Promoting racial justice with emotion and culturally focused strategies in early childhood classrooms

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Abstract

An important indicator of equity in early childhood settings is discipline, particularly the removal of young children from the learning environment, reflecting larger issues of the preschool to prison nexus (Becker, Carr, Knapp, and Gustavo Giraldo, 2017). For the past 15 years, research on preschool discipline has indicated that Black children and boys remain disproportionately excluded from learning environments compared to their total enrollment, and most recently that Black girls are removed at rates as high or higher than white boys (Gilliam, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Given the persistent racial and gender disparities in exclusionary discipline outcomes there is a need to understand the role of intersections of race, gender, implicit bias, and discrimination (Collins & Bilge, 2019) and how they manifest in the early learning environments, specifically in teacher practices. This article draws from the first author's research, specifically a single-subject multiple baseline across participants design, that examined whether a practice-based coaching (PBC) (Snyder et al., 2015) framework enhances teachers' use of emotionally supportive practices with Black boys (Catherine, 2019). The study was conducted in the U.S. in a mid-Atlantic state with two Black preschool teachers and Black boys. We also discuss research related to ways that bias can inhibit healthy emotional learning of certain children, particularly Black children and boys and how to support teachers as they promote racial justice in early learning contexts. We conclude with recommendations for addressing racial injustice in early childhood contexts through practice-based coaching and other professional development approaches, particularly for boys of color.

Keywords: emotional learning, preschool, Black boys, discipline, classroom coaching, anti-racist practice

Introduction

Pervasive anti-Black U.S. policies and systemic racism, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the killings of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and many others have created more tension between the dominant society and racially/ethnically and linguistically diverse communities. These issues worsened during the Trump administration as many Indigenous, immigrant, and migrant children and families have been affected by anti-immigration policies, creating undue harm and trauma. These broader societal issues tend to show up in schools and influence school personnel's, especially teachers', perceptions of children and families from these communities (Starck, Riddle, Sinclair & Warikoo, 2020). These perceptions often lead to racial and gender injustices, as seen in research on school discipline, particularly in early care and learning settings (Gilliam, 2015; Fabes, Catherine, Quick, & Musgrove, 2021). To address these injustices, recent federal policy has called for the use of professional development models that support the early learning workforce as they manage deeply held biases that influence their

decision-making and practice (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Education, 2013).

Given these issues and the resulting renewed focus on racial and social justice, this article draws on the first author's research on how a practice-based coaching (PBC) (Snyder, Hemmeter, & Fox, 2015) framework supported preschool teachers who work with Black boys who have difficulty managing strong emotions. The researcher used a single-subject multiple baseline across participants design with two Black preschool teachers to examine whether a PBC framework enhances teachers' use of emotionally supportive responses with Black boys (Catherine, 2019). During the study, the researcher, in her role as coach supported teachers in the classroom setting.

While a single-subject design is considered quantitative research, the PBC framework included a reflection component that enabled the researcher to gather qualitative data (i.e. anecdotes and self-reflections). The overall objectives of the study were to: (1) better understand early childhood (Black) teachers' responses to Black boys' emotion expressions in terms of intent and classroom practices; (2) assess the efficacy of a coaching model similar to early childhood mental health consultation to enhance teachers use of emotionally supportive practices; and (3) use systematic classroom observation to better understand the dynamics surrounding emotion expression and document changes in teachers' practices.

The decision to focus on teachers and Black boys was based on the one-on-one collaborative nature of the PBC framework and the racial injustices that Black boys face in early learning demonstrated primarily in discipline data. Further, this project is part of a larger body of scholarship and advocacy that seeks to inform and guide the development and expansion of emotionally and culturally focused strategies that support early learning teachers as they face racial injustices and that target the overall well-being of the early care and learning workforce. This is critical, not only to the children served, but also to the field as it grapples with enhancing professional practice in culturally diverse early learning contexts.

