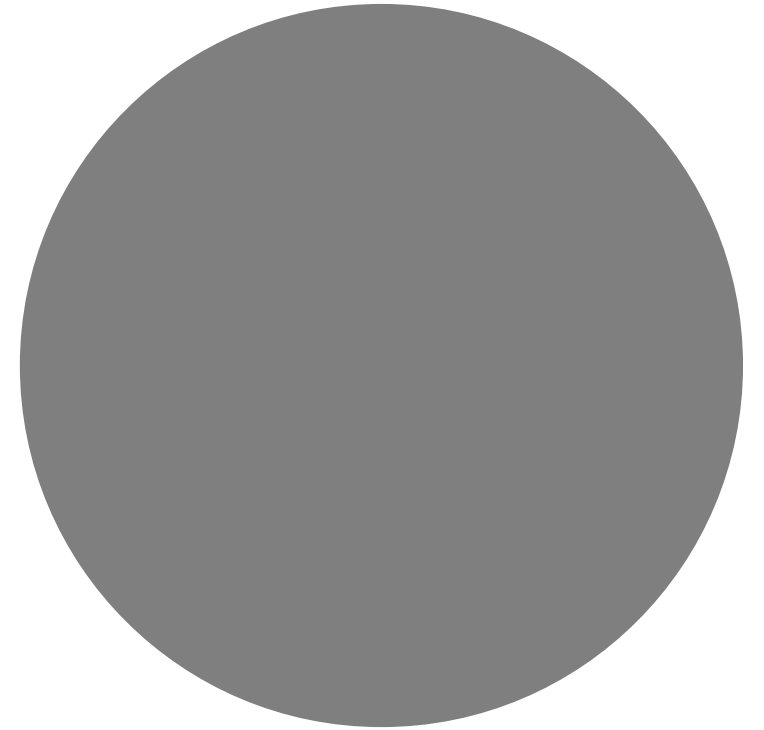


Working Toward Justice: Reducing Suspension and Expulsion by Practicing Inclusion

Megan Vinh, Ph.D.

Adapted from Vinh &
Ayankoya, 2019

- Megan Vinh

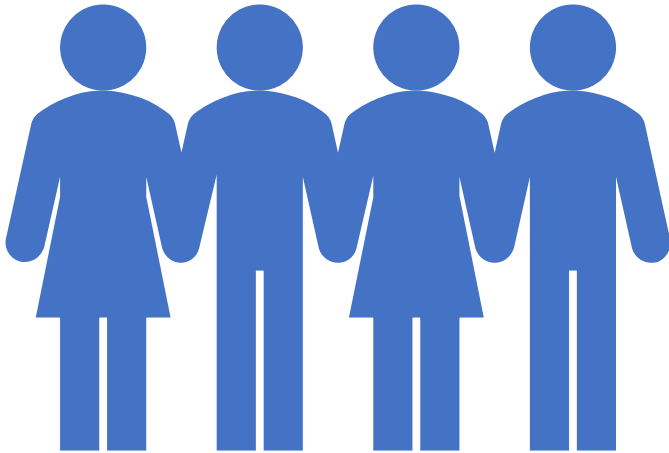


Who Are We?



Getting to know you

As a field . . .



“We have a responsibility to cultivate early learning communities in which the identities of all young children are affirmed”





The Choice

The problem:

- A philanthropist has offered to pay for the college education for three students from an urban area near the University. Your committee has the task of awarding the scholarships. Nine students have been referred to your committee as possible recipients of the scholarships and it is up to you to make the decision as to which of them will be given the opportunity to continue their education. Comments from their short essays on the application form are below.

Restrictions:

- The philanthropist will only provide funds for three of these students.
- None of these students will be able to attend college without the scholarship.
- You must decide based only on the information given below.



What is the
issue?



Expulsion: Complete and permanent removal of a child from an early learning programs

What is Expulsion?

What is Suspension?

Suspension: A “disciplinary action that is administered as a consequence of a student’s inappropriate behavior, requires that a student absent him/herself from the classroom or from the school for a specified period of time.”

What do exclusionary discipline practices look like in early childhood settings?

Examples of exclusionary practices in early childhood



In-School Suspension could look like...

Disciplining a child by sending the child out of the classroom, such as to the director's office.



Out-of-School Suspension could look like...

Asking a family to pick up their child early because of behavioral issues (e.g., biting, hitting, not following directions).



Expulsion could look like...

Telling a family that they will need to find another care arrangement/center because the child is not a "good fit" for the program or that the program can 'no longer support' their toddler or preschooler.



'Soft' Expulsion could look like...

Asking the family repeatedly to pick their child up early because of behavior issues, requiring them to leave or miss work frequently.

What does this *REALLY* look like in Early Childhood?

- [In-school suspensions](#) – Practices that involve removing or excluding the child from the classroom.
- [Out-of-school suspensions](#) – Practices that involve temporarily removing the child from the program.
- [Expulsions](#) – Permanent removal or dismissal from the program.
- [Soft-expulsions](#) – Practices that make it so that the program is not a viable or welcoming care arrangement for the family and leaves the family with little choice but to withdraw their child.



What behaviors get children suspended?

Say it louder for the
people in the back...

Suspension and expulsion pathologizes normal
child behavior!

"Expelling preschoolers is not an intervention...Rather, it disrupts the learning process, pushing a child out the door of one early care and education program, only for him or her to be enrolled somewhere else, continuing a negative cycle of revolving doors that increases inequality and hides the child and family from access to meaningful supports."

-NAEYC



Show me the Data!



Civil Rights Data Collection

- Biennial (i.e., every other school year)
- Survey Required by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights since 1968
- Collected data from all public local education agencies (LEA) and schools, including long-term secure juvenile facilities, charter schools, alternative schools, and schools serving students with disabilities



The background of the slide features several thin, curved lines in shades of gray, some solid and some dashed, creating a sense of motion or a stylized globe. On the left side, there is a blue rectangular box with a white border and a small white triangle pointing downwards at the bottom center, resembling a speech bubble or a callout box.

Civil Rights Data Collection

- It included the number of preschool children who:
 - had at least one out-of-school suspension,
 - had more than one suspension,
 - were expelled, and
 - received corporal punishment.



