



National Association for the Education of Young Children

Professional Development Guide

No Single Story ***Amplifying Asian American and*** ***Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander*** ***Early Educators***

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About the Book

No Single Story: Amplifying the Voices of Asian American and Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander Early Educators, is a diverse collection of stories written by Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) early educators on how their AANHPI identities have impacted their personal and professional lives, creating strengths and challenges. It also points to implications for practice and offers recommendations for the field. The book is a provocation and invitation to embark on a journey to explore one's own identity, as we all have stories, and our stories matter. *No Single Story* is an excellent choice for professional book study groups, either in affinity groups or mixed groups.

How the Book Is Organized

The book contains four parts. **Part One: Where to Start** offers the introduction and framework for the book. It explores the complexities of what it means to be AANHPI. The remaining parts include the authors' personal stories grouped into three overarching domains: **Part Two: Knowing Who You Are**, **Part Three: Connections to our Practice**, and **Part Four: Advocacy and Leading for Change**. An introduction to each of the four parts identifies common themes and provides reflection questions to guide your reading. We recommend that everyone begin with About the Book and Part One (Chapters 1 and 2) before reading the chapter stories.

Using This Guide

This Professional Development Guide provides support and suggestions for course instructors, program directors, training consultants, supervisors, and other early childhood and care professionals who are using the book as a resource for professional development with adult learners, including college students, pre-service and in-service educators, community-based organization staff, and caregivers in early education and care settings.

The following are some of the learning objectives that this book may support:

- Explore the complexity of AANHPI identities. There is no single story that defines the AANHPI experience.
- Examine how complex and intersectional processes of identity formation—including race, culture, language, family history, and lived experience—shape one's sense of belonging, learning, and development.
- Reflect on your own personal identity journeys and experiences to better understand how they influence relationships, biases, expectations, and practices in your work with children and families.

- Identify strategies for creating culturally responsive learning environments that provide meaningful “mirrors and windows” through representation, curriculum, storytelling, and daily interactions that affirm children’s identities and build connections across communities.

Where to Start

Start by reading Chapter 1: Marginalized and Privileged, Labels and Identity, and Chapter 2: It’s Complicated. Consider the reflection questions on page 1.

Reflection questions are provided in the introduction to each of the four parts of the book. We recommend reviewing the questions in advance of reading the section or any chapter. Reflection questions help readers dig deeper into the content, promote critical thinking, foster self-awareness, and make connections and applications to their own lives and settings. They can be used both as writing prompts and discussion prompts.

Throughout the book are quotes from AANHPI professionals, called “So Many More Voices,” representing additional AANHPI voices beyond the stories in the book. These quotes can also be used as provocation for discussion.

Using Themes as a Tool for Learning and Growth

Although this book encompasses many diverse voices and experiences, a few key themes have emerged across chapters that we believe are useful to call forward because they correspond with topics that are frequently included in educator preparation program curricula and/or professional development workshops. We have divided the themes into two categories: foundational concepts and practical applications.

Overarching Themes

Foundational Concepts

- Identity development and intersectionality
- Complexity of AANHPI identity
- Immigrant, refugee experiences
- Reclaiming language and culture
- Goals of anti-bias education

Practical Applications

- Culturally responsive and sustaining practices for working with young children and

families

- Culturally responsive and sustaining practices for teacher education.
- Leadership and advocacy

Whether you are using the text for a course, leading a staff meeting, or offering a professional development workshop for educators, the themes offer entry points to engage with the stories and to inspire both dialogue and self-reflection. Although there are other themes in the book, these examples outline some of the possibilities. For each of the eight themes, we offer a brief introduction to the theme, along with a curated list of chapters that addresses the theme from a range of perspectives. Depending on the audience and goals of the learning experience you are planning, you may select two or three chapters for all of the participants to read or assign different chapters to different participants so they can engage in a jigsaw learning experience, sharing about the chapter they each read with others in their small group. We also offer excerpts from two or three chapters, highlight a few key takeaway messages, and reflection questions that may also be used to invite group discussions or as prompts for individual writing. The book also includes reflection questions at the beginning of each of the four parts. In addition, for each theme we have included Activities for Self-Growth and Working with Adults and/or Early Childhood Program Activities for use with children. Finally, each section concludes with a short list of resources. An extensive list of resources can be found at the end of this guide.

Foundational Concepts

Theme 1: Identity development and intersectionality

Theme 2: Complexity of AANHPI identity

Theme 3: Immigrant, refugee experiences

Theme 4: Reclaiming language and culture

Theme 5: Goals of anti-bias education

Theme 1: Identity Development and Intersectionality

Corresponding chapters: 3, 5, 7, 9, 22, and 26

Every author in this book shares about their identity journey and how their intersecting identities shape who they are personally and professionally. Identity can be defined as “how individuals know and name themselves and how they are recognized and regarded by others” (Danielewicz 2001, 3). We each hold multiple identities, including social identity, cultural identity, personal identity, and professional identity. Identities are constructed and negotiated with and through our interactions with others and continuously shift across time and context.

