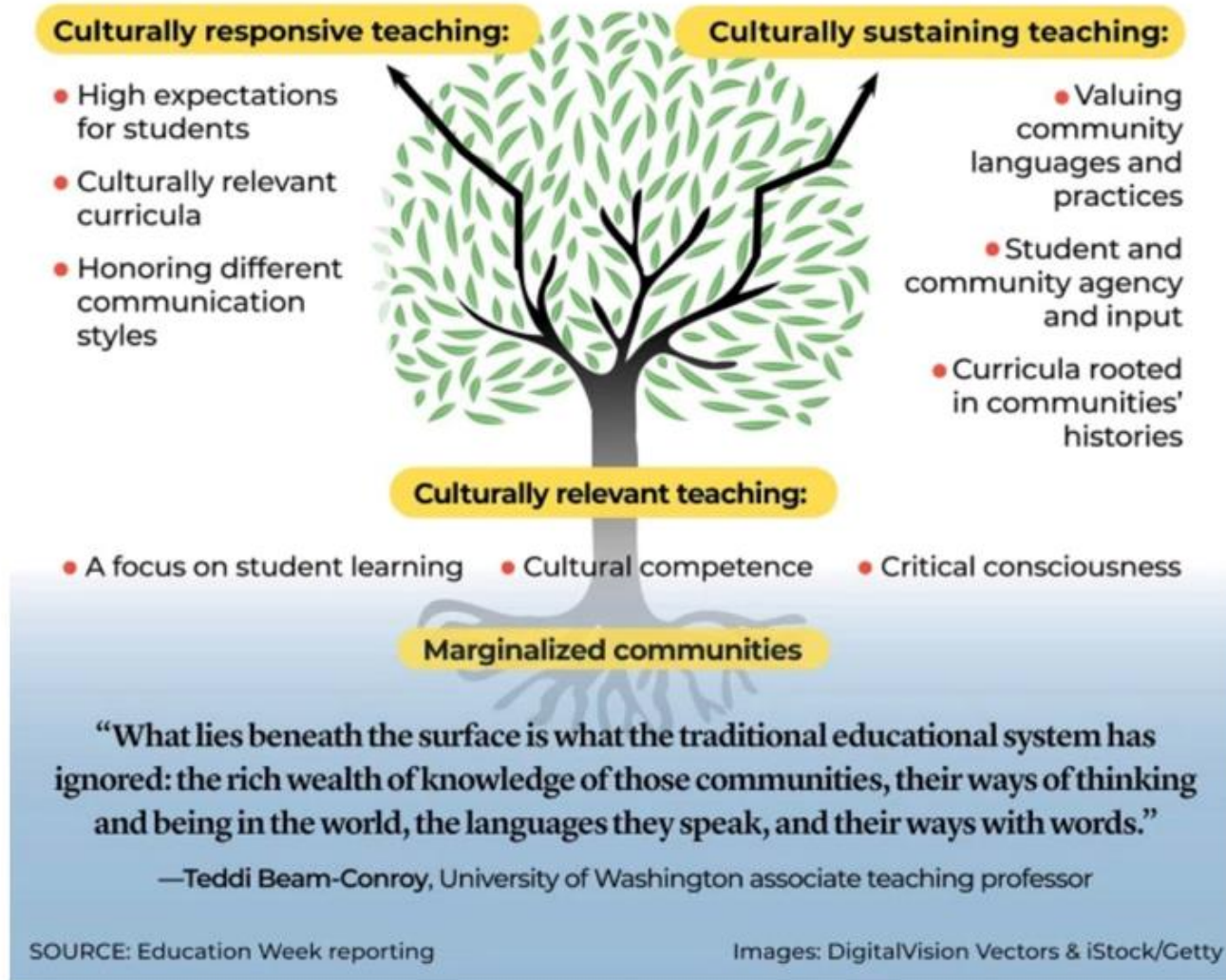
In this section, we will:

1. Define asset-based pedagogies and CSP
2. Understand the purpose of CSP
3. Apply CSP to ourselves



Asset-Based Pedagogies

These teaching methods and practices focus on the strengths of all students and value diversity in culture, language, and other traits. Here are some of the most commonly known terms in this approach to teaching and their key components.