Racial Injustice in Early Childhood Education Discipline

In 2005, Walter Gilliam provided the field of early childhood education with a look into the reality of harsh discipline, specifically expulsion in early childhood education settings. Gilliam (2005) examined rates of expulsion in 40,211 state-funded preschool classes and found that nationally, nearly seven preschoolers were expelled per 1,000 enrolled, which is 3.2 times the rate for K-12 children. Findings also revealed stark racial and gender disparities (Gilliam, 2005). Black children were twice as likely to be expelled as white children and boys were expelled at a rate over 4.5 times that of girls. The most alarming finding was that Black boys accounted for 91% of expulsions (Gilliam, 2005). These findings prompted immediate policy and advocacy action. Six years later and for the first time in four decades of Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), in 2011-12 national data were collected on the suspension and expulsion of preschoolers. Unfortunately, these data showed similar patterns to Gilliam's findings (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

The CRDC data indicated that while Black children only represented 18% of US preschool enrollment, they accounted for nearly half of suspensions. Boys represented 54% of the preschool enrollment, yet 82% of suspensions (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). The most recent data collection indicates that Black children and boys still remain disproportionately suspended with very little change, with the exception of Black girls (U.S. Department of Education, 2020; Fabes, Catherine, Quick, Musgrave, 2021; Fabes et al., 2021). These data reveal that while Black girls represented just 19% of the preschool enrollment, they made up nearly 60% of all

female suspensions (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Racial and gender patterns are similar for expulsion, also showing that Black girls are the recipients of over half of all female expulsions (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). While these data reveal the realities of exclusionary discipline in public prekindergarten programs, the Center for American Progress (2017) found that across all settings (i.e., private preschools as well as public schools), in one year an estimated 50,000 preschoolers had been suspended at least once.

These data reveal a significant racial injustice in a very key equity indicator in early childhood education. The existing research suggests various factors including a lack of social emotional supports and culturally responsive curriculum, and teacher's perceptions of Black children's behaviors and how they address these behaviors for these disparities are responsible for these disparities (Gilliam, Maupin, Reyes, Accavitti, Shic, 2016; Meek & Gilliam, 2016; Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015). The latter has been referred to as implicit bias or an unconscious belief or stereotype that is triggered unknowingly and that impacts behaviors toward others (Banks, Eberhardt, & Ross, 2006; Meek, Allen, Catherine, Fabes, McIntosh, Gordon, Hemmeter, & Gilliam, 2020; Staats, 2014).

Role of Bias in Racial Injustice

Emerging research reveals that race and gender play a critical role in teachers' bias in expectations of behavior and recommendations regarding suspension and expulsion in early learning environments (Gilliam et al., 2016). A major predictor of an early childhood teachers' decision to remove a child from the learning setting is whether he or she feels the child may pose a danger; therefore, how Black children are perceived has implications for racial disparities (Meek & Gilliam, 2016). Gilliam and colleagues (2016) conducted a study to determine whether early childhood educators' implicit biases regarding race and gender were related to behavior expectations and decisions to remove a child from the learning environment.

The study tracked teachers' eye gazes and revealed potential implicit biases in teachers' ratings and expectations of Black children's behaviors. Findings revealed that when expecting challenging behaviors early childhood teachers gazed longer at Black children, especially Black boys, even when no challenging behavior was present (Gilliam et al., 2016). The study also revealed that when teachers were provided information on family background, the nature of implicit bias appeared to differ based on the race of the teacher. When family information was withheld, white teachers tended to hold Black children to a lower behavioral standard, whereas Black teachers held Black children to a higher behavioral standard that led to recommendations for harsher discipline (Gilliam et al., 2016).

These researchers and others show that racial and other forms of bias are not limited to white teachers but can be present in teachers of color, manifesting as internalized oppression that reflect implicit bias in educational contexts (Benson & Fiarman, 2020; Kohli, 2014). This refers to being immersed in the pervasive bias, myths and misinformation regarding groups who are targets of systemic oppression. We argue that biases and internalized oppression in teachers of color should be acknowledged and discussed, as they reflect systemic racism and are important to unpack and unlearn. Kohli (2014) studied the process Black, Latina, and Asian American female pre-service teachers, enrolled in a social justice-oriented urban teacher education program in California, took in unpacking their internalized racism as they strive for racially just classrooms. In-depth interviews and focus groups were conducted and findings indicated that these future teachers felt that critical dialogues about internalized racism within teacher preparation was essential to develop pedagogy that challenges racial inequality (Kohli, 2014).

Understanding the ways that bias manifest in early childhood teachers' practice, particularly with Black children, is critical to ensuring that the early childhood workforce is supported and are provided space to reflect on these biases. Teachers without opportunities to discuss how systemic or internalized racism influence practice place undue burdens on the children they serve and lead to the use of practices that do not foster healthy social and emotional development in young children. Further, these practices perpetuate racial injustices and disparities in early childhood outcomes.