Patterns of racial and gender disproportionality:

- 5,000 preschoolers were suspended at least once and nearly 2,500 were suspended a second time (2014)
- ***Black preschoolers:*** 3.6 times more likely to be suspended than their White peers (2016)
 - ***Black children:*** 18% of the preschool enrollment, but 48% of suspensions (2014)
 - ***White children:*** 43% of preschool enrollment but 26% of suspensions

Patterns of racial and gender disproportionality

Boys: Represent 54% of the preschool enrollment; 79% of preschool children suspended once and 82% of all preschool children suspended multiple times



A photograph of two young Black children in a kitchen setting. The child on the left is wearing a white chef's hat and a red shirt, looking towards the right. The child on the right is wearing a black chef's hat and a white shirt with colorful horizontal stripes, looking down at a large metal bowl. In the foreground, there is a wooden steamer basket containing yellow food items, possibly dumplings or buns. The background shows a kitchen counter with various items and a tiled wall.

Studies spanning 40 years show that Black children are up to four times more likely to be suspended than White students.

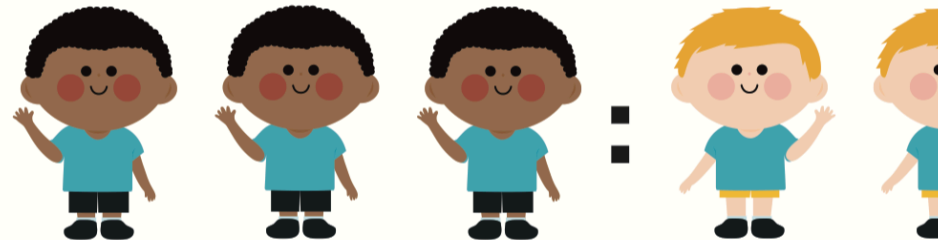
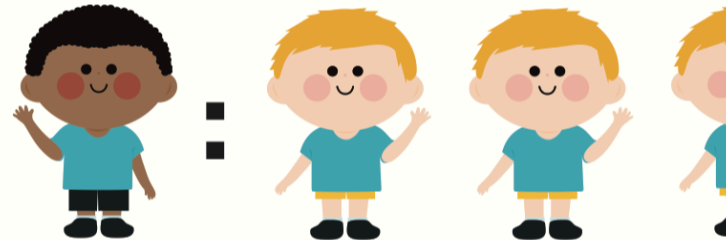
Bradshaw et al., 2010; Children's Defense Fund, 1975; Milner, 2013; Skiba et al., 2011



Preschool Enrollment

Racial Inequities in Preschool Discipline

Black students, especially boys are disproportionately more likely than their white peers to face multiple suspensions from preschool.



Multiple suspensions

Disproportionate preschool suspensions are the result of adult behaviors.

- They arise from **implicit racial biases** which impact teacher expectations (Gilliam et al., 2016).
- Preschool suspensions contribute to **loss of vital school time** that contributes to the achievement gap and can begin students on a negative school trajectory (Losen, et al., 2015).
- Young students who are expelled or suspended are as much as **10 times more likely** to drop out of high school, experience academic failure and grade retention, hold negative school attitudes, and face incarceration than those who are not (Lamont et al., 2013; Petraset al., 2011).



Suspension of students with disabilities

- Students with disabilities are more than twice as likely to receive an out-of-school suspension (13%) than students without disabilities (6%)
- Students with disabilities represent 12% of the student populations, but 58% of those placed in seclusion or involuntary confinement and 75% of those physically restrained at school or immobilize them or reduce their ability to move freely.

The negative outcomes for students that have been suspended and expelled include:



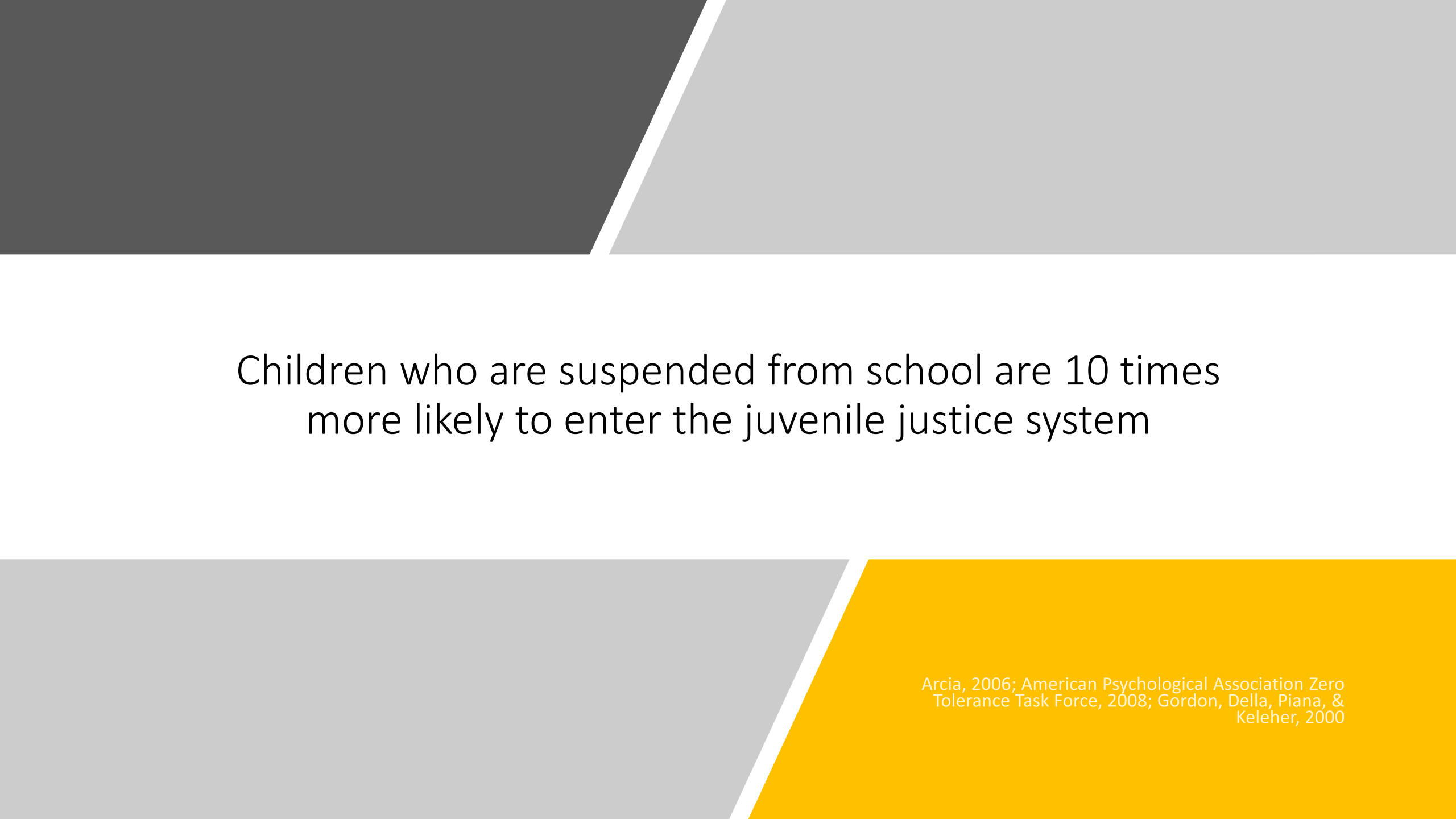
Disengagement from the educational system