Chapter Examples

1. “My relationships, family, and community have played a significant role in shaping my understanding of identity. Exploring my Chamorro ancestry and embracing indigenous values shaped my disability identity, while connecting with disabled communities helped me find pride in that identity. That learning has been essential not just personally, but to understand and resist the colonial and ableist practices that continue to shape early childhood education.” (Chapter 3, Jordan Taitingfong)
2. “In my first class, I introduced myself as a Korean migrant. The students followed by sharing where they were from, often naming the towns in Hawai‘i where they grew up and even the high schools they attended. Many spoke about their mixed heritage, including Native Hawaiian, Filipino, Japanese, Chinese, Portuguese, Korean, Vietnamese, or other ethnic groups, sharing not only their familial heritage but also the stories of their family’s migration histories. Their stories revealed how categories such as “Asian American” or “Caucasian” cannot fully capture the complexity of who they are. Listening to them made me think about my own upbringing in South Korea, where society was mostly homogeneous and people rarely talked about race. Their introductions encouraged me to rethink identity itself, seeing it not as a fixed label, but as something formed through heritage, history, and lived experience.” (Chapter 23, Shin Ae Han)

Key Messages

- Social identity refers to significant group categories that are centered and defined by culture, disability, ethnicity, economic class, family structure, gender, language, race, religion, and more. They begin at birth and are shaped by family and caregivers, community, and schooling. Social identities can shift during one’s lifetime. They carry various statuses, assumptions, and biases that affect how people are perceived and treated.

- Early childhood programs can play a crucial role in supporting children's social identity development.
- Intersectionality is a framework highlighting that individuals possess multiple, overlapping identities, such as race, gender, class, and sexuality, which create interdependent systems of discrimination or privilege.

Reflection Questions

- How do your identities shape your professional practices? It may help to consider a specific practice, such as how you communicate with families or how you manage conflicts between children.
- How does taking an intersectional lens afford deeper insight into events or issues than looking at it through the lens of a single identity?

Activities for Self-Growth and Working with Adults

- **Educator Autobiography:** Read a selection of chapters from the book and make note of the key events, places, and people that have influenced the authors' identity development and/or professional practice. If you were to tell your own story, what does it mean to inhabit your intersecting identities, and how have key events, places, and people shaped who you are as an individual and as a professional?
- **Identity Web:** Make an identity web of your multiple social identities. Which identities are most important to you and why? How do your identities shift depending on your context?

Early Childhood Program Activities

- **Self-Portraits:** Read the books *Two Eyes, a Nose, and a Mouth* by Roberta Grobel Intrater and *The Skin You Live In* by Michael Tyler. Have the child look carefully at their face with a hand mirror as you read the book. Afterward provide drawing materials so the child can try to draw themselves. Adults can join in as well. After the drawings are complete, talk about similarities and differences.
- **Seven Chinese Brothers/Sisters Study.** There are many versions of this folktale (Grace Lin, Claire Bishop, and Margaret Mahy). Some have positive depictions of Chinese people; others do not. Choose two versions for the children to compare and talk about what makes the book appropriate or not.

- **“I am” Posters:** Using a large piece of posterboard, place the child’s name in the center and work together to create a word web including all the things the child knows and chooses to describe themselves. Items can include ethnicity and activities.

Resources

Crenshaw, K. (2016). The Urgency of Intersectionality. TEDWomen, YouTube.

[The urgency of intersectionality | Kimberlé Crenshaw | TED](#)

Derman-Sparks, L., LeeKeenan, D., & Nimmo, J. 2023. *Leading Anti-Bias Early Childhood Programs: A Guide to Change, for Change*. 2nd ed. Teachers College Press.

[https://www.antibiasleadersece.com/wp-](https://www.antibiasleadersece.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Appendix_LeadingAntibiasEarlyChildhoodPrograms.pdf)

[content/uploads/2023/10/Appendix_LeadingAntibiasEarlyChildhoodPrograms.pdf](https://www.antibiasleadersece.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Appendix_LeadingAntibiasEarlyChildhoodPrograms.pdf)

DiAngelo, R., & Sensoy, O. 2025. *Is Everyone Really Equal? An Introduction to Key Concepts in Social Justice Education*. 3rd ed. Teachers College Press.

UN Women. 2021. *Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit*.

<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/Intersectionality-resource-guide-and-toolkit-en.pdf>

Theme 2: Complexity of AANHPI Identity

Corresponding chapters: 1 and 4

NHPI chapters: 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 14, 15, and 22

No single experience defines what it means to be AANHPI in the United States today. We consist of people from more than 50 ethnic groups with over 100 languages and dialects, all with different cultures, religions, and our own sets of historical and contemporary regional politics. Our communities include newly arrived immigrants, people who have been on American soil for multiple generations, and people of Indigenous heritage. Depending on immigration status, class, and other factors, there are vast differences even among those from the same country of origin.