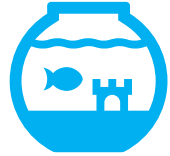


Part 1: Defining Asset-Based Pedagogies

Similar teaching concepts related to Asset-Based Pedagogies:

- Culturally Responsive Teaching
- Culturally Relevant Teaching
- Multicultural Education
- Funds of Knowledge
- Anti-Bias Education

Part 1: Defining CSP



Culturally

The norms, values, practices, patterns of communication, language, laws, customs, and meanings shared by a group of people in a given time and place



Sustaining

The ability to acknowledge, support, and strengthen something



Pedagogy

The method or practice of teaching as an academic subject or theoretical concept

Part 1: Defining CSP

***Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy
means our approaches to teaching
must support and strengthen our
students' cultures***

Part 1: Purpose of CSP in ECE

After hearing the definition of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy, consider:

What is the purpose of incorporating CSP into ECE settings?

Raise your hand to share – there are no wrong answers, only observations!



Part 1: Purpose of CSP in ECE

When you see and value my culture, you see and value me as a member of the classroom community.



Part 1: Purpose of CSP in ECE

- Children bring their own set of culturally based expectations, skills, talents, abilities, and values with them into the classroom.
- They begin to develop their self-concept (at least in part) from how others see them.
- To form positive self-concepts, children must honor and respect their own families and cultures **and have others honor and respect these key facets of their identities too.**
- If the classroom doesn't reflect and validate their families and cultures, children may feel invisible, unimportant, incompetent, and ashamed of who they are.

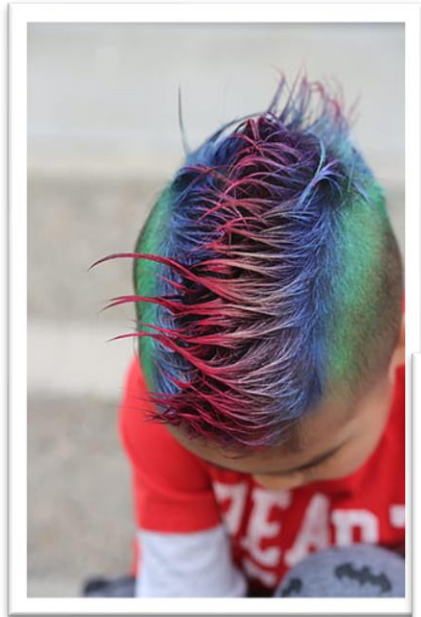
Part 1: Purpose of CSP in ECE

When you don't see or value my culture, you devalue and dehumanize me.

You do not need to adopt a culture's norms in order to respect them.



Part 1: Cultural Expression Examples



- **Body art**
 - Beliefs on piercing, tattoos, hair color/cut
- **Food**
 - Notions of “healthy” meals
- **Dress**
 - How we express ourselves through fashion
- **Communication**
 - The way children communicate with adults

Part 1: Purpose of CSP in ECE

- Many people, including educators, have long believed it is better to act “color/race blind” and/or “culture blind”— to not acknowledge color (race) or cultures different from their own
 - “Let’s just focus on what makes us the same”
 - “I don’t see color, I see children!”
 - “Let’s not talk about politics”
- Research shows that this “artificial blindness” keeps us from recognizing, acknowledging, and appreciating important differences.
- Worse, it may lead to unintentional bias toward or disrespect for those who are different from us.

Part 1: Purpose of CSP in ECE

***When you see and value my culture,
you see and value me as a member
of the classroom community.***

Part 1: Purpose of CSP in ECE

**Self
Constructed**

**How do
I see
myself?**

**Externally/
Socially
Constructed**

**How do
others
see me?**

Part 1: Purpose of CSP in ECE

This same logic applies to our:

Gender identity: How a person self-identifies their gender, which may include man, woman, boy, girl, genderqueer, or other gender identities.

Racial/Ethnic identity: The significance and meaning that individuals and society place on race as a definitive characteristic

Part 1: Purpose of CSP in ECE

This same logic applies to our:

Class identity: The social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation

Abilities identity: A person or group's understanding of the diverse array of differences in physical, mental, cognitive, developmental, learning, and/or emotional make-up

Part 1: Purpose of CSP in ECE

When you see and value my identities, you see and value me as a member of the classroom community.

