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## Disrupting Implicit Racial Biases to Support Children’s Positive Behavior

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### INSTRUCTIONS

This handout was designed for use with the NPR segment “Bias Isn’t Just a Police Problem, It’s a Preschool Problem.” The questions and activities in this handout could be used in a work session (e.g., professional learning community, professional development session), for individual coaching, or for self-reflection.

### Goals

- ◆ Acknowledge that preschool teachers’ implicit racial biases influence how they anticipate and evaluate children’s challenging behaviors.
- ◆ Identify your implicit biases and understand how they impact your perception of children’s challenging behavior.
- ◆ Confront implicit racial biases to offer equitable behavior support to all children.

### Activity

- ◆ Listen to the segment or read the accompanying article.
- ◆ Complete the *Implicit Association Tests: Race, Gender-Career, and Disability* found in our Additional Resources section (p. 3).
- ◆ Use the questions below to reflect on how you can disrupt your implicit biases to support children’s positive behavior.
- ◆ Implement your plan and adjust as needed.

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**If you look for something in one place, that’s the only place you can  
typically find it.**

**Dr. Walter Gilliam**

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## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- ◆ What caught your attention from the segment? Why was that fact, idea, or example meaningful to you?

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- ◆ We all use implicit categories or associations (biases) to guide our expectations and interactions with others. Our brains are constantly categorizing and making associations that we aren't even aware of. Sometimes this can be harmful when these implicit biases lead us to have untrue or negative thoughts or beliefs about people. The first step to disrupting the negative effect of these biases is to acknowledge they exist.

- Before taking the Implicit Association Tests, had you ever examined your implicit biases? Why or why not?
- What did you learn about your biases after taking the Implicit Association Tests?

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- ◆ Researchers found that preschool teachers expect more challenging behavior from Black children than White children.

- Close your eyes and think about each child in your classroom. Who do you expect challenging behavior from?
- Which of your biases might cause you to expect challenging behavior from these children?

- ◆ In the study, teachers also rated challenging classroom behaviors as being more severe when the child did not share the teacher's race.

- Recall a time when a child of your race displayed a challenging behavior in the classroom. What was your perception of that situation? How did you respond?
- Think of a time when a child of a different race displayed a similar challenging behavior. How was your perception of the behavior different? How did you respond in that case?
- Confront your biases and use your present awareness to reflect on those situations. What would you do differently to ensure that you were equitably supporting children's behavior?

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- ◆ Data also shows that Black boys are over three times more likely to be suspended from preschool than white children. How does this negatively affect relationships between Black children and their teachers? Relationships between teachers and Black families?

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- ◆ It is important to confront your implicit racial biases because they prevent you from equitably supporting children's behaviors in the classroom. Identify one specific way you could disrupt your implicit bias to support children's positive behavior in classroom.

- What resources or supports do you need to put this idea into action?
- When and how will you check in to see if your plan is working?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Learn more about supporting children’s positive behavior:

- ◆ **Source:** Project Implicit
- ◆ **Resource:** Implicit Association Tests
- ◆ **Link:** <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- ◆ **Description:** Use the Implicit Association Tests to explore and acknowledge the implicit biases you hold.

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- ◆ **Source:** TEDWomen2018
  - ◆ **Talk:** “Why Black Girls Are Targeted for Punishment at School—And How to Change That” by Monique W. Morris
  - ◆ **Link:** [https://www.ted.com/talks/monique\\_w\\_morris\\_why\\_black\\_girls\\_are\\_targeted\\_for\\_punishment\\_at\\_school\\_and\\_how\\_to\\_change\\_that/up-next?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/monique_w_morris_why_black_girls_are_targeted_for_punishment_at_school_and_how_to_change_that/up-next?language=en)
  - ◆ **Description:** Listen to understand how educators can help Black girls feel safe and thrive at school.

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- ◆ **Source:** Ohio State University’s Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity
  - ◆ **Modules:** Implicit Bias Modules Series
  - ◆ **Link:** <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/implicit-bias-training/>
  - ◆ **Description:** Watch these four modules to learn more about the science behind implicit racial biases and how to confront them.

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- ◆ **Source:** Zero to Three
  - ◆ **Article:** “Dis/ability Critical Race Studies (DisCrit) for Inclusion in Early Childhood Education: Ethical Considerations of Implicit and Explicit Bias” by Alissa Rausch, Jaclyn Joseph, and Elizabeth Steed
  - ◆ **Link:** <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3094-dis-ability-critical-race-studies-discrit-for-inclusion-in-early-childhood-education-ethical-considerations-of-implicit-and-explicit-bias>
  - ◆ **Description:** This article describes how ability biases intersect with other identity-based biases (e.g. race, gender, socio-economic status) within early childhood education systems. It proposes solutions for educators to more equitably support children and their families.