The Ethos of Racial Justice in Early Education

Researchers have long questioned the overall goals or philosophy of early childhood education for and in the countries of the Global North, early childhood programs often reflect dominant (white, middle class) values, an issue that has long been raised by reconceptualist scholars (e.g., Kessler & Swadener, 1992; Bloch, Swadener, & Cannella, 2014; Perez, 2017; Polakow, 1993; Swadener, 1989; Souto-Manning, Falk, Lopez, Cruz, Bradt, Cardwell, McGowan, Perez, & Rabadi-Raol, 2019). This dominant ethos has resulted in pervasive racial injustices throughout the early childhood education system.

Kessler (2020) argues that early education theorists believed that the central purpose of education was to help people fit into the social system. Based on trends and patterns in preschool discipline, this idea of "fitting in" for Black children and boys seems to reflect the ethos of "either you do or get out," resulting in early learning environments that do not appear tolerant of the presence or behaviors of Black children and contribute to the preschool or school to prison nexus (Nunez-Eddy, 2020; Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015; Stumbo, 2019). This scholarship and other studies suggest that anti-bias and anti-racist practices are promising approaches for achieving racial justice in early childhood education.

Anti-bias approaches have long been advocated in early childhood, though have not been widely enacted (e.g., Derman-Sparks, 1989; Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010; Iruka, Curenton, Darden, & Escayg, 2020; Farago & Swadener, 2016). Anti-bias work has been critiqued for not confronting issues of white supremacy, anti-Blackness and racial power and privilege (Escayg, 2019) and more scholars advocate explicitly anti-racist stance and praxis (Ecayg, 2018, 2019, 2020; Iruka et al., 2020), including abolitionist pedagogies (Love, 2019). While anti-bias and more recently, anti-racist approaches show promise for addressing racial injustices in early learning settings, the research shows a social justice approach is broader and multi-faceted.

Social justice, including racial justice scholarship and practice in early childhood education encompasses anti-bias and culturally sensitive teaching, addresses issues of fairness and unfairness, and privileges cultural funds of knowledge (Pelo 2008, Peters, 2020; Kessler & Swadener, 2020). Young children's sense of justice, often expressed as fairness, has long been noted and the use of anti-bias curriculum (Derman-Sparks, 1989), anti-oppressive (Farago, Murray & Swadener, 2017) abolitionist pedagogies (Love, 2019) and approaches informed by Black and Chicana feminist work (e.g., Collins & Bilge, 2019) that emphasize critical intersectionality (e.g., Perez, 2017, Rideaux & Perez, 2020; Souto-Manning, et al., 2019) have been documented in a growing literature. Related professional development that supports teacher's use of anti-bias approaches is increasingly advocated and available. Increasingly, early childhood teacher education programs are organized around principles of social justice and include an emphasis on anti-bias practices, respect for cultural funds of knowledge, and understanding children's emotional well-being.

Culturally and Emotionally Focused Strategies

At the same time that anti-bias practices have been increasingly advocated in early childhood contexts, PBC and early childhood mental health consultation (ECMHC) that focus on children, families, and teachers have grown in visibility, particularly in publicly funded preschool settings. This visibility has led to emerging research that is examining whether these models address and reduce racial disparities in outcomes, specifically discipline outcomes (Shivers, Farago, Gal-Szabo, 2021). Further, these models have been mentioned in federal and state early childhood policy recommendations to address racial disparities (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Education, 2015).

PBC is a cyclical and collaborative process for supporting early childhood teacher's use of effective practices, particularly social emotional practices. At the center of the framework are teaching or instructional practices surrounded by three components, shared goals and action planning, focused observation, and reflection and feedback (Snyder, Hemmeter, & Fox, 2015). The research indicates that PBC's emphasis on teaching practices has led to improved teacher social emotional learning practices and fidelity of practice. Additionally, the research indicates that PBC is an effective model for reducing school suspensions and behavior incidents in schools that serve mostly Black and Latino children (Flynn, Lissy, Alicea, Tazartes, & McKay, 2016).

ECMHC is also a collaborative partnership framework for promoting children's social and emotional competence and mental health and addressing challenging child behavior. Through the partnership particularly between consultant and directors, teachers, or parents, ECMHC builds individual's capacity to understand the influence of teachers' relationships and interactions on young children's development (Hepburn, Perry, Shivers, & Gilliam, 2013). A critical aspect of ECMHC is what has been described as the "consultative stance" (Johnston & Brinamen, 2006), a framework that describes how mental health consultants build relationships with teachers and/or are perceived by teachers.