Section 2: My Multicultural Self Activity

My Multicultural Self Activity (5 min per step)

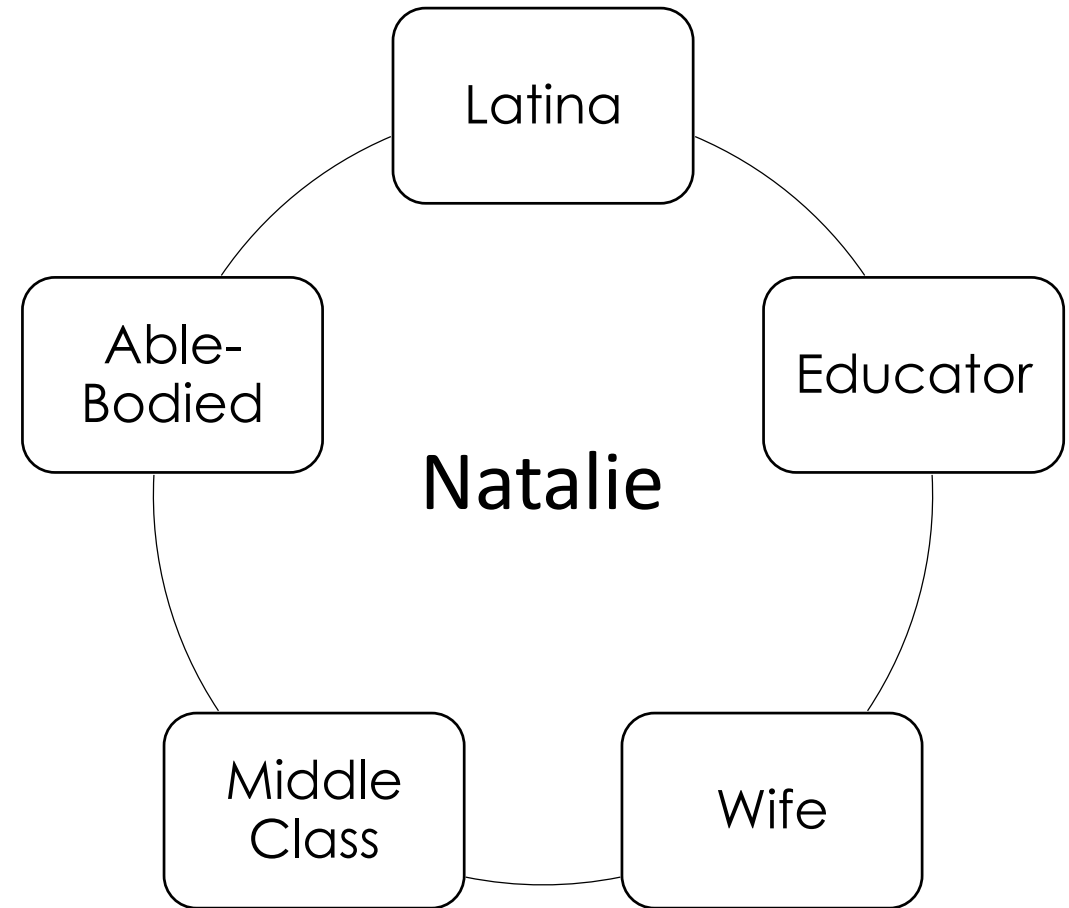
Materials Needed:

- ✓ Writing utensil
- ✓ My Multicultural Self Handout (4 step document)
- ✓ A partner or small group to share with

**Please write on your copy of the handouts. PDF copies are available to download.*

My Multicultural Self Activity (5 min per step)

Step 1: Use the identity bubbles to name aspects of yourself that are important in defining who you are.



My Multicultural Self Activity – Whole Group Discussion

Was it difficult to pick only 5 identities?

My Multicultural Self Activity (5 min per step)

Step 2: Compare your identity bubbles with your table/partner to see if there are any similarities and/or differences.

