

Anti-Bias & Self Identity

Our schools are engaged in a practice of Anti-Bias Early Education. As outlined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Anti-Bias Early Education is a philosophical and tactical approach to creating equitable, open, and nurturing spaces for all children and adults to learn, thrive, and grow.

Little Sprouts respects all of our children's and families' traditions, backgrounds, and differences. Anti-Bias is a daily practice aimed at helping everyone feel welcome and comfortable in the classroom. Besides holidays, another way we maintain our practice is to support children by building their self-confidence.

Much of child development revolves around a child understanding and discovering who they are. Our job as educators is to keep children safe and to provide a nurturing environment for children to explore their identity and learn that not everyone or every family is the same. It's important for all children to feel good about who they are and what they can do.



ANTI-BIAS is about making everyone feel
welcome and **safe**.

Healthy Gender Identity Development Tips

INFANTS

have no understanding of gender, yet do understand how they are treated.

TODDLERS

begin to develop a sense of self and notice gender, but don't put much emphasis on it.

PRESCHOOLERS

begin to "categorize" objects, animals and people and start to truly pay attention to gender for the first time.

Creating a safe, gender inclusive classroom:

- Make your classroom a space for children to express themselves.
 - Show interest + ask children lots of open-ended questions.
 - Validate their choices - If today Teddy is a girl + tomorrow he is a cat, roll with it. He is exploring, playing + learning.
 - Encourage play that allows children to explore all gender roles
- Model healthy gender discussion without reinforcing stereotypes.
 - Offer a wide range of toys, books, games + displays that expose children to diverse gender roles + encourage all children to try all roles.
 - Use adjectives to describe actions, clothing, etc., not just the child themselves. All kids can have a pretty shirt or do something that was kind or brave.
 - Point out stereotypes + address them when you see them in books or children's play with something as simple as, "Hmm, wait, all of the doctors in this picture are men. Can women be doctors too?"
- Support other educators + develop together.
 - Call out, kindly, when you see another adult reinforcing a gender stereotype.
 - Give examples of what may be healthier statements.
 - Remember: WHEN you mess up gender language or someone's pronouns - apologize, correct yourself + keep on going. The energy shouldn't always be on the other party.

Avoid + Instead Say...

- **AVOID:** Words that reinforce binary genders: i.e. "Boys + Girls"
- **INSTEAD:** Say, "Friends!" or "Everyone!" or "Toddler 2!"
- **AVOID:** Reinforcing gender stereotypes -- i.e. "Oh Sally, you look so pretty!" or "Bobby, you are so strong!"
- **INSTEAD:** Encourage self-esteem. "I DO see your new shoes, Sally! They are great! What is your favorite thing about them?"
- **USE:** The same adjectives for all kids regardless of gender.

DEFINITIONS:

- **Binary** is defined as having only two expressions of gender, male + female
- **Spectrum** refers to the idea that there are many gender identities (female, male, transgender, two-spirit, etc.)
- **Gender Neutral** refers to things suitable for, applicable to, or common to both male + female genders
- **Gender Inclusive** refers to speaking in a way that does not discriminate against a particular sex, social gender or gender identity, + does not perpetuate gender stereotypes
- **Gender** is a product of the mind. It is influenced by nature, nurture + context + refers to how we identify + how we present.
- **Sex** refers to the assignment at birth based on your anatomy.

RESOURCES

[The Language of Gender](#)
[The Queer Dictionary](#)

Questions? Contact Meghan McGinley Crowe, Director of Career Success: mcrowe@littlesprouts.com