Antisocial behaviors



Risk for entering the juvenile justice system



Children who are suspended from school are 10 times
more likely to enter the juvenile justice system

Arcia, 2006; American Psychological Association Zero
Tolerance Task Force, 2008; Gordon, Della, Piana, &
Keleher, 2000

Overall, it's clear that...

Those children who most need access to high quality programs are the least likely to attend and most likely to be expelled due to behavioral concerns.



By kindergarten entry, many children have been labeled and sorted into categories according to behavior, which has negative effects on children's self-worth, their perception of school as being safe and supportive, and is directly related to chronic absenteeism and suspension.



What is Implicit Bias?

- “Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.” It is:
 - Activated involuntarily (i.e., individual not aware of biases)
 - Pervasive and robust
 - Does not necessarily align with our declared beliefs
 - Malleable, but can be unlearned and replaced with new mental associations

Implicit Bias is...



Attitudes, Stereotypes, & Beliefs
that can affect how we treat others.

Implicit bias is not intentional, but it can still impact how we judge others based on factors, such as:



Race



Ability



Gender



Culture



Language

In early childhood settings, implicit biases can affect how providers perceive and respond to children, which can lead to unfair differences in the use of exclusionary discipline practices, such as suspension and expulsion.

Go to our Guide to learn about recommended policies and strategies for promoting all children's success and preventing suspensions and expulsions in early childhood settings! preventexpulsion.org

SRI Education™
A DIVISION OF SRI INTERNATIONAL

Write down your first response
to the following:

Where should you keep your peanut butter?



Write down your first response
to the following:

Where should you keep your peanut butter?

When should your children get a bath?



Write down your first response
to the following:

Where should you keep your peanut butter?

When should your children get a bath?

Where should newborns/infants sleep at night?



Write down your first response to the following:

Where should you keep your peanut butter?

When should your children get a bath?

Where should newborns/infants sleep at night?

Where should you eat dinner? At what time?



Write down your first response
to the following:

Where should you keep your peanut butter?

When should your children get a bath?

Where should newborns/infants sleep at night?

Where should you eat dinner? At what time?

When should your child be toilet-trained?



Write down your first response to the following:

Where should you keep your peanut butter?

When should your children get a bath?

Where should newborns/infants sleep at night?

Where should you eat dinner? At what time?

When should your child be toilet-trained?

What does meal time look like for a 4-year-old?

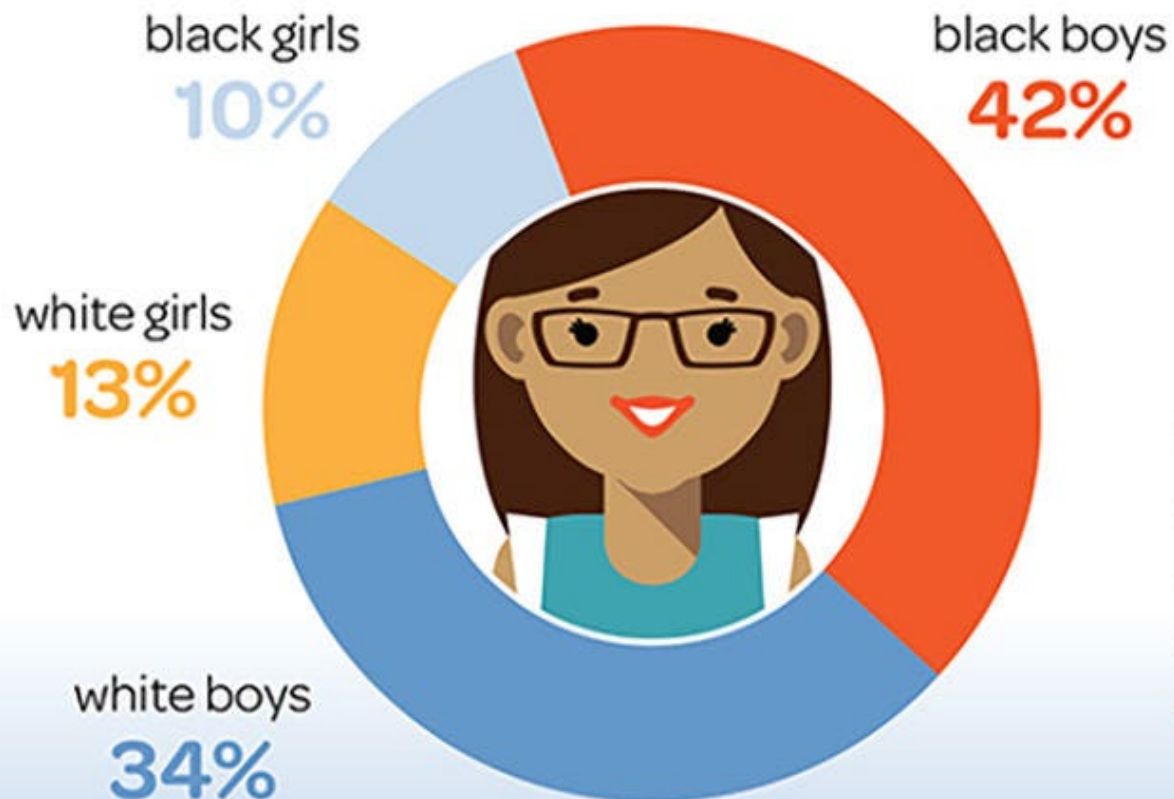




Why does it matter?

