

The Four Goals of Anti-Bias Education

Goal 1 (Identity)

Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities.

This is about making it possible for children to like who they are without needing to feel superior to others. It's also about helping children avoid "internalized oppression", which occurs when they learn and begin to believe negative bias about themselves. And it's about preventing children from internalizing messages of superiority (being better than those who are different from them) which can happen when the majority of messages about a group they belong to are positive while those about other groups are negative.

Goal 2 (Diversity)

Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; and deep, caring human connections.

This means guiding children's developing awareness of differences in a way that creates interest in and empathy with difference, rather than a fear or judgment of it. It means helping children develop skills to negotiate the day-to-day natural discomfort, tensions, problems, or conflicts that can arise over differences.

This goal is also about coaching our children to recognize and respect differences while simultaneously recognizing the commonalities all people share. In other words, the hope is that they come to embrace the idea that, "We are all alike; and we are all different".

Goal 3 (Justice)

Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.

This is about helping children develop the knowledge and analytical skills to identify unfair and untrue images (stereotypes), comments (teasing, name-calling), and behaviors (discrimination) directed at their own or another's identity. This goal is about knowing that bias hurts.

Goal 4 (Activism)

Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions.

This goal is about helping children learn and practice a variety of ways to act in the face of bias expressed by other children and adults.

From: Derman-Sparks, Louise and Olsen Edwards, Julie (2010). Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves. Washington D.C., NAEYC.