We believe that successful teachers learn about their students’ histories, cultures, languages, background knowledge, and experiences (Adair, Tobin, & Arzubiaga, 2012; Souto-Manning, 2010, 2013; Volk & Long, 2005). We recommend that all early childhood teachers have professional development opportunities that are steeped in a culturally responsive framework. Culturally responsive educators (Gay, 1995) develop pedagogical practices that serve to counter structural and educational inequities that marginalized groups experience in schools. Culturally responsive models of education focus on developing culturally competent teachers who have positive racial identities that inform their ability to take up racial literacy practices to support diverse learners. Individuals with multilingual and multicultural backgrounds can be advocates and provide crucial support for diverse young children and families. We must recruit more bilingual educators, give them appropriate professional responsibilities, and link them in collaborative relationships with others in the field.

Classroom teachers mediate curricula. Given that the majority of early childhood educators are White and middle-class, we propose additional preparation and professional development that supports their learning how to (a) effectively work with students from backgrounds other than their own; (b) confront their own biases; and (c) engage in conversations about racial, cultural, and linguistic bias with young children.

Works Cited


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