As Shivers et al (2021) argue, the consultative stance is quite compatible with the healing justice movement for racial equity and its call for individuals to undertake the "inner-work" of social justice. These inner qualities include "self-awareness, presence in the here and now, perspective-taking, emotional regulation, and empathy which supports compassionate action." These are all skills and ways of being that are not only foundational to how early childhood MHCs approach their work with educators (Shivers, 2016), but similar to ways that culturally competent coaches approach their work. The need for promoting social justice with emotion-focused practices is a newer focus in this literature, particularly as it seeks to understand roles of early childhood mental health consultants in helping teachers better understand emotion-focused and culturally relevant practices.

As Shivers et al (2021) remind us, citing Johnston & Brinamen (2006), there are three consultative stance elements in particular that we speculate might be especially relevant to understanding the current findings: 1) "avoiding the position of sole expert,'" 2) "understanding another's subjective experience," and 3) "considering all levels of influence." These elements might be strengthened when a MHC is working with a teacher who is challenged by the behavior of a Black boy (Shivers et al., 2021). While not explicitly part of the present study, the consultative stance reflects interactions of the researcher in her capacity as a practice-based coach. These also reflect skills that apply to anyone attempting to work in culturally informed ways.

The following sections will describe the first author's study that examined teachers' use of emotionally and culturally focused strategies when working with Black boys. Given the pervasiveness of racial and gender disparities in early learning settings, the study

sought to understand whether coaching support enhanced teachers' use of emotionally supportive responses with Black boys who had difficulty managing emotions and/or were at risk for being removed from the learning environment. Before describing the study and discussing findings, we share standpoint statements that clarify some of our identities and experiences.

Author Backgrounds and Identities

The first author, an assistant professor of Early Childhood Education and Early Childhood Special Education, identifies as Black. She identifies as Black as opposed to African American as a way to be inclusive of the entire African Diaspora. She grew up homeless most of her childhood and chose to enlist in the United States Air Force to escape homelessness. At 18, she was assigned to the Pentagon shortly before the 9/11 terrorist attacks as an emergency medical technician (EMT). She was one of the initial first responders on scene and as a result of these heroic actions was awarded the Commendation Medal. After she separated from the Air Force she began her activist career as an African American Studies major at Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA. As an AFAM major she developed a strong racial identity and purpose and decided to pursue a career in policy and advocacy, particularly around issues that affect Black males.

Her interest in Black males is a result of her socialization with and by them during her homelessness. Additionally, she is the mother of a Black boy with Asperger's. Her interest in policy and Black males, and interactions with the special education system, led to her current research and policy interests. She focuses on the emotional development and discipline of Black boys, specifically birth to 8, and how early childhood educators support and respond to their emotional expression and behaviors. She also makes federal, state, and local equity policy recommendations related to discipline and special education.

The second author, a professor of Justice Studies with focus on anti-oppressive education, social justice issues in early childhood, and cross-national early childhood policy studies, identifies as a white, heterosexual, woman who grew up in a working-class, predominantly white Indiana city not far from Chicago and became active in social justice issues in the early 1970 and has co-facilitated unlearning oppression and anti-racism workshops for 30 years. She has long done work at the intersections of race, ability, and colonialism and considers herself an accomplice against intersecting forms of oppression, including long-term involvement in anti-racism and anti-bias practices in early childhood, as well as disability justice issues. She has done research and volunteer work in sub-Saharan Africa since the late 1980s and has been active in faculty unions, campus organizing for social justice, and multiracial women's alliances and identifies as a scholar activist.

Study Overview and Theory

This section describes a single-subject multiple baseline across participants design study that examined whether a practice-based coaching (PBC; Snyder et al., 2015) model increased preschool teachers' use of emotionally supportive practices with Black boys. PBC is a cyclical professional development model designed for use in early care and learning programs to support the implementation of effective teaching practices. The PBC model consists of three components, action planning and goal setting, focused observations, and reflection and feedback (Snyder et al., 2015) In the center of the model are effective teaching practices implemented in the context of a collaborative partnership between coach and teacher.

Given the nature and manifestation of bias, particularly in early childhood discipline outcomes, and its role in racial injustices, there is a need to contextualize and understand how emotion socialization occurs in early care and learning environments. This study is also motivated by teachers' reports of a lack of training on social emotional development (National Survey of Early Care and Education (NCES), 2013). Therefore, the theories that guided the study described the process of emotion socialization and how adult's beliefs about negative emotions affect their responses.