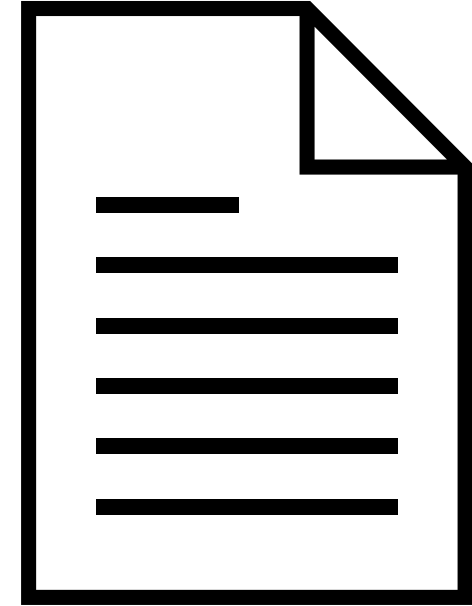
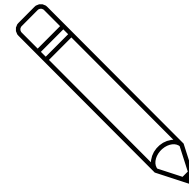
Similarities	Differences
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Female✓ Middle class✓ Wife	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Religion✓ Mother

My Multicultural Self Activity – Whole Group Discussion

Which identities do you have in common with others? Differences?

My Multicultural Self Activity (5 min per step)

Step 3: Consider how you would feel if you had to remove one of your identity bubbles, or hide them. You can also consider how you would feel if someone devalued one of your identity bubbles. Write your reflection.



My Multicultural Self Activity – Whole Group Discussion

Which identity would be most difficult to remove? How would you feel if one of your identities was devalued?

My Multicultural Self Activity (5 min per step)

Step 4: What are some of the ways you might be able to acknowledge, accept, celebrate, and value the different identities of another person?

Acknowledge	Accept	Celebrate	Value
"I see you are an immigrant. You were born in a different country"	"Your citizenship status does not make you a less loving and caring person"	"I am so glad you are part of my classroom community"	"As an immigrant, you bring new perspectives to our community, and I want to learn from them"

My Multicultural Self Activity – Whole Group Discussion

If you were able to get to the “value” column, how did you get there? What steps did you take?

Section 3: Affirming Identities with Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

Part 3: Defining Affirmations with CSP

What does the term “affirm” mean to you?

Directions: In the poll, pick one or two words that help you describe what the term “affirm” means.

- **Text:** NATALIEFLORES125 to 37607
- **Web:** [PollEv.com/natalieflores125](https://www.poll-ev.com/natalieflores125)

Part 3: Affirming Gender Identity with CSP

Gender Identity:

How a person self-identifies their gender, which may include man, woman, boy, girl, genderqueer, or other gender identities.

A person's understanding of their gender identity can begin as early as age 2.

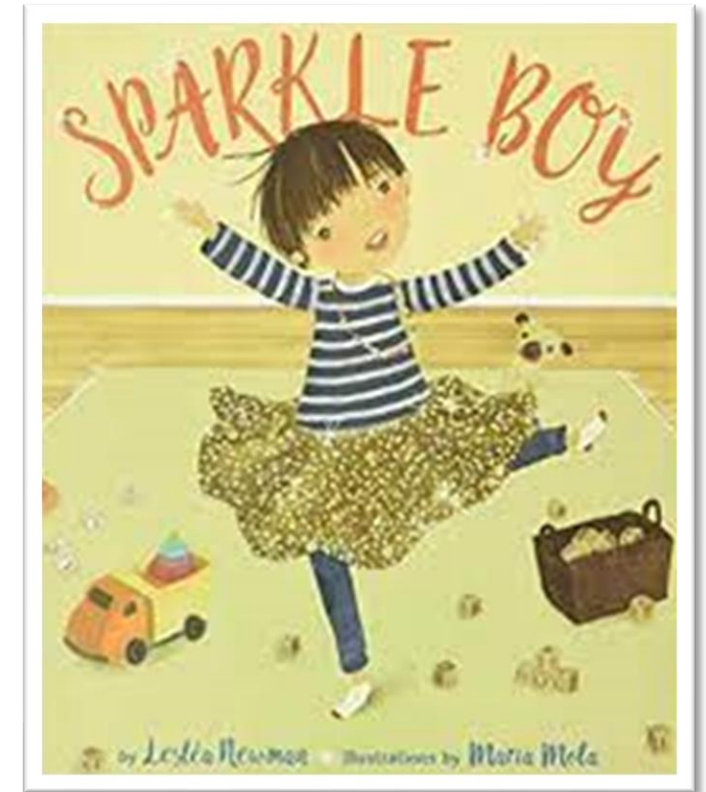
- Some children begin to persistently identify with a gender different from their assigned sex at a very young age (Feeney & Freeman 2019; Ehrensaft 2011)
- Our role as educators is to create a safe and reflective space for children to develop their identities and to counterbalance gender stereotypes.