- Implicit Bias impacts EVERYTHING!
 - Attractiveness bias (Salter, Mixon, & King, 2012)
 - Height bias (Judge & Cable, 2004)
- Implicit bias predicts the extent to which..
 - Police officers use force when arresting Black children (Goff et al., 2014)
 - Arbitrators decide labor grievances in favor of women over men (Girvan, Deason, Borgida, 2015)
 - Pediatricians recommend less pain medication for Black children than White (Cooper et al., 2012; Sabin & Greenwald, 2012)

Track the eyes: Which students are teachers watching?



Preschool teachers tend to more closely observe blacks than whites, especially black boys, when challenging behaviors are expected.

What is Ableism?

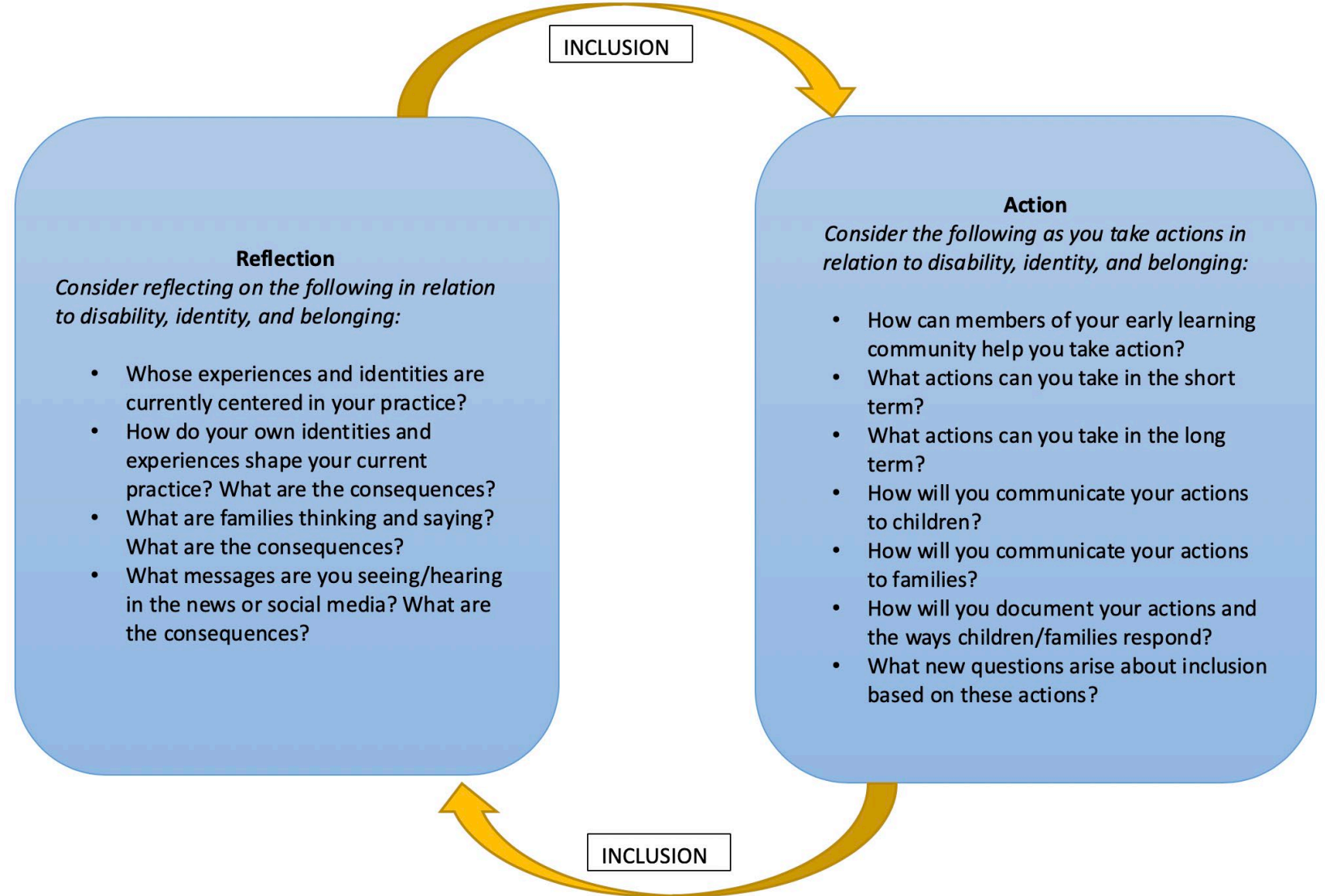
“Ableism is systemic, meaning it is not simply an individually held explicit in prejudice, but a social idea that is deeply embedded in how society is structured around singular accepted standards of physical, intellectual, and emotional normalcy” (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017)

“Such enmeshed societal attitudes means that even well-intentioned practitioners work in systems that frame young children who not meet notions of ‘normalcy’ through a deficit lens” (Ferri & Bacon, 2011)



What messages are we
giving kids about their
worth?

Framework for Engaging in Inclusive Praxis



Use the Framework for Leo

Leo, a 2.8 year old child, experiences developmental delays. Leo was born just months after his family emigrated from Mexico to the U.S. He has attended the same early childhood center since he was 12 weeks old. Leo moved from the infant room to the toddler room alongside his peers. He frequently chooses to participate in small- and large-group classroom activities such as dancing and exploring books with other children in the class. However, center staff have recently voiced concerns about Leo advancing with his peers to the preschool classroom in the fall. The center has a strict policy that children in preschool must be able to use the bathroom independently and Leo has not shown interest in toilet training.

Who are early childhood educators?