Chapter Examples

1. For me, the AANHPI acronym is relatively new. I grew up just identifying as Samoan and didn't have to explain that. When I moved to Seattle in the early 2000s for college, my identity expanded more as Polynesian. Then I got older and expanded even more to Pacific Islander. There is value in the expansiveness of our cultural identity. I also have found it difficult to be lumped into this acronym. During the AANHPI month, I'd see more Asians and East Asians being highly represented, and I felt left out. It's hard to find books, materials, and podcasts that are hosted by and for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders. It's very complicated. There is so much beauty and diversity within the NHPI community and so much cultural richness to be able to pull from it. But I do feel like I've been playing catch up because I was raised mostly in the stereotypes and now I'm trying to lean into pre-colonial education and learn more about my people and our culture so that I can pass that down to my daughter. So, I have lots of thoughts, lots of mixed feelings about the identity itself, but a lot of pride and love for the people, too. (Chapter 2, Sala Sataraka p. 12)
2. The contradictions of Asian American identity never felt more acute to me than the year-long period beginning with the COVID-19 pandemic, the racial reckoning following George Floyd's murder, and the Atlanta spa shooting in which six of the eight victims were women of Asian descent. One minute, I was afraid to walk through the city by myself for fear that I would be harassed by people who thought Asians were to blame for the pandemic. The next minute, I was in the streets marching alongside thousands of people seeking justice for Mr. Floyd and countless other Black victims of state brutality. Then, in March of 2021, with the murders of those aunties, like whiplash I was reminded that anti-Asian hate was real. (Chapter 4, Caryn Park, p. 35)

Key Messages

- Two stereotypes about Asian Americans, the model minority and perpetual foreigner, have persisted.
 - The model minority myth is a false stereotype that labels Asian Americans as uniformly intelligent, wealthy, and hardworking, pitting ethnic groups against one another and hiding systemic racism. In reality, our experiences are diverse, complex, and multifaceted.
 - The perpetual foreigner stereotype is the harmful assumption that Asians, whether naturalized citizens or U.S. born, are outsiders who will never be truly loyal or belong. For generations, it has been used to treat Asian Americans and other ethnic minorities as permanent targets for xenophobia, scapegoating, and discrimination.
- Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander groups are harmed by overgeneralizing across Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia, obscuring the diversity of culture and history that exists among these regions and the diaspora. More problematic still is when data are aggregated for all AANHPI groups, obfuscating important inequities in economic, health, and education outcomes. This causes real harm, particularly for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities. There is a need for further recognition, dialogue, and consideration of when the label of AANHPI can be a strategic coalitional identity for political mobilization and when it becomes a form of erasure for some groups.

Reflection Questions

- What new insights have you gained about the AANHPI identity?
- How have you been impacted by stereotypes that circulate about your group or other groups? What are the “dangers of a single story” (Adichie, 2009), and how have such dominant narratives shaped your life? How do you challenge them in your professional context?

Activities for Self-Growth and Working with Adults

- Read Chapter 2 (Interview with NHPI authors) plus a few other chapters that offer some contrasting perspectives on the AANHPI identity. What are some of the strengths and pitfalls or challenges of an umbrella AANHPI identity?
- Read about Nguyen’s “expansive solidarity.” Nguyen urges marginalized groups to move beyond self-interested inclusion and build radical, widening kinship with other outsiders, centering those devastated by imperialism and other forms of oppression rather than solely seeking assimilation into dominant structures. What are the implications for your thinking and work?

Resources

Nguyen, V.T. (2025). *To Save and to Destroy: Writing as an Other*. Belknap Press.

Chang, Jeff. (2016). The In-Betweens: On Asian Americanness. In J. Chang, *We gon' be alright: Notes on race and resegregation* (pp. 137-157). New York: Picador.

Theme 3: Immigration and the Refugee Experience

Corresponding chapters: 4, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 23, and 28

Multiple chapters in the book depict both the immigrant and refugee experience. The authors share stories of individuals and families who left their ancestral homelands to begin new lives in a new land—some by choice and others because there was no other choice. These are stories of transition, bravery, and loss, juxtaposed with dreams and hopes for a better life. There are chapters that connect these lived experiences directly into classroom practice and draw clear lines into interactions with families and other educators in both early education and higher education settings and in other professional settings.

Chapter Examples

1. I am a refugee immigrant from Vietnam. This became my identity at the age of seven years old. My parents had five children, we were 9, 7, 4, 2, and 8 months old. I am the second oldest. During the Vietnam War in 1975, when Saigon fell to the communist party, my family had to flee due to the work my father did for the South Vietnamese Army. We were just having a regular day until late afternoon when my father came home and said, “We have to leave.” He drove home in a big army truck, and we were fascinated by it because we had never seen it before. He tried to stay calm and made it sound like we were getting ready to go on a vacation-like trip. At that time, we didn’t really know what was happening. (Chapter 11, Bick Hang, p. 87)
2. Yuji: I was born in Tokyo, Japan in 1974 and moved to the United States in 1993 at the age of 19. I am both a martial artist and an educator. As the second child in a family of four, I grew up immersed in Japanese culture before transitioning to life in the U.S. Now, having lived in the United States for 32 years, my time here has surpassed the years I spent in Japan. When I first arrived, I was deeply influenced by Hollywood’s portrayal of American life. I especially had a fascination with the movie *Top Gun*. I thought that being American meant playing volleyball on the beach and riding motorcycles. I believed that by living in the U.S., I could fully assimilate and become “American” in the way I had seen in movies. Fascinated by these media depictions, I consciously distanced myself from my Japanese heritage, attempting to reshape my identity to fit my idealized vision of American life. (Chapter 18, Misa Okiyama and Yuji Uchida, p. 144)

Key Messages

- Migration has always been a part of human history. Whether voluntary or forced, the experience of migration involves transition, upheaval, loss, and adaptation to new lands and new ways of being. For many of the authors in this book, there is a tension between forging new paths and identities and preserving connection to one’s roots.