Part 3: Affirming Gender Identity with CSP

What are some gender stereotypes you have observed?

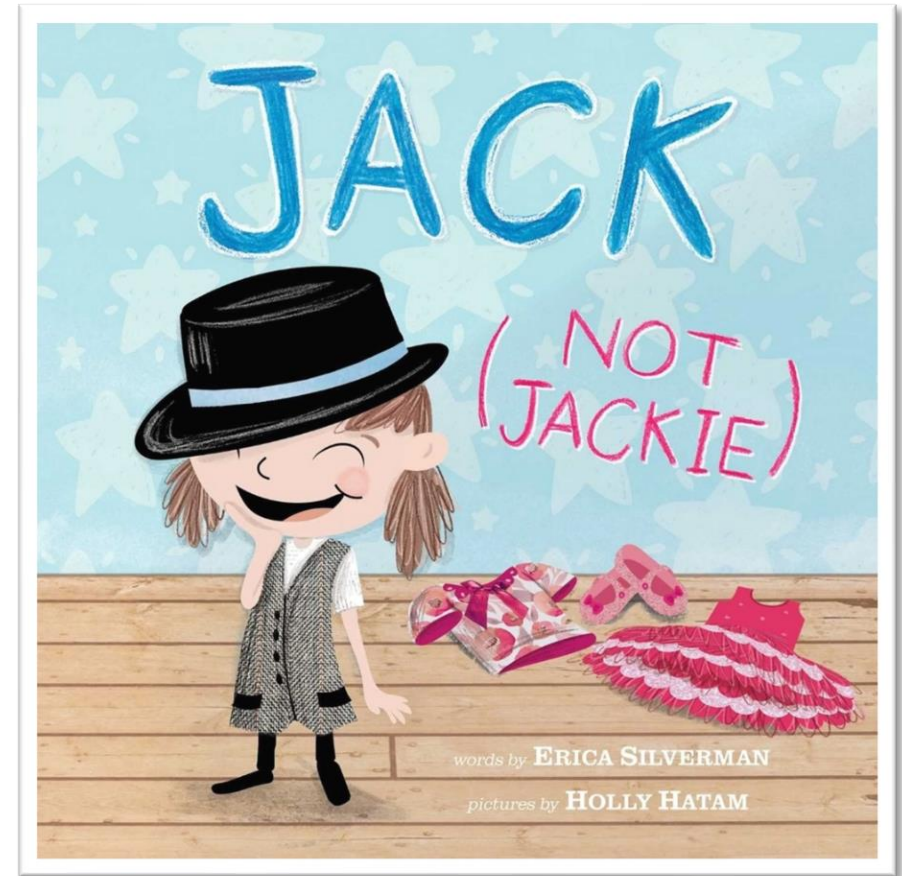
Part 3: Affirming Gender Identity with CSP

- Young children have always engaged in various forms of gender play, exploration, and identification.
- In recent years there has been *greater recognition of the range* of ways that individuals express their gender identity.
- While this has opened space for conversations about gender identity, some adults (including some educators, parents, grandparents) still attempt to stop the behavior.



Part 3: Affirming Gender Identity with CSP

- Many child-rearing values are strongly rooted in families' cultural beliefs. As teachers, we must be **flexible** and **well prepared** for difficult conversations.
- Our goal is to **balance** our responsibilities to children and to their families.



