

Call for Papers: Reflecting on Our Own Identities in Early Childhood Education ***Voices of Practitioners* Fall 2023, Volume 18**

For the 2023 issue of *Voices of Practitioners*, we are seeking stories that explore how early childhood professionals' reflections on their own identities, specifically social identities, impact their work with young children. We welcome narratives that highlight how aspects of your social identity have influenced your teaching practice and your experience of power dynamics in early childhood settings.

Social Identities and Early Childhood Education

Social identity refers to the group categories that each society creates and defines, which include race, family structure, language, gender, religion, economic class, and more (Derman-Sparks & Edwards with Goins 2020, p 25). Early childhood educators know that our social identities shape how we interact with young children, their families, and the communities we serve (Derman-Sparks, LeeKeenan & Nimmo 2014). The concept of identity is complex and shaped by individual characteristics, family dynamics, historical factors, and social, cultural, and political contexts.

Reflecting on how these identities intersect and influence our practice can help us understand and challenge how systems of oppression and privilege operate in early childhood settings. By sharing our experiences and insights, we can create deeper understanding about how to create more equitable and inclusive learning environments for all children.

Considerations for Writing about Social Identities

We hope you will share your story with the early childhood community. You might start your narrative by asking yourself, “*Who* in the world am I?” and then shift the emphasis to ask, “*Who in the world* am I?” You might also consider who others (families, colleagues, supervisors, children) say you are. Think about the message reflected in the faces and voices of the people around you, in and outside of teaching. Consider what you learn from media about yourself and how you are represented in cultural images too.

We are interested in receiving submissions that explore a wide range of topics, including but not limited to:

- How your social identities have informed your understanding of the children and families you work with
- How your social identities have influenced your teaching practices and classroom dynamics
- The role of self-reflection and professional development in understanding and addressing how your social identities impact your teaching

Submission Guidelines

Deadline for submitting a proposal: April 7, 2023

We invite teachers and administrators working with young children aged birth to 8 years to pitch your idea for a personal narrative essay that discusses how reflecting upon your identity has affected your practice relative to the broader issues of equity and social justice. We welcome submissions from early childhood educators at all stages of their careers, including pre-service teachers and experienced educators. We encourage submissions written by educators from various backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. We are also interested in stories from teacher educators, particularly those working with associate degree students.

Proposals should be 500-750 words in length and should include the following features:

1. A statement of the challenge or opportunity for reform your piece intends to address
2. A brief contextual overview of your program (e.g., geography, the population of children and families served, how your program operates)
3. A key anecdote or descriptive narrative that captures the heart of your message
4. Bullet points of two to three lessons you learned from the experience and your reflections about it

Of these, the single most important element will be the key anecdote, which should set a scene, introduce believable characters, and set a plot in motion. This brief anecdote will likely not resolve the tension, but it should illustrate the potential for the change that is the focus of your essay.

Published Articles

We will select from the submitted proposals and will support these authors through the revision process. The final narrative essays will be published in late fall 2023, will be 1,000 to 1,500 words in length, and should ideally include photographs of children and their creative products relevant to the essay.

Before submitting a proposal, we recommend you review the narrative essays published in the Fall 2022, Volume 17 issue available for free [on the NAEYC website](#).

Timeline

- Proposals are due by April 7, 2023. Email your complete proposal to **editorial@naeyc.org**. Please indicate in the subject line that it is a submission for *Voices of Practitioners* Fall 2023.
- The authors will be informed of our selection decisions in early summer 2023.
- Selected authors will work with an assigned *Voices of Practitioners* editor to prepare a final draft due by September 1, 2023.

- During October 2023, authors will work with the NAEYC editorial team to prepare the manuscript for publication on the NAEYC website.

References:

Derman-Sparks, L., & J.O. Edwards. With C.M. Goins. 2020. *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves*. 2nd ed. Washington, DC: NAEYC.

LeeKeenan, D., L. Derman-Sparks, J. Nimmo. 2014. *Leading Anti-Bias Early Childhood Programs: A Guide for Change*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.