



NAECTE--Speak out and Move to Action

As members of the executive board of the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators, we stand in solidarity with recent statements released by the National Association for the Education of Young Children's incoming president, Ann McClain Terrell, and Chief Executive Officer, Rhian Evans Allvin. Paramount in their message and our beliefs is the statement that "our goal is to nurture a more diverse and inclusive generation of young children who thrive through their experience of equitable learning opportunities in early learning programs...to increasingly recognize injustice; and to have the will and the skills to act against prejudice" (found at <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/blog/message-from-naeyc>).

The effects of COVID-19 have already filled us with uncertainty and alone are stressful to endure. However, the strife is magnified as we find ourselves once again heavy-hearted, grieving, and outraged by the inequity and violence towards our Black families, children, neighbors, educators, and friends in our nation. These violent experiences pile up against the COVID-19 crisis and suffering that is exponentially plaguing the black, brown, and indigenous communities. There is a long list of violence towards Black citizens that trail the death of George Floyd such as: Trayvon Martin (2012), Michael Brown (2014), Eric Garner (2014), Laquan McDonald (2014), Tamir Rice (2014), Sandra Bland (2015), Jamar Clark (2015), Freddie Gray (2015), Eric Harris (2015), Walter Scott (2015), Philando Castile (2016), Terence Crutcher (2016), Keith Lamont Scott (2016), Michelle Shirley (2016), Delrawn Small (2016), Sylville Smith (2016), Alton Sterling (2016), Botham Jean (2018), Atatiana Jefferson (2019), Marzues Scott (2019), and Sean Reed (2020) (this partial list found at https://nameorg.org/headline_news.php).

Systematic brutality against Blacks, Anti-Blackness, White Supremacy, racism, and intolerance, and for too many, murder, must come to an end. We are in solidarity with the family of George Floyd and all families who have ever been impacted by unjust and discriminatory violence. George Floyd's execution re-stirs generational pain and anguish in the Black community and for us all who call for equity and justice for all. We have to recognize our place in the social fabric of these tragedies and work to create better outcomes.

We must support our Black students, colleagues, and communities of color in the midst of these insufferable events--reach out to them and let them know that we care.

What do we stand for?

As an organization, NAECTE stands for many ideals; a particular few in our position statement help guide us now as follows:

- Attend to equity through strength-based partnerships with families; respecting families' funds of knowledge (cultural resources & networks) to support children's development and learning since young children's lives are so embedded in their families and communities and the success of early childhood education depends on these partnerships. (González, Moll, and Amanti, 2005)
- Respect and attend to children's culture, values, and language as inseparable from their learning and development, considering the many influences from their community as well as family to develop a culturally responsive curriculum (Reid, Kagan, Scott-Little, 2017).

These principles compel us as educators to work towards eradicating bias and bigotry through research-based pedagogy and teaching practices. We recognize our duty to inspire future early childhood teachers to open their hearts and minds and take up anti-racist and anti-bias education, becoming advocates of justice. Our vision is one where communities of color thrive in our schools

and society. We must employ efforts to uplift cultural assets and recognize and value funds of knowledge as opposed to the current deficit narratives we continue to encounter. We strive to move to a place where we all can live in new and different ways together, building a better and more just world.

What We Insist Happens Now

We resolve that discrimination, bigotry, racism, prejudices, and -isms and -phobias of all kinds be brought to light and expelled. In the wisdom of the National Association for Multicultural Education Statement, we also insist that “America’s opportunity gap and deficit thinking victimizing black people must end so that through good schools...African Americans can achieve their potential. The same has to apply for Latinos, Native Americans, Asian Americans and other long-marginalized groups. Anti-racists, across all racial, cultural and socio-economic communities must come together, now. Solidarity is key to affecting real change” (found at https://nameorg.org/headline_news.php).

We believe we must develop teachers’ abilities to mastery with culturally infusive perspectives in practice ensuring that our approaches and activities support the children and each child’s family within the community, cultural, and custom context; advance equity through integrated curriculum that promotes world perspective as unique and valued; provide racially and culturally diverse field experience contexts where learning, education, teaching approaches, responsiveness, and guidance are different in value and application from one’s own upbringing; foster community building to break down any racial, gender, or socioeconomic bias in learning ability, critical thinking, or socialization that could hamper the ability of the teacher to positively influence children’s social, emotional, and academic realization in culturally responsive ways.

We know our beliefs can lead us to actions. We are an organization of educators who raise up the next generation of early childhood teachers. We can better learn to fully understand the events that have taken place and the perspectives and history of all Black Americans. Imagine our teachers prepared with ways of knowing, doing, and being which center on creating space in our classrooms, schools, and communities to speak and act against structural injustices and bring to existence better lived experiences.

Our Commitments...Now What? Where do we go from here?

We invite early childhood teacher educators, teachers, families and our community to work together, to develop resources, to speak out, and to enact equity in their schools and learning communities. We invite each one of us to do our personal work to probe our privileges and work against our own prejudices and biases we have. We recognize that none of us has all the perfect answers, we make mistakes, and we can keep learning together how to build a fair, equitable, and just world.

We ask that you join us in our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/eceteachered>) to build a robust resource library to draw on and aid in our and our students’ actions as social change agents. We can do this work one giant leap at a time. We are here with you, to do this work together.

The NAECTE Board