

Creating an anti-racist child care system in Ontario

Key recommendations for child care operators

To enact anti-racism, inclusion and equity policy and practice throughout child care organizations, accountability measures will include:

- Ongoing anti-racism, inclusion & equity training for all levels of the organization;
- Ongoing training and coaching to develop and implement anti-racist, inclusive pedagogy;
- Diversity in leadership: A demonstrated commitment to providing opportunities for Black, racialized and Indigenous staff or external candidates to assume leadership roles within the centre. This should include mentorship, coaching, succession planning, recruitment, policies and practices;
- Support for racialized staff in leadership roles through ongoing coaching and mentorship;
- Advisory Committee that includes Black, Indigenous and racialized community members;
- Cultural safety policies and practices;
- Demonstrated commitment to AECEO Decent Work Common Tables' Decent Work Standards;
- Mental health supports tailored to the needs of the staff;
- Honour Truth and Reconciliation and seek ongoing support to decolonize the program;
- Demonstrated commitment to creating accessible programs, where full and meaningful inclusion and equity are experienced by the children and their families. For example, respecting and valuing home language by encouraging children to speak/use their first language;
- Supports for newcomer families to access and navigate the child care system.

What is cultural safety?

Cultural safety is an outcome – it focuses on how racialized people *experience* an environment rather than simply the intent of those providing services. Culturally safe programs are created by ongoing respectful engagement that acknowledges and works to address power imbalances and systemic racism. Culturally safe programs provide an environment that is free of racism and discrimination - one where Black, Indigenous and racialized children, families and staff feel safe and valued.

Over the past year, the OCBCC has been carrying out a project, “Centering the voices of racialized mothers and educators in child care policy” to better understand barriers to access, inclusion and equity in our early learning and child care system. Systemic racism remains a problem across Canadian child-care settings in ways that impact racialized children, families and educators. As we work to expand access and raise the quality of child care we need to ensure we are actively working to create an anti-racist child-care system. The “Centering the voices of racialized mothers and educators in child care policy” project is funded by Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) Canada, but the opinions, recommendations and outputs are those of the OCBCC. Learn more about our project at www.childcareontario.org/wage_project

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