



Reflect on your own experiences with children, families, and colleagues. If you are an supervisor, administrator, or adult educator, how might you use these questions and activities to help other adults reflect on their experiences?

Turn questions into action

In her article, "Social Justice in Early Childhood Classrooms," Nora Hyland suggests a research project that we recommend you undertake, reflect on, and write about.

Observe all of the children to understand how they talk among themselves about specific issues of race, culture, family structures, and economic circumstances. Specifically, notice ways that children set limits or boundaries in defining what it means to have different skin color, languages, or family circumstances.

How they classify each other?

How do they talk about hair and skin in relation to appearance?

How do they compare skin color, and talk about what is appropriate or inappropriate for those who are different from them?

Who do they describe as normal or real, weird or bad?

How do they talk about people they've seen who are "the bad guys?"

What other questions that children ask or comments that they make on the topic of differences come to mind for you?

Use these sorts of observations to identify issues of injustice, and to open discussions among the staff about discomfort and discriminations in order to devise a plan for countering these impressions of difference with the children.