

# ENGAGING WITH OTHERS

Engaging with others is essential to changing systems to become more inclusive for people belonging to marginalized groups, and that individuals should move past being an ally to being a leader in influencing change. Check out the following 5 tips and consider how they pertain to your work as an early childhood professional.

1

Avoid the “savior” mindset. Refrain from giving unwanted help or assuming your ideas are the “normal” or “best” way to do things.

Liz is a new teacher in an inclusive preschool classroom. She learns that one of the caregivers of a child in her classroom uses a wheelchair. Liz thinks about how difficult it might be for them to unload their wheelchair, enter the building, and exit with their child and wonders what she can do.

Add your own ideas about what Liz should and should not do in this situation.

What should Liz avoid doing in this situation?

What are some things Liz could do in this situation?

# 2

Start conversations and invite others to join.

What kinds of conversations can you start? With whom? In what context?

# 3

Join existing efforts led by individuals who have experienced injustice.

Hailey is a Caucasian parent educator who works in a community with a large Hispanic population. While she is conducting a parent-child interaction group, she hears some of the Hispanic families discussing discrimination they have experienced in the community.

What should Hailey avoid doing in this situation?

What are some things Hailey could do in this situation?

# 4

Prepare for and withstand discomfort when engaging in groups to which you do not belong.

How can you prepare for potentially uncomfortable feelings when engaging in groups to which you do not belong?

# 5

Don't wait for issues to arise to change exclusionary policies. Advocate for DEI policies whether a particular group is presently represented in the organization.

Complete the following table with your thoughts to begin reflecting on how your program supports DEI efforts and how it can improve.

How is diversity represented in my organization for children and families, staff, and leaders? In the physical environment (posters, bulletin boards, toys, books, photographs etc.)?

What inclusionary policies, procedures, traditions, and trends exist in my organization?



What exclusionary policies, procedures, traditions, and trends exist in my organization?



What steps can I take to improve DEI in my organization?