- The context of both the sending country and receiving country can profoundly shape the migration experience. These contexts have shifted over time and impacted different generations in different ways, so there is no single migration story. Educators have long played a key role in setting the course of an immigrant child's developing sense of identity, belonging, efficacy, and hope for the future. The AANHPI authors describe their commitment to providing culturally responsive and sustaining learning environments for all the children and families they serve.

Reflection Questions

- What are some common threads that appear in each migration story?
- How does your own lived experience connect with the stories you have read?
- Did anything you read surprise you? What did you learn that you didn't know before about immigrant experiences?

Activities for Self-Growth and Working with Adults

- How can we be more responsive to students' and families' cultural and linguistic experiences given their lived experiences?
- After reading about the immigrant or refugee experience of others, how will you check in with your students, teachers, families, or colleagues differently to understand their needs and strengths?
- How do the stories of migration in this book compare with the context of immigration policy and attitudes today? What might new immigrant children need in the current sociopolitical climate that may be different than what some of our authors and/or their families or ancestors may have experienced?

Early Childhood Program Activities

- Read the children's book *Islandborn* by Junot Díaz and discuss Lola's experience. Ask children if they have ever had a similar experience and to draw a picture of it.
- Read the children's book *Where are You From? A Story About Identity, Belonging and Cultural Heritage* by Jamie Kim and discuss the question "Where are you from?" Find out if children have been asked this question by using a class voting chart. See how children feel about the book and how the question makes them feel.

Resource

Re-imagining Migration. <https://reimaginingmigration.org>

Theme 4: Reclaiming Language and Culture

Corresponding chapters: 9, 14, 16, 18, 20, and 2

Language and culture reclamation within the AANHPI communities is an intergenerational movement that takes many forms. It includes decolonizing histories; preserving endangered Indigenous languages; integrating heritage education into schools; and shifting narratives through art, writing, and community activities. Multiple contributing authors depict the vast variety of experiences and strategies to protect and honor AANHPI languages and cultures. For some contributors, it's about opportunities to read books in native languages, and for others it's about finding communication strategies so everyone's voices can be represented. Many authors note that keeping home language is important. It connects children to their heritage and supports their sense of self. Maintaining a home language benefits not only the child but the family as well. Educators can support this with intentional engagement with children and understanding the benefits for life-long learning.

Chapter Examples

1. How can one have culture without language or language without culture? That was the question my kūpuna were trying to get me to ask myself as they forced me to realize you need to have both. Thus, our 'ohana (family) committed to reclaiming 'Ōlelo Hawai'i as our kuleana (responsibility). It has been a journey that holds some of my greatest joys in life and parenting as well as the grief of what colonization took away. 'Ōlelo Hawai'i was a way for me to carve out a pathway to accept my role as makuahine (mother) amidst trauma from our birth and generations past. (Chapter 14, Kamalei Brandon, p. 112)
2. Language is never just about words. It holds memory, culture, belonging, and power. Growing up as a Punjabi Sikh in where everyone spoke English, speaking Punjabi at home should have been a connection to my family, but outside our walls, it was a marker of difference, one I wanted to highlight. I realize that language is more than a tool for communication, it is a container of identity, a bridge between generations, and a way to honor where we come from. I've come to understand that advocating for language justice, ensuring that people can learn, teach, and lead in their home and heart languages is a necessary part of reclaiming not just my own story, but ensuring others don't have to silence theirs. (Chapter 26, Ninderjit Gill, p. 207)

Key Messages

- Educators need to build bridges between home and school, ensuring that all the different languages and cultures of children's families are honored and valued in the classroom.
- Learning two or more languages benefits children in multiple ways, from increased

cognitive flexibility and memory to better connections with family (such as grandparents) and home culture. Having multiple words to identify or describe something gives children different perspectives of seeing the world. It involves flexible and creative problem-solving skills (Kavak & Deterala 2020).

- Educators should encourage families to continue to speak with their children in their heritage language(s), assuring them that children will learn English with practice at school.

Reflection Questions

- Reflecting on your own language identity, what was the relationship between culture and language in your family growing up? How has this shifted over time?
- What messages did you grow up with about the English language, and how have these messages shaped your views on multilingualism?
- What parts of your culture of origin are currently at risk of being lost, and what can you do to help document or preserve them?

