

“We must all work to make this world worthy of its children.” – Pablo Casals

Dear Friends, Partners, and Members of the Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children,

The murder of George Floyd and ensuing protests highlight a brutal fact: This world is NOT worthy of its children, especially children of color. Black children and their families matter. Their dreams matter. The family’s fears for their black children are real. What’s more, trauma affects a child’s brain for life. That, too, is real, and is witnessed and interwoven within the fabric of everyday life in America in 2020.

It is the mission of Iowa AEYC to advance a diverse dynamic early childhood profession and support all who care for and work on behalf of young children. ALL young children.

Driven by our mission, we stand against the actions of exclusion: racism, hatred, and violence. It is within our mission to stand against trauma, and to empower communities to mitigate its effects. We also believe that change occurs through committed collective action.

While Iowa AEYC has taken steps toward becoming a high-performing and inclusive organization, we must commit and re-commit to act with intention as an organization committed to being part of the solution. We must work internally to uplift our members and we must work across our state to uplift children and families.

“In a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be anti-racist.” – Angela Y. Davis

400 Years in the Making

Some may be asking, “What is the difference between non-racist and anti-racist?” Truth be told, the difference between the two terms is striking. The term ‘non-racist’ is loosely defined as, “not influenced by a person’s race,” (www.cambridge.org/dictionary) “Being antiracist is fighting against racism. Racism takes on several forms and works most often in tandem with at least one other form to reinforce racist ideas, behavior, and policy,” (National Museum of African American History & Culture, Smithsonian; Washington, DC).

Different types of racism exist in today’s society. We at Iowa AEYC work to quell these notions in an effort to be both high-performing *and* inclusive as an early childhood association. These types of racism include:

- Individual Racism – refers to beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism in conscious and unconscious ways.
- Interpersonal Racism – occurs between individuals. These are public expressions of racism, often involving slurs, biases, or hateful words or actions.
- Institutional Racism – occurs in an organization. These are discriminatory treatments, unfair policies, or biased practices based on race that result in inequitable outcomes for whites over people of color and extend considerably beyond prejudice.
- Structural Racism – is the overarching system of racial bias across institutions and society. These systems give privileges to white people resulting in disadvantages to people of color.

Source: National Museum of African American History & Culture, Smithsonian; Washington, DC

Ways to be Anti-racist instead of Non-racist

1. Understand the definition of racist.
2. Stop saying, "I'm not racist."
3. Identify racial inequities and disparities.
4. Confront the racist ideas you've held or continue to hold.
5. Understand how your antiracism needs to be intersectional.
6. Champion antiracist ideas and policies.

Source: Six Ways to be Antiracist, because being 'Not Racist' isn't Enough; www.mashable.com

Today: Iowa's Landscape

In Iowa:

- Black Iowans educate Iowa's children in a service industry that barely pays a living wage.
- Black Iowans face systemic barriers to medical care, food, and education.
- Black families deal with disproportionate rates of incarcerations that eat away at family and community connectedness.
- Black males risk violent, and in some cases, lethal treatment at the hands of law enforcement.

Source: 2016 Working in Early Care and Education in Iowa- Workforce Study
American Academy of Pediatrics, the Impact of Racism on Child and Adolescent Health Iowa Iowa Profile 2018,
www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/IA.html

Iowa AEYC's Commitment

Because lasting change must occur through both action and education, Iowa AEYC will continue to:

- Partner with those organizations that uncover and/or expose discrimination against all marginalized individuals;
- Advocate for living wages for teachers;
- Uplift childcare providers by seeking out and propelling gifted educators with educational scholarships, mentoring, and leadership opportunities;
- Expose and eradicate the implicit bias that taints relationships, because we know that what matters most for children is positive relationships with adults within the communities in which they live; and
- Strengthen communities so that ALL families and their children can thrive

The work of the Iowa AEYC will continue to inform, educate, and advocate for a statewide antiracist movement in an effort to advance our diverse dynamic early childhood profession as well as to support all who care for and work on behalf of young children. This statewide dedication is our intentionality of purpose in terms of lifting up and moving forward the NAEYC's Position Statement: Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education. <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/equity>

Thank you for ongoing support as we work against racial injustice and to become more inclusive.

Jillian Herink
Iowa AEYC Executive Director

Donna Kennebeck
High-Performing, Inclusive Organization
Committee Chair

*"To be antiracist is a radical choice in the face of history, requiring a radical reorientation of our consciousness."
— Ibram Kendi*

Executive Board Members

Mary Lukas
Governing Board President

Miranda Niemi
President-Elect

Denis Wandera
Vice President

Dr. Brian Kingrey
Treasurer and NAEYC Affiliate Council Rep

Dr. Brandy Smith
Secretary