White

Middle class

Women

Often little experience with other cultures

Often little education and training to work
with children and families from other cultures

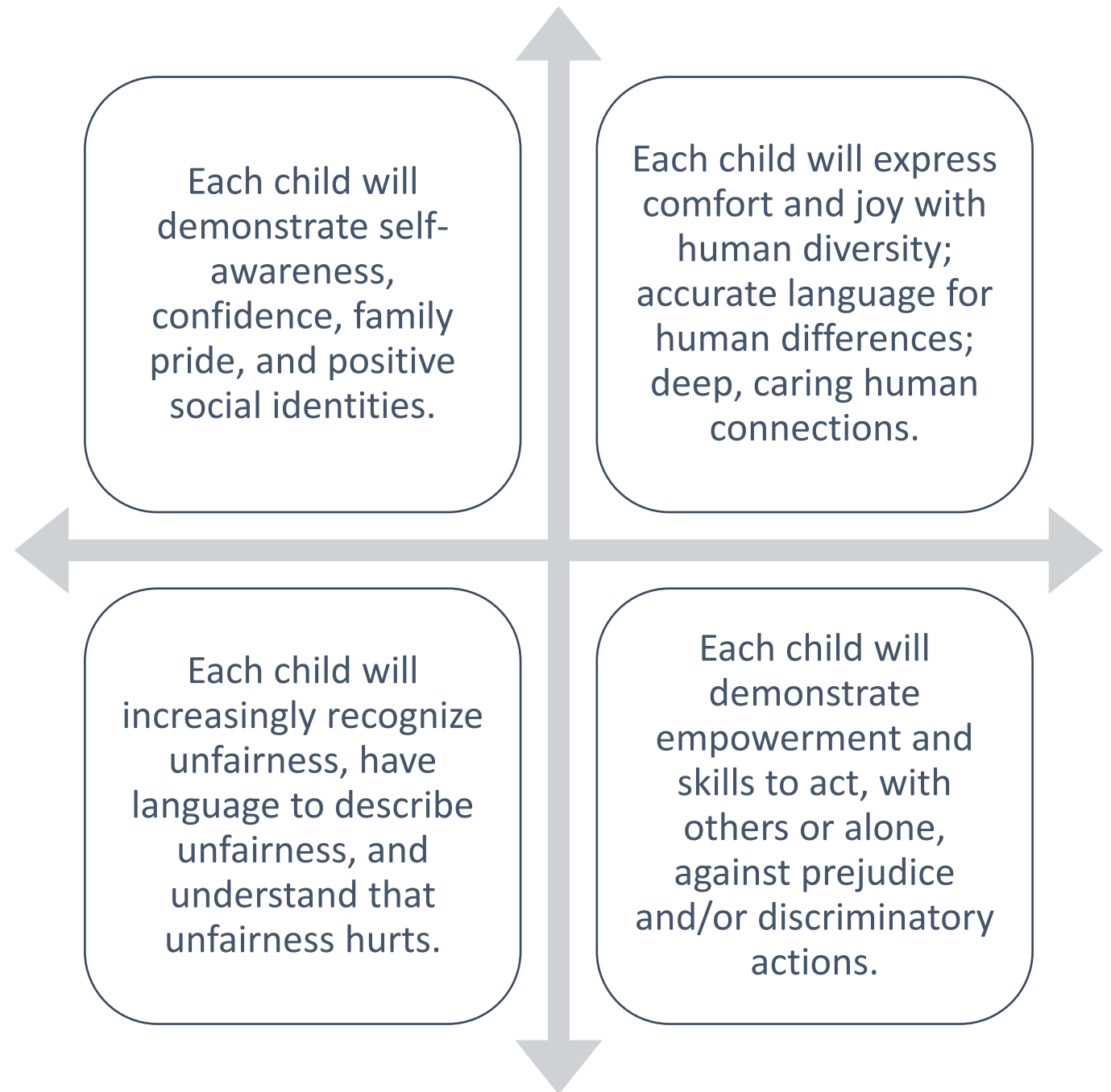


Creating Culturally Responsive Anti-Bias Programs

A pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning

Ladson-Billings, 1994

Core Goals of Anti-Bias Education



Components of Culturally Responsive Practices



Cultural engagement



Culture, language, and racial identity
development



Multicultural awareness



High expectations

Culturally Responsive Anti-Bias Programs



Encourages positive
identity
development



Prevents isolation



Designed to
address isolation
because it helps
children to develop
an increased
sensitivity to the
life experiences of
others



Discourages denial
and fear of
differences in
young children

Principles of Culturally Responsive Anti-bias Pedagogy

- Recognizes the **importance of including children's cultural references** in all aspects of learning.
- Learning takes place within the **context of culture**.
- **Learning environment where all students are welcomed, supported, and provided with the best opportunities to learn** regardless of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- Can be positive for children's self-concept
- Focus on teaching equity and social justice



TYPICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Rule-driven
- Conformist
- Rigidity, order
- Thing-focused
- Hierarchical

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE ANTI-BIAS

- Freedom-loving
- Creative
- Flexibility
- People-focused
- Democratic

Reflect on:

What is your response to the children's conversation? What is your experience and comfort level with talking about identity- including topics such as skin color, race, and religion- with children? Have you ever worried that you might say something wrong?

As an early childhood professional, what values and beliefs do you have about your role in furthering children's understanding of these complex issues and in guiding their development to value diversity?



CRAB Instructional Practices

- Materials that demonstrate acceptance of all children's gender, family, race, language, culture, ethnic, SES, and special needs
- Build children's understanding of their own and other cultures by providing cultural experiences using songs, stories, and language familiar to the child
- Build children's pride in their cultures, families, and communities (e.g., culturally reflective themes, home language reflected in print, items from home, family photographs include in environment)