Activities for Self-Growth and Working with Adults

- Who are the elders and cultural knowledge keepers in your community that you can actively learn from or support?
- How do you approach cultural or linguistic practices that are different from your own? How can you honor the cultural and linguistic diversity of the adults you work with?

Early Childhood Program Activities

- Think of three ways to incorporate children's home languages into your daily classroom life (e.g., songs, routines, or games).
- **Cooking Immersion:** Cook traditional family recipes together. Teach words for ingredients, utensils, and taste profiles in children's heritage languages. This engages multiple senses and connects cultural history directly to family meals.
- **Puppetry:** Create puppets representing characters from cultural folktales (taking care to avoid reinforcing stereotypes). Let the children retell the stories, encouraging them to use expressive sounds, phrases, or dialogue in their home languages.
- **Language Nests:** Surround children with the target language during everyday routines. Label everyday objects around the classroom in the different languages spoken at home; play games such as Simon Says or I Spy using only heritage words.

Resources

Alanis, I., Arreguín-Anderson, M.G., & Salinas-González, I. (2021). *The Essentials: Dual Language Learners in Diverse Environments in Preschool and Kindergarten*. NAEYC.

Theme 5: The Four Goals of Anti-Bias Education

Corresponding chapters: 5, 8, 12, 19, and 29

Anti-bias education is a central framework for this book that is discussed in Chapter 1. Anti-bias education puts diversity and equity at the core of everything we do in early childhood education, recognizing that children are always observing, experiencing, and making sense of the social world around them and their place within it. They have a deep and empathetic sense of fairness. Read Chapter 1 and refer to the Four Core Goals of Anti-Bias Education on page 5.

Chapter Examples

1. Kira: I think of social justice as teaching and learning that intends to advance equity across social identity groups (e.g., race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability), promote critical perspectives, and nurture social action (Carlisle et al. 2006; Dover 2009). In practice, this means questioning and acting in ways to change the inequities, hierarchies, and injustices that currently exist in our society. Racial justice means critically examining the ways that racism operates in our society, institutions, and in schools, within one-on-one interactions and making efforts to eliminate racism by intentionally acting in anti-racist ways (Kendi 2023). Both commitments are far from simple, but to delineate these terms into something very basic, very human, they mean that I always try to teach in ways that make visible those who have felt or feel invisible. (Chapter 5, Kira LeeKeenan and Debbie LeeKeenan, p. 46)
2. In over a decade of conversations, I would learn many lessons about power, perception, and identity. None would be more powerful than a conversation I had with a 4-year-old Chinese child. Like many of the parents, her mom worked in a sewing factory. This girl was well on her way to being bilingual. With the sureness of truth only a child can hold, she took me aside one morning. Looking directly into my eyes she declared, “You are not Chinese.” With a little “huh” from me, she continued to explain how she had come to this conclusion. “You don’t talk Chinese, and you don’t act Chinese.” After years of studying *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves* (Derman-Sparks, et al, 2020), here it was—that magical, teachable moment. (Chapter 12, Lisa Lee Luke, p. 97)

Key Messages

- In working toward the four goals of anti-bias education, we begin by learning about ourselves and our roots so that we can in turn affirm each child and family’s social identities and cultural ways of being. Building on the strengths and knowledge children bring to school, anti-bias educators seek the active engagement of families and communities, which requires us to develop an appreciative inquiry stance toward differences. Anti-bias teachers observe carefully, think critically, and reflect deeply. More than a set of curriculum or teaching strategies, this approach recognizes and offers a

clear orientation for educators to expand their own capacity to actively resist bias and systemic oppression in our society and support children to speak out and stand up for fairness in their own lives.

- Provide mirrors, windows, and sliding doors to your students. Mirrors are books, materials, and images in the classroom that reflect a child's own culture, identity, family, and life so they feel seen and valued. Windows are books and materials that offer a clear view into the different lives and experiences of other people to build empathy. Sliding doors are real life experiences that allow children to experience and connect deeply with others. (Bishop 1990) (<https://scenicregional.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Mirrors-Windows-and-Sliding-Glass-Doors.pdf>)

Reflection Questions

- How do the four anti-bias goals show up in your life for you personally and professionally?
- Which goals are easier for you to implement with children, with yourself? Which goals are harder?

Activities for Self-Growth and Working with Adults

- View the video [Reflecting on Anti-bias Education in Action: The Early Years](#) with colleagues and discuss what needs to be in place to create the culture to do anti-bias work.
- Use an anti-bias self-assessment tool to reflect on your classroom, pedagogy, and self.
 - https://www.antibiasleadersece.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Appendix_LeadingAntibiasEarlyChildhoodPrograms.pdf

Early Childhood Program Activities

- Use persona dolls or puppets to tell stories that provide mirrors and windows to the children and families in your program. Persona dolls can also be used to discuss topics such as fairness, exclusion, friendship, cultural or linguistic differences, loss, conflicts, and any other issues that impact children's lives.
- Create opportunities to collaborate with families and community members as partners in the education of children.

Resources

AmazeWorks. <https://amazeworks.org>

LeeKeenan, D., Nimmo, J. & Efe McKinney, F. "Reflecting on Anti-Bias Education in Action: The Early Years." Anti-Bias Leaders ECE. 2021. 48:32.

