

**Developing Brains-
Ideas for Parenting and Education
From the New Brain Science**
www.developingbrains.org

Training Module 3:

**Reducing Bias: Teachers of Young Children
Create Safer Environments**

Purpose of this Training:

This training is designed for people who are already motivated to reduce biases that they may hold (consciously or unconsciously) and significantly improve their relationships with people who are different from them in some way (ethnic culture, language, faith, socio-economic circumstances, family composition, physical characteristics, sexual orientation, disability, etc.)

Learning Objectives:

To increase understanding of how negatively biased attitudes and stereotypes can influence how we interact with children in our care, and how these biased interactions can limit children's learning and development.

To raise awareness of the role of implicit bias on one's communication and interactions with children and adults who differ from oneself in terms of one or more characteristics.

To increase understanding about why the teacher/caregiver staff in early childhood settings need to represent the populations served as well as populations in the local area in order to provide developmentally appropriate settings for young children.

Suggestions for the training:

For a group (such as the staff of a Child Care Center or Part-day Preschool) try to plan for 2 to 3 staff trainings where you have about 2 hours for each meeting.

For an individual (such as a Family Home Child Care teacher/caregiver or a parent) try to find one or more other providers who are interested in doing this training so you can have dialog with others for the application of the concepts. If you cannot

find a co-learner, you can do this by yourself. If you are motivated, you can successfully work on implicit bias alone.

Structure of the training:

First Session:

1. Participants come together and start with some type of warm up activity if people are not already familiar with everyone else in the group. If the group is not too large, people can get into pairs and prepare to introduce each other to the whole group. (Suggestions for introductions: name, position, how long employed there, what they like best about their job, something interesting or funny about them.)

2. Individuals will fill out the handout: "Being Conscious of Bias Around Us And Doing Something About It." (see below) Keep this to bring to the second session.

3. Participants watch the following video lecture: [This is Your Brain on Bias... or, the neuroscience of bias](http://www.clark.edu/video/faculty_speaker/DrKathyBobula/index.php), which can be accessed at:

http://www.clark.edu/video/faculty_speaker/DrKathyBobula/index.php

4. Spend about 15-30 minutes to talk about the lecture.

Second Session:

1. Participants will get into small groups and do the First Follow-up After the Lecture- Learning New Associations. (see below)

Third Session:

1. All participants will read the following article under Supporting Developing Brains:

"Reducing Bias and Opening the Doors: Another Look at Why Early Childhood Programs Need Culturally Diverse Staff"

2. Get together as a whole group and brainstorm how the program might increasingly diversify the staff.

Being Conscious of Bias Around Us and Doing Something About It

Kathy A. Bobula, Ph.D.

www.developingbrains.org

Prior to hearing the lecture, reflect on your own personal experiences with bias. Think about some experiences you have had being the target of bias and think about times when you have witnessed or become aware of someone else being the target of bias.

Make some notes below to remind you of these experiences.

Examples of when you were the target of bias	Examples of when you became aware of someone else being the target of bias
What happened? What characteristic about you was the issue? Were there assumptions?	What happened? What characteristic of the person was at issue? Were there assumptions?
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Bring these notes to the first follow-up session.

First Follow-up after the Lecture: Learning New Associations

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The following activities could happen via ongoing workgroups which continue to explore and work on personal bias reduction.

Form some small groups to do some brainstorming about implicit bias.

- All participants must be involved in the groups voluntarily and be willing to share information about personal biases with others in a constructive atmosphere, and be willing to do the follow-up personal work.
- The goal of the activity is personal change for the purpose of reducing harm we might inflict on others due to our biases.

In each group meeting, participants would begin by **taking turns sharing one of the examples** written down prior to the lecture, or others that have come up since then. The individual with support of the group will try to pin down the most specific "assumptions" that underlie the bias. Discuss this.

Collectively discuss what might be the **most specific contradiction** to the biased assumptions about this specific group or group characteristic. Take notes.

Each person would **make a plan** to say the counter to the stereotype they have shared every time they see or in some other way encounter a perceived member of that group or an individual with that characteristic.

Each participant will privately **utilize the Implicit Bias test** most applicable to the bias they explored. The findings will help inform the person to make the most specific and accurate contradiction to use to reduce the implicit bias.

Here is a link to the Implicit Bias Tests:

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/takeatest.html>

Implicit Bias tests can be utilized to discover implicit biases that each person has acquired. This then allows the person to find the assumptions and then a counter concept to be utilized in learning the new association.