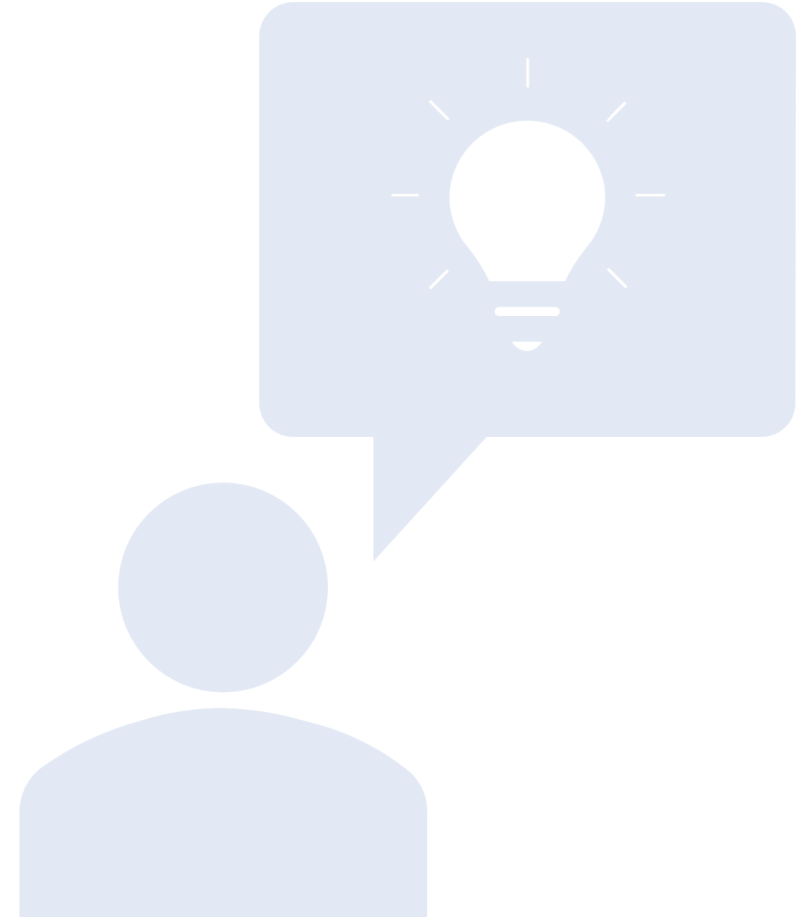


CRAB Instructional Practices

- Teach through stories, song, drama, and role play
- Encourage questioning
- Allow interactive discourse, discussion, and analysis with an emphasis on verbal play
- Provide collective/collaborative activities
- Share the room by letting children help decide what goes on the walls
- Share the daily routine by being flexible and allowing learning to unfold within the context of activities



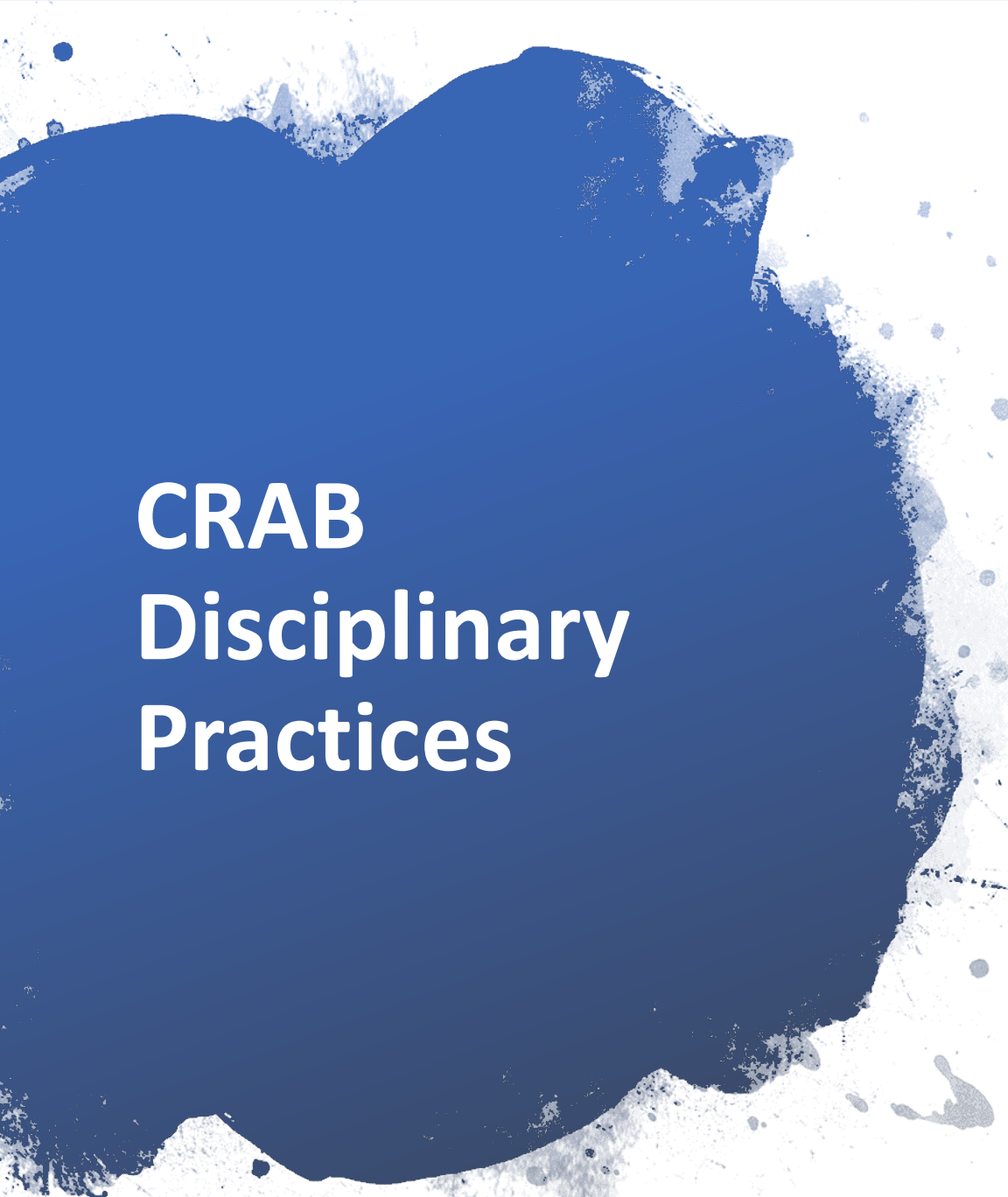
What, if anything, makes
you uncomfortable with
these instructional
strategies?