<https://www.antibiasleadersece.com/the-film-reflecting-on-anti-bias-education-in-action>

LeeKeenan, D., Nimmo, J., & Efe McKinney, F. "Families Embracing Anti-Bias Values." Anti-Bias Leaders ECE. 2024. 49:58. <https://www.antibiasleadersece.com/families-embracing-anti-bias-values>

NAEYC. 2019. Advancing Equity Position Statement and Resources.

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/equity>

Practical Applications

Theme 6: Culturally responsive and sustaining practices for working with young children and families

Theme 7: Culturally responsive and sustaining practices for teacher education.

Theme 8: Leadership and advocacy

Theme 6: Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Practices for Educators Working with Young Children and Families

Corresponding chapters: 6, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, and 24

Culturally responsive education draws on decades of research in asset-based pedagogies that recognize that cultural differences (including racial, ethnic, linguistic, gender, sexuality, and ability) should be treated as assets for teaching and learning rather than deficits to be overcome. Taken further, culturally sustaining pedagogy advocates for educators to actively nurture and sustain students' home languages and cultural lifeways, not as a means to an end but as an end to itself (Paris & Alim 2017).

Many contributing authors describe how they affirm children's racial, ethnic, and linguistic identities in their classrooms and in their practices with children and families. The efforts to center around community languages and cultural practices build deep educator-student relationships connecting children's academic experiences to their lived experiences at home. There are a few important strategies employed that are important to note: leveraging funds of knowledge, honoring home languages, and co-constructing communities of belonging. Section three of our book focuses on how teachers teach and what they learn from the children and families they serve. The powerful examples provided by the authors demonstrate the impact early educators can have on children and families alike.

Chapter Examples

1. I began to think about and question the historical way in which Western early care and education settings were constructed. Educational practices were historically based on the factory model wherein parents separate from their home environments and to go to work. Therefore, children were also separated from their home environments and sent to (class)rooms where they were taught with emphasis placed on production, memorization, repetition, and following instructions of authority figures (Cramer 2010). I see ways in which the above themes echo in our early learning settings across the nation: children are still being separated and sent outside the home to be cared for and taught, in order for parents to work. (Chapter 15, Charis-Ann F. Sole, p. 125)
2. The original intent in establishing this group was to support children's Filipino language acquisition through book reading and engaging them in activities that support their vocabulary growth. Occasionally, we have guest readers who enthusiastically spend their time with us. In every event we introduce new Filipino words from the book. The children listen for those words during the reading and then we practice saying those words out loud. The post-reading activities are designed to help them learn about the Filipino culture as well as strengthening their skills in other areas. We read "Lolo's Sari-Sari Store," by Sophia N. Lee, about a child's experiences helping in her grandfather's

corner store. We set up a makeshift store with Filipino snacks, and the children used replicas of Philippine pesos to purchase their snacks. They used new Filipino words to buy what they wanted and practiced math skills using their pesos, getting a glimpse of buying from a corner store, which is a staple in most neighborhoods in the Philippines. (Chapter 20, Clare Juico, p. 157)

Key Messages

- Acknowledge the strengths children bring to school through their funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti 2005) and community cultural wealth (Yosso 2005). Funds of knowledge are the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and expertise rooted in daily life experiences, family backgrounds, and communities. The concept highlights accumulated life experiences, practical everyday skills, and cultural ways of interacting. The closely related concept of community cultural wealth challenges deficit perspectives implicit in traditional understandings of cultural capital and sheds light on the often-unrecognized knowledge, skills, and social connections held by minoritized communities.
- Learning from and with families: Culturally responsive and sustaining education requires creating welcoming schools through authentic and trusting relationships with families. Ensure families are visible, valued, and validated. Invite young people and families to share their heritage cultures in ways that are relevant and meaningful to them. Culture should be recognized as living and evolving rather than something static and fossilized. Provide safe and brave spaces for open discussions and problem solving around cultural and identity development.

Reflection Questions

- Do my students see their own families, cultures, and lived realities reflected in the materials we have and the books we read? Which student groups are consistently mirrored in our classroom, and whose experiences are left out?
- How do your own race, background, and social class shape your teaching philosophy? How do you integrate the cultural backgrounds of your students and yourself into your teaching?
- Whose ways of knowing, relating, communicating and living are privileged? Are some varieties of English held up as “standard,” while others are devalued or seen as needing to be corrected? Are some cultural practices or faith traditions considered to be barriers for children’s learning? Are all families’ hopes and dreams for their children honored, or only those that align with school culture? And, importantly, are our classrooms and schools’ spaces where pluralism is valued and dialogues across differences are welcomed?

Activities for Self-Growth and Working with Adults

- Use a Culturally Responsive Teaching Checklist to assess your own classroom and practices (e.g., https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Culturally-Responsive-Teaching-Checklist_Re-Imagining-Migration.pdf).
- Identify some community organizations that can help you navigate a student group that you need to learn more about. How can you bring authentic experiences and practices into your classroom?