Part 3: Affirming Gender Identity with CSP

Strategies for affirming gender identity through CSP

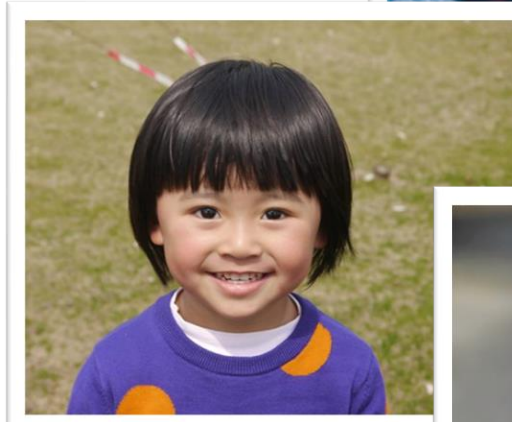
- ✓ Create an inclusive classroom that supports a variety of gender expressions and avoids perpetuating harmful gender stereotypes
- ✓ Avoid gender-specific activities (lining up, grouping)
- ✓ Incorporate pictures, books, and dress-up materials that avoid gender stereotypes into the classroom
- ✓ Be responsive to bullying; demonstrate to children how to speak up for themselves
- ✓ All of us express our gender differently over the course of our lives; children should be encouraged and supported to play, explore, and define the gender that feels right to them at the time

Part 3: Affirming Racial/Ethnic Identity with CSP

Racial Identity:

The significance and meaning that individuals and society place on race as a definitive characteristic.

Children as young as 6 months old begin to observe differences in skin color.



Part 3: Affirming Racial/Ethnic Identity with CSP

On a scale of 1-5, how comfortable do you feel talking about race with other adults?

On a scale of 1-5, how comfortable do you feel talking about race with young children?

Part 3: Affirming Racial/Ethnic Identity with CSP

- ✓ **18 months:** Many toddlers can correctly place a photograph of themselves in their racial/ethnic group, and some can select their own picture correctly in response to a group label.
- ✓ **2 Years:** Children observe and are curious about differences; they may also question differences.
- ✓ **2 ½ - 3 ½ Years:** Children become aware of and absorb negative stereotypes; some may show discomfort or dislike others who do not look like them (particularly if they have darker skin)
- ✓ **4 Years:** Children seek labels for racial/ethnic identity
- ✓ **5 Years:** Children have developed a core sense of racial/ethnic identity and begin to explore what it means to be from one race compared to another.

Part 3: Affirming Racial/Ethnic Identity with CSP

As you watch the short clips, consider the following:

- What messages have young children received about their own or others skin color?
- Where do you think these children learned these ideas?
- What impact does *avoiding* conversations of race have on children? Even when done in a “protective” manner?

Part 3: Affirming Racial/Ethnic Identity with CSP

Strategies for affirming racial/ethnic identity through CSP

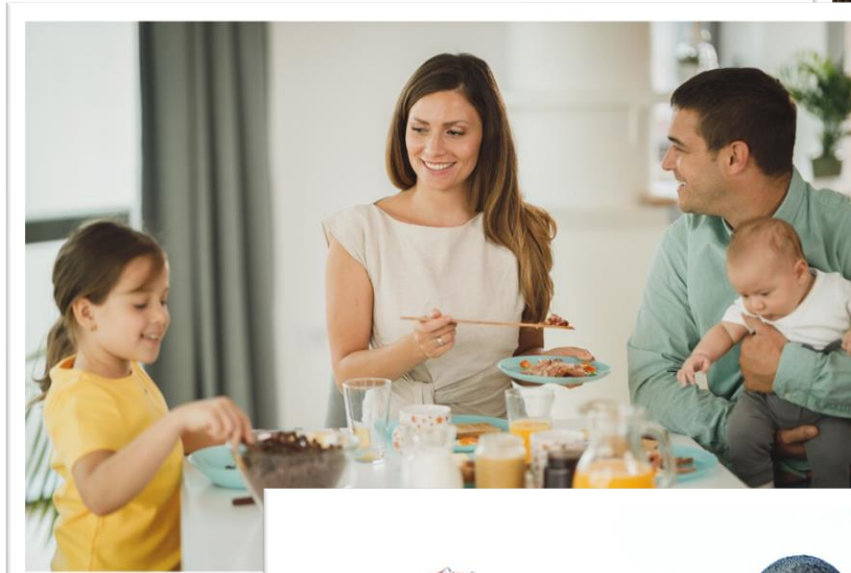
- ✓ Create safe spaces for children to explore topics of race
- ✓ Develop strategies for responding to teachable moments
- ✓ Seek in-person or online communities that aspire to learn about racial/ethnic identities and affirm them
- ✓ Anticipate the kinds of concerns or misconceptions that children and families might have, and prepare in advance some strategies for responding.
- ✓ Adopt a lens of anti-racism yourself; explore your own prejudices.

