



# Understand and Challenge Biases Worksheet

## Introduction

A bias is an assumption, stereotype, or unintentional action (positive or negative) that humans hold or take toward others based on identity labels, such as race, ethnicity, religion, age, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, or ability.<sup>1</sup> While it is human nature to notice and respond to differences, many of our biases are taught and learned throughout our lives. Bias develops from a combination of influences — our own upbringing, our experiences, the media, and other external influences. There are two types of bias: implicit bias and explicit bias.

- **Implicit biases** are unconscious thoughts or attitudes we have that affect our behaviors, actions, and decisions. These biases are involuntary and unintentional. For example, a teacher may unknowingly assume that parents who speak with certain accents are less intelligent than other parents.
- **Explicit biases** are thoughts or attitudes we are conscious and aware of. For example, a person may assume coworkers of a certain age are difficult to work with and may avoid working with them.

Racial bias is an example of a persistent bias that can be both implicit and explicit bias and that many families experience. Often, our implicit biases contradict our values. But as humans, we all have implicit biases. Even the most kind and thoughtful people have them — it is human nature!

Both implicit and explicit biases can be harmful. Whether or not you are aware of it, biases affect how you engage families. Consequently, as you engage with families in collaborative and strengths-based partnerships, you will want to be aware of how your biases influence these relationships.

## Activities

This worksheet features three activities to complete:

1. Understanding What Bias Means
2. Self-reflecting to Understand Your Biases
3. Identifying Actions to Tame Biases

Each activity builds on the one before it, so make sure to do them in order:



If you only have 15 minutes, complete Activity 1.



If you have 30 minutes, complete Activity 1 and Activity 2.



If you have an hour, complete all three activities.

You may choose to spend more or less time on each activity depending on your needs or the needs of your group.

<sup>1</sup> [“Definitions of Key Terms.”](#) NAEYC. Accessed June 25, 2024.

## Activity 1. Understanding What Bias Means

- Watch the video [The Look](#). This video demonstrates how bias can be expressed even without words.
- Reflect on the video.
- Respond to each question using the space provided.

What biases or assumptions did you make about the main character as you watched?

How would you describe the “looks” he received?

How do you think he felt when receiving these “looks”?

Think about a time when you may have made assumptions about someone and, without using any words, your “look” could have shown that bias.

## Activity 2. Self-reflecting to Understand Your Biases

Name it to tame it. The first step to knowing and acknowledging our biases is to observe and reflect on them (“name it”). Then we can reduce and combat our biases (“tame it”). This activity focuses on naming biases. It helps to make it personal. Since we all have biases, it is important to examine our own values and cultural upbringing, as well as our experiences (or lack of experiences) with racism and/or discrimination. Consider, for example, how your biases and experiences influence how you build relationships with families, particularly those whose race, ethnicity, or cultural background is different from your own.

### Journaling Activity: Practice “Naming It”

- Make a list of your biases.
- Since your assumptions form many of your biases, list the assumptions you have made about families in the space provided below.

Families You Encounter	Assumptions
Living in Poverty	
Experiencing Homelessness	
Of Various Races and Ethnicities	
Whose Primary Language Is Not English	

Review your list of biases and assumptions. Think of a time when your assumptions or biases affected your thoughts, behaviors, or interactions with a family. Write down your thoughts in the space provided.

You will practice “taming” your biases in Activity 3.

### Activity 3. Identifying Actions to Tame Biases

Now that you have identified your assumptions (“name it”), consider how you can adjust your thoughts or behaviors to address your biases (“tame it”), so they don’t influence your relationships with families. This is not easy. But a commitment to equity requires that we do more than just name where racial bias or other biases may have caused unfair treatment. Equity requires that we reflect on how our biases impact our views and interactions with families — and then do something different in the future.

#### Journaling Activity: Practice “Taming It”

Identify ways you can challenge your biases by completing the task listed below. Use the space provided to journal your thoughts or respond to the questions.

For the next few weeks, pay attention to how your biases may impact your interactions with families or community members. Write down any observations or self-reflections you have in the space provided.

Think about “taming” or adjusting your thoughts and behaviors. Identify next steps in the space provided for each category. Starting small, I can do this now:

To challenge myself, I will talk with my supervisor or a trusted colleague about trying the following:

For more information, please contact us: [PFCE@ecetta.info](mailto:PFCE@ecetta.info) | 1-866-763-6481

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