Early Childhood Program Activities

- **What's in a Name?"** Read several children's books about names, such as *That's Not My Name* by Anousha Syad, *Name Jar* by Yansook Choi, *Sora's Seashells* by Helena Ku Rhee, *Thao* by Thao Lam, *Alma and How She Got Her Name* by Juana Martinez-Neal, or *Your Name Is a Song* by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow. Invite families in to share stories about family names.

Resources

Alim, H.S., & Paris, D., eds. 2017. *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World*. Teachers College Press.

NAEYC. 2019. *Becoming a Culturally Responsive Teacher: Sustaining the Cultures of Young Children*. <https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/crs/culturally-responsive-sustaining-education-framework.pdf>

Yosso, T.J. 2005. "Whose Culture Has Capital? A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth." *Race Ethnicity and Education* 8 (1): 69–91.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006>

Theme 7: Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Teacher Education

Corresponding chapters: 9,10, 19, 21, and 23

Many authors in this book are teacher educators in higher education or program leaders who are responsible for providing professional development to their teachers and staff. They write about how better understanding their own identity journeys and lived experiences also influenced their teaching journeys and made them better teacher educators.

Chapter Examples

1. My early childhood experiences have built a strong foundation in my life to teach others. Those experiences taught me the importance of ensuring that early childhood education educators incorporate culturally responsive pedagogies in their practices. For example, the traditional patterns of A‘o (education) in Hawaiian society/culture were nānā (observation), ho‘olohe (listening); hana ka lima (doing); reflection; questioning (nīnau) (Chun 2011). We need to support teaching and learning that reflect strategies on how children from different cultures best learn and apply those to our own praxis. (Chapter 9, Alethea Ku‘ulei Serna, p. 76)
2. I know that to many people, my background as Muslim, immigrant, and Asian, is a professional liability, although I see it as my greatest asset. It gives me a deeper lens to look at how knowledge is created and how education can either shrink or expand a child’s sense of the world. Education is often framed as politically neutral, especially in public discourse, but I believe everything is political—especially curriculum. Curriculum choices shape not just what students learn, but who gets to belong and who doesn’t. (Chapter 19, Sarah Elahi, p.150)

Key Messages

- Without a culturally responsive and sustaining framework, traditional teacher training programs can reinforce the message that differences between school culture and home culture are expected to be bridged by students and families as part of learning how to “do school.” Many of the authors had to navigate such cultural differences on their own and made a commitment to ensuring that the children in their care and the communities they serve would be supported in the ways that they needed when they were children.
- Just as teachers of young children will be better equipped to support children and families when they have themselves had opportunities to deepen their awareness of their intersecting identities, those supporting adult learning benefit from engaging in identity work. The lived experiences and critical reflections of teacher educators and leaders can inform and strengthen their ability to scaffold culturally responsive and sustaining

practices for preservice and inservice teachers and bring the concepts to life in powerful ways.

- Culturally responsive and sustaining teacher education challenges the dominant cultural narratives that have traditionally privileged White middle class cultural models of what a good teacher looks like and sounds like. It supports the professional development of educators who can effectively challenge the status quo to create learning environments that center students' diverse cultural backgrounds, home languages, and lived experiences.
- Key components of culturally responsive and sustaining teacher education include building critical reflective practice, partnering with communities, challenging systemic inequities, and centering students' lived realities and cultural assets.

Reflection Questions

- What messages or dominant narratives have you as a teacher educator had to learn or unlearn in order to develop cultural humility? How might you support preservice or inservice teachers to develop their own cultural humility? What are the challenges involved in this work?
- How do your university course grading policies and procedures demonstrate culturally responsive teaching? For program leaders: what policies and procedures have inequitable impacts on BIPOC staff or create barriers for them to advance professionally within your organization?
- The early childhood educator workforce is relatively diverse, especially compared with educators in K-12 or higher education. However, the workforce of teacher educators and program leaders remains predominantly White and middle class. What changes are needed to further expand who gets to become a teacher educator or program leader? How can you contribute to this effort?

Activities for Self-Growth and Working with Adults

Community Asset Mapping: What are the organizations, elders, places for gathering, or spaces of worship that sustain ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identities and provide other important services within your community? How might you partner with these community assets to better support children and families? How might you and/or your organization function as a hub to connect children and families to these community resources? (You could create your own personal community asset map as a self-reflection exercise or create a map for your organization and invite staff and families to contribute to it.)

Resources

Alim, H.S., & Paris, D., eds. 2017. *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning*

for Justice in a Changing World. Teachers College Press.