Part 3: Affirming Class Identity with CSP

Class Identity:

The social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation

No combination of education, income, and/or occupation determine the love families feel for their children.



Part 3: Affirming Class Identity with CSP

- Classism, the system of economic inequity and bias against people with low incomes and those in poverty is very real.
- Living in poverty is extremely difficult on children and their education, nutrition, housing stability, mental health, and more.
- Experiencing classism on top of the difficulties of living in poverty make the situation more difficult; children are not likely to develop positive self images and experience internalized oppression.
- Explicit and implicit biases toward people with low incomes and those living in poverty tend to be negative, while biases about people with wealth are more likely to be positive.

Part 3: Affirming Class Identity with CSP

What age were you when you realized you weren't "rich"?

What age were you when you realized you weren't "poor"?

Part 3: Affirming Class Identity with CSP

Strategies for affirming class identity through CSP

- ✓ Have the same high expectations for all families; if they can't meet those expectations, see what's in your control
- ✓ Be mindful of families' concerns about clothing
- ✓ Use sensory alternatives that are not food. This is important for families with/out food insecurities.
- ✓ Ask for contributions from neighborhood stores
- ✓ Be intentional about not drawing too much positive attention to new materials (clothing/toys) during sharing times.
- ✓ Focus on justice rather than charity. Instead of "helping poor people" focus on what actions increase fairness.

Part 3: Affirming Abilities Identity with CSP

Abilities Identity:

A person or group's understanding of the diverse array of differences in physical, mental, cognitive, developmental, learning, and/or emotional make-up

Keep in mind not all disabilities are visible.



Part 3: Affirming Abilities Identity with CSP

- Research confirms that many, if not most, children with disabilities can be successfully included in high-quality early childhood programs.
- Depending on a child's needs, they might participate in a classroom with/out disabilities for part of the day rather than full time.
 - Sadly, many children do not have even this opportunity; in schools and programs across the country, large numbers of children with disabilities are still served in segregated special education programs with little chance to participate in high-quality programs designed for all children.
- Early childhood educators are often the first professionals to suspect that there is a delay or a disability, and many times they are also the first to start interventions. Advocate for your students by collecting observational notes and administering assessments regularly.

Part 3: Affirming Abilities Identity with CSP

When was the first time you met someone with an identified disability?

Did you see this person at school? Where were they? (playground, classroom, hallway)

Part 3: Affirming Class Identity with CSP

Strategies for affirming abilities identity through CSP

- ✓ Environment: Arrange the classroom furnishings so all children can move and maneuver by themselves. Create a space that fosters autonomy.
- ✓ Relationships: Learning from peers is a two-way street; children with disabilities can equally contribute to relationships as much as children without disabilities.
- ✓ Family Engagement: Affirm ability identities with families. Some adults may not know how to use inclusive language
- ✓ Self Reflection: Examine your beliefs and knowledge about people with disabilities. Children with disabilities do not need “saving” – they need committed adults to help remove societal obstacles

Part 1: Defining CSP

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy means our approaches to teaching must support and strengthen our students' cultures and identities.

References & Resources: Race/Ethnicity

- Becoming Upended: Teaching and Learning about Race and Racism with Young Children and Their Families
- Never Too Young To Support A Cause: Supporting Positive Identity Development Through Social Justice Curriculum in Preschool
- Valuing Diversity: Developing a Deeper Understanding of All Young Children's Behavior

References & Resources: Gender

- [Focus On Ethics: Gender Expression and Identity](#)
- [Practical Guidance for Teachers: Supporting the Families of Gender Nonconforming Children](#)

References & Resources: Class

- [Addressing Inequity with Anti-Bias Education: Learning about Class and Fairness](#)
- [Addressing Inequity with Anti-Bias Education: Learning about Class and Fairness](#)
- [Overview of the Development of Ethnic, Gender, Disability, and Class Identity and Attitudes in Children and Youth](#)

References & Resources: Abilities

- [Every Child Belongs: Welcoming a Child with a Disability](#)
- [Excerpt from The Essentials: Supporting Young Children with Disabilities in the Classroom](#)

Closing & Reflection

What did you (un)learn today?