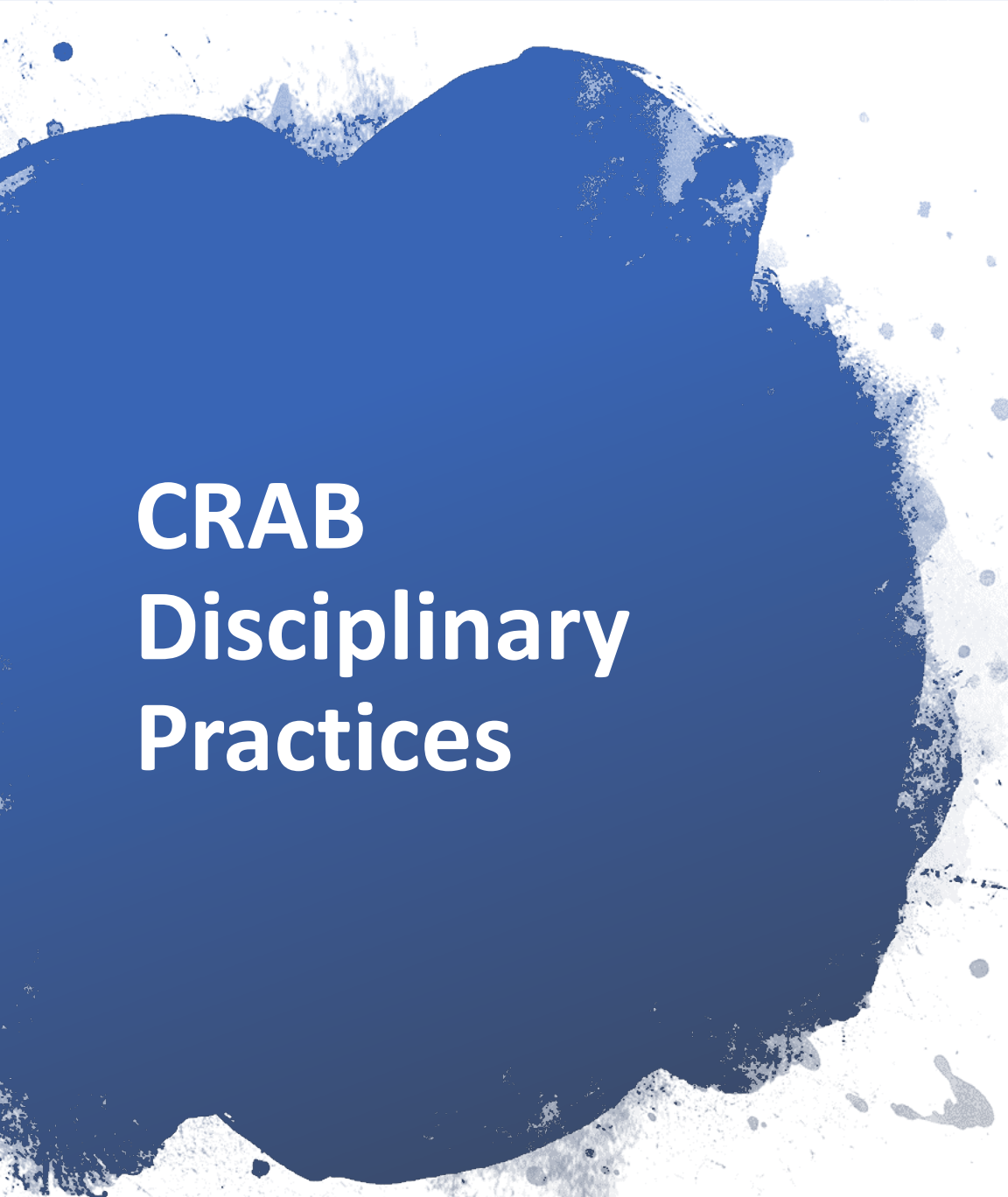
CRAB Instructional Practices

- Use fables, morals, and proverbs
- Self-portraits
- Exploring family history
- Exploring similarities and differences
- What would you do if.....?
- Develop classroom rights



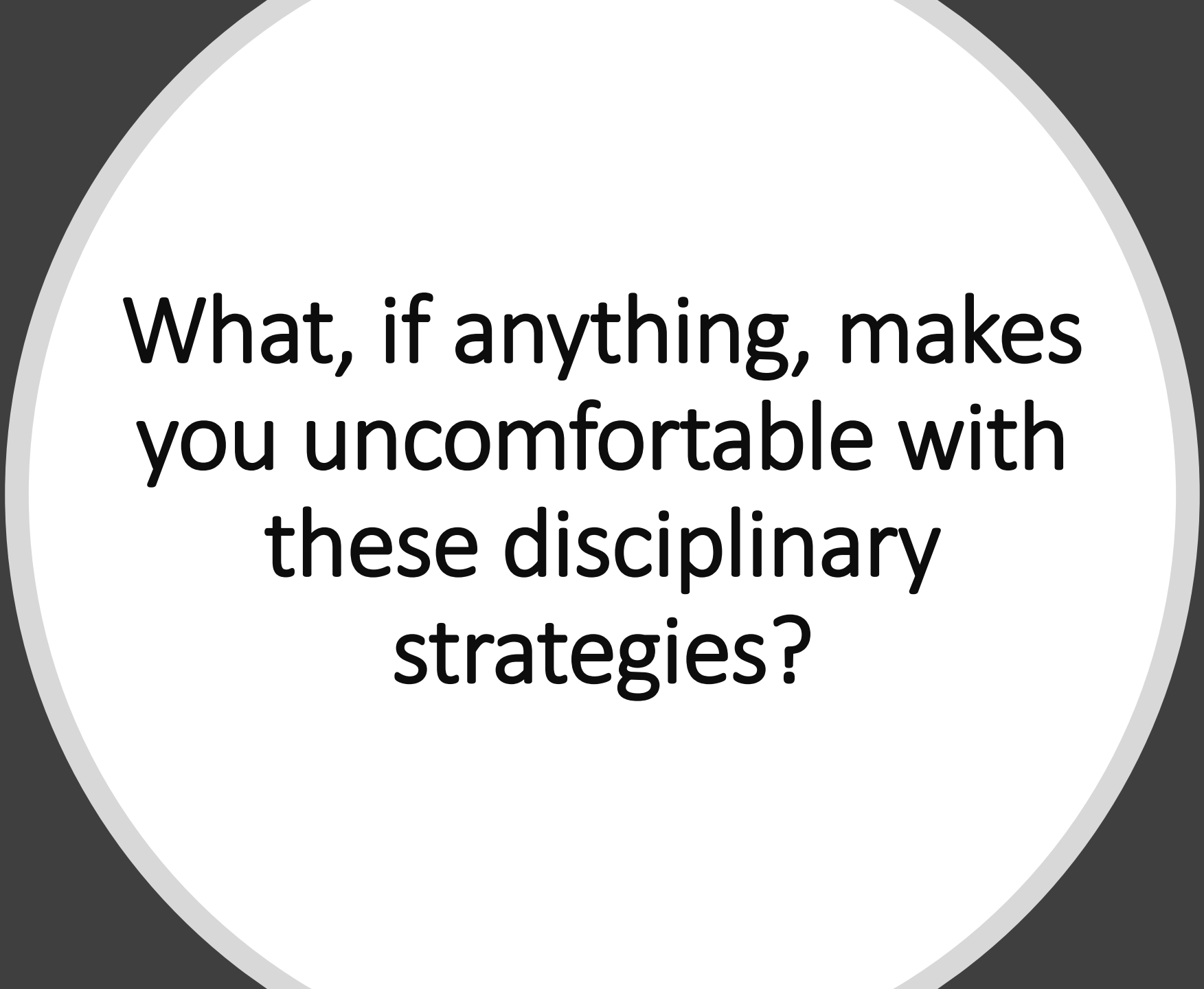
CRAB Disciplinary Practices

- Live by the Platinum Rule
- Teach social emotional skills (e.g., recognize feelings, frustration tolerance, anger, disappointment, asking to play, using words, taking turns, sharing, cooperating, asking for help, giving compliments, developing empathy)
- Use directives rather than implied questions
- Use if-then statements