Bhansari, R.S., Park, C., Varghese, M., & Daniels, J. 2023. "Forging Teacher Educator Identities: Embracing Friction through Critical Reflexivity." *The New Educator* 19 (4): 258–272.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1547688X.2022.2151675>

Derman-Sparks, L., LeeKeenan, D., & Nimmo, J. 2023. *Leading Anti-Bias Early Childhood Programs: A Guide to Change, for Change*. 2nd ed. Teachers College Press.
https://www.antibiasleadersece.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Appendix_LeadingAntibiasEarlyChildhoodPrograms.pdf

Theme 8: Leadership and Advocacy

Corresponding chapters: 13, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29

Many of the contributing authors of this book did not grow up seeing AANHPI leaders or teachers. The stories shared are about pushing forward in a time when those models and mentors were not available. These individuals grew up in the field, knowing that they needed to be present and create a space and voice for the AANHPI children in their communities. Seeing the change and being part of the change are powerful and necessary. We need to elevate the voices of those who are overlooked or intentionally set aside. These are the stories of how to make this happen in early education today. Journeys in classrooms, public policy, and early education leadership circles to make the change needed for children and families. These stories make visible for the future how to enter these circles and how to create a platform to advocate and improve the lives of families and children.

Chapter Examples

1. The dominant narrative of leadership—especially in early childhood—still carries narrow expectations. Leadership is often equated with being assertive, polished, confident in a way that demands space without first listening. And when you don't fit that mold, you're either invisible or misunderstood. There's a subtle but persistent idea that a strong leader looks a certain way—sharp blazer, business speak, a tone that says, "Trust me, I have the answers." My leadership doesn't always look like that. I lead from a place of humility. I ask questions. I center relationships. I share power. I make decisions by listening first. (Chapter 22, Nicol Russell, p. 179)
2. Having navigated these cultural differences, I have learned to bridge these gaps when working with diverse communities. When meeting with immigrant families struggling with early education or family services systems, I provide the narrative of American education or family services systems through cultural frameworks that resonate with their experiences. Similarly, when presenting to policymakers, I transform rich family narratives into the data points and actionable recommendations they require to move forward. This isn't code-switching for me, it's simply how I naturally communicate after years of living between cultural worlds. (Chapter 25, Sandy Baba, p. 199)

Key Messages

- The path to leadership takes many forms; each journey is unique and based on one's background, lived experiences, and supports.
- The process of change may require letting go of ways of doing things that are familiar and comfortable in order to build new culture and infrastructure. Some of the authors

describe key people in their lives who taught them to be the leaders they have become today.

Reflection Questions

- How did your ancestors shape your leadership journey? What cultural messages were you taught about leaders and changemakers?
- What examples of leadership and advocacy do you connect with in your own life? What are the connections you notice between your leadership style and your other intersecting identities?

Activities for Self-Growth and Working with Adults

- Use a tool, such as “Reading the Program,” to create a strategic plan for change (https://www.antibiasleadersece.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Appendix_LeadingAntibiasEarlyChildhoodPrograms.pdf).

Resources

Brown, Adrienne M. (2017). *Emergent strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*.

Derman-Sparks, L., LeeKeenan, D., & Nimmo, J. 2023. *Leading Anti-Bias Early Childhood Programs: A Guide to Change, for Change*. 2nd ed. Teachers College Press. https://www.antibiasleadersece.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Appendix_LeadingAntibiasEarlyChildhoodPrograms.pdf

hooks, b. 1994. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. Routledge.

Additional Selected AANHPI Resources

The editors and contributing authors of *No Single Story* share additional AANHPI resources, which are available as a separate PDF. These resources are useful for developing curricula or training materials for educators and other adult learners, as well as for more information about AANHPI communities. This resource list is organized by sections starting with general AANHPI web resources, museums, children's book lists, book sellers, adult books, and articles. Readers will also find identity- and ethnicity-specific sections that were recommended by our chapter authors.

Professional Development Film

Debbie LeeKeenan, Producer & Filiz Efe McKinney, Filmmaker. “No Single Story: Collective Voices.” 2026. 22:00. <https://bravesprout.com>

Description

“No Single Story: Collective Voices” is a 22-minute film that brings to life many of the voices in the book. The authors reflect on their identities, their communities, and what it means to tell their stories together. This professional development film is a tool for workshops, presentations, and courses—a provocation for discussion. The film moves through seven themes from the book:

1. Complexity of identity
2. Collective power
3. History and erasure
4. Immigration
5. Culturally responsive practices
6. Leadership and advocacy
7. Storytelling matters

We greatly appreciate the authors who volunteered to share their thoughts on film.

Suggestions for Use

- Watch the video **before** you read the book. It gives an overview of the major themes and introduces you to many of the authors.
- Watch the video **after** you read the book to review what you read and hear some of the authors share their key ideas.
- Watch the video and **stop** at each chapter mark and have a short discussion or pause for reflection.
- The video can be used as part of presentations, workshops, courses, and staff and family meetings, as a provocation for discussion.

Reflection Prompts for the Video

For a deeper conversation, use a protocol from resources such as The Center for Leadership and Educational Equity (schoolreforminitiative.org/protocols) or Making Learning Visible (<http://www.mlvpz.org/indexed95.html>). For instance, this “thinking routine” is modified from Project Zero’s protocols in Making Learning Visible (2015):

- **Connect:** How do the ideas presented in the video connect to your personal and professional experiences?

➤ **Extend:** What new ideas did you get that extended or broadened your thinking?

➤ **Challenge:** What challenges or puzzles have come to mind?

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