Emotion socialization theory posits that adults communicate important messages to young children related to the understanding, expression, and regulation of emotions (Denham, Zoller, & Couchoud, 1994; Denham, Bassett, & Zinsser, 2012; Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad 1998). These messages are communicated through three primary emotion socialization behaviors: modeling emotions, teaching about emotions, and discussions about emotions. These three behaviors have been linked to the development of emotion-related skills such as emotion knowledge in preschool aged children (Denham et al., 1994; Eisenberg et al., 1998). The theory further suggests that multiple factors such as caregiver characteristics, child characteristics, cultural, and contextual have been theorized to influence adults' responses to preschool-aged children's negative emotion expressions (Eisenberg et al.,1998).

Meta-emotion philosophy explains how adults' beliefs and thoughts about emotions influenced their responses to negative emotion. For example, the research shows that some primary caregivers believe emotion expressions provide opportunities for teaching about emotions and encourage negative emotion expressions whereas, others believed negative emotions were harmful and dismissed their children's negative emotions. The research shows that caregivers who view emotions as positive tended to have children with greater inhibitory control, lower levels of behavior problems, higher levels of academic achievement, and better physical health (Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1996, 1997).

Method

The purpose of the current study was to examine whether a PBC model increased teachers' use of emotionally supportive practice. A single-subject design was used because it allowed the researcher to establish a causal relationship. Findings from the study showed a functional relation between the PBC model and teachers' use of emotionally supportive practices. Also, the nature of a PBC model pairs a coach with a teacher in the classroom setting and focuses on the implementation of teaching practices. This design also allowed for focused observations of teachers' implementation of the practices.

Participants

The participants included two lead preschool teachers. Focal children were selected based on the following characteristics: Black boys who had limited emotional skills, described as limited emotion vocabulary, frequent and intense (i.e, duration and responsive to supports) negative emotion expressions, and difficulty with interpersonal interactions during teacher and child-led activities. The selection of children occurred when the researcher met with program directors and described the study; the directors suggested Black boys in the program who fit the above description and acknowledged that the teachers of these children could benefit from coaching support.

Once teachers agreed to participate, to ensure the children met the above criterion, each teacher completed a questionnaire on atypical negative emotions for the selected children. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher and based on the literature that describes atypical negative emotion expressions, defined by frequency, duration,

and response to supports (Wakschlag, Choi, Carter, Hullsiek, Burns, McCarthy, & Briggs-Gowan, 2012). Teachers were also asked about child's verbal ability and interactions with adults and peers. Based on this criterion, there was one focal child selected from Participant A's classroom and three focal children selected from Participant B's classroom.

Both teachers identified as Black, one from the Eastern Caribbean (Participant A) and the other bi-racial (Black and white; Participant B). Participant A worked in a non-profit community-based setting that targeted children with a delay or disability and from low-income backgrounds. The teacher had 19 years of teaching experience and held a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and was implementing the Creative Curriculum (Dodge, Colker, & Heroman, 2002) alongside an emotion-focused curriculum, Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS described in Domitrovich, Cortes, & Greenberg, 2007). The program was rated 3 out of 5 stars in the state's quality rating program.

Focal child in Participant A's classroom was a three-year-old Black boy whose family was from Africa. Both the director and teacher believed the child had a suspected disability or delay that manifested as limited verbal abilities and frequent meltdowns. The child also did not respond to verbal prompts or instructions. Although he had a suspected delay, the child's caregivers did not share in that thinking. It was revealed that in the child's culture his behaviors were not perceived as a disability or delay. His caregivers believed he would grow out of his behaviors (frequent and intense negative emotions and limited verbal skills).

Participant B worked in a small private not-for profit mother-daughter owned program that mainly served families who received child care subsidies. The teacher had 10 years of teaching experience and held a child development associate (CDA)credential. The teacher was implementing the state recommended curriculum Learn Everyday. The program was rated 1 out of 5 stars in the state's quality rating program. There were three focal children selected in the teachers' classroom, none had a suspected disability or delay based on teacher's and director's perception but did have frequent and intense negative emotion expressions.

Intervention

The current PBC model was manualized and included four emotionally supportive teaching practices adapted from the research (see Table 1 for description of practices). Based on the theories that guided the study, each of the four practices built on teachers' understanding of the benefits of supporting and encouraging negative emotion expressions in the early learning environment