CRAB Disciplinary Practices

- Focus on discipline rather than punishment
- Use posters and illustrations for rules that show children what to do
- Have a peace table or a place where children can go to solve conflicts without fighting
- Discipline equally
- Share power and control by stepping back and letting children work things out
- Share classroom management (e.g., letting children make rules, how to resolve disagreements)



What, if anything, makes
you uncomfortable with
these disciplinary
strategies?

Establishing Teacher-Child Relationships



Deliver equal attention and praise



Create a warm and friendly classroom that is based on respect and cooperation



Respond to children's emotions promptly, and with kindness, empathy, and respect



Get to know each child; let children get to know you



Think Critically.....

1. Are there certain children who get on your nerves?
2. When all the children have their hands raised, who are you most likely to call on first?
3. Do you praise certain kids more often than others?
4. Do you have better relationships with certain children?

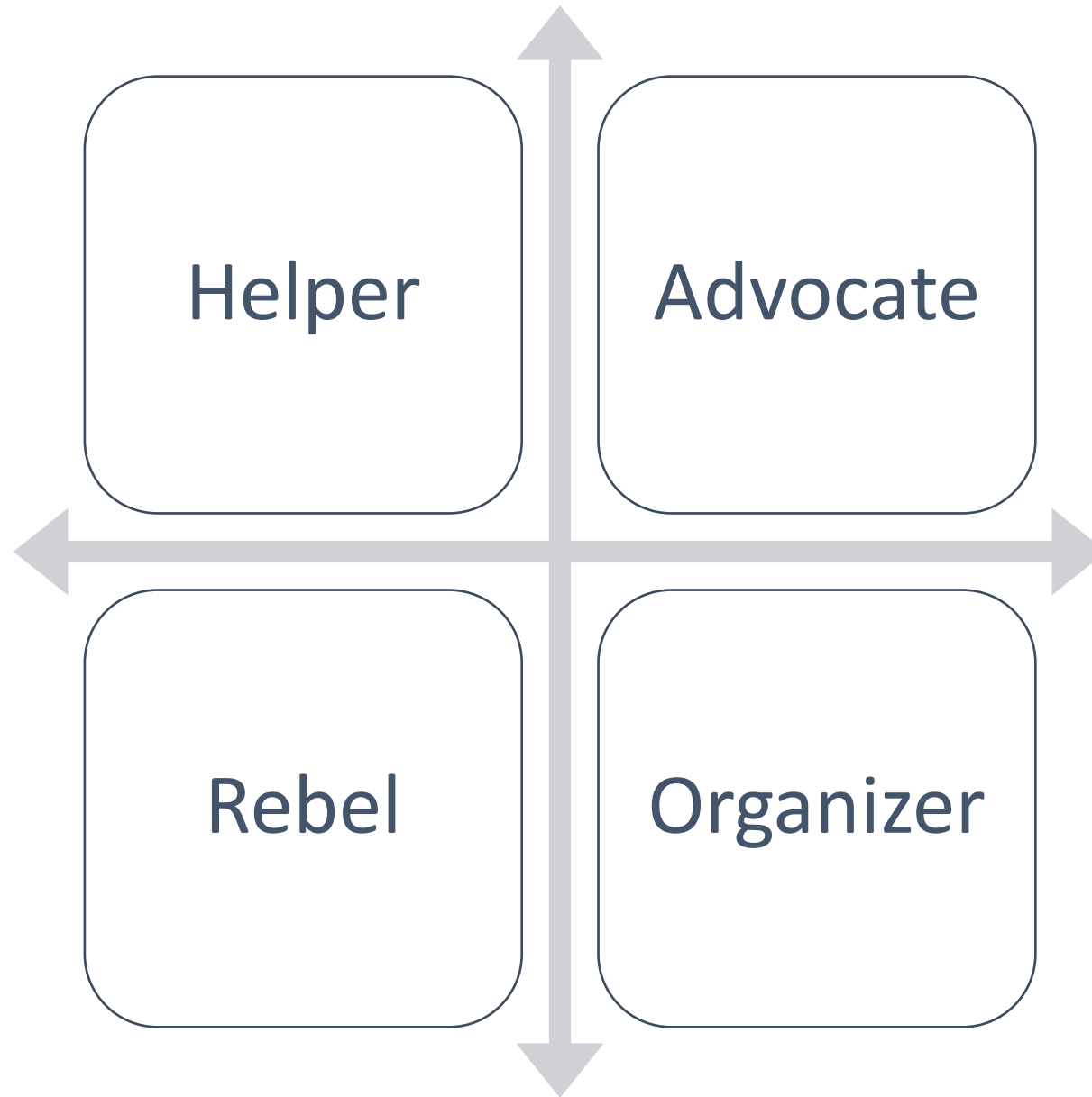
Tips for Success

Find	Find details of children's competence
Seek	Seek children's points of view
Examine	Examine the environment
Consider	Consider multiple perspectives



Tornado Activity

In a Midwestern city in the US, a major tornado hits and knocks down a big manufactured home park. Almost forty people are still unaccounted for, and might be trapped in the rubble. The city's response is terribly inadequate – both in terms of preparation for a disaster like this, and in terms of execution of its flawed plan. State and federal offices have the resources to respond, but are not adequately mobilized. The bungled relief effort highlights a number of broader issues about how the government at all levels responds, especially to working poor Midwesterners.





What will you bring
back? How will you
create social change?



Contact Information

Megan Vinh

Megan.vinh@unc.edu

Betsy Ayankoya

betsy.ayankoya@unc.edu



Find out more at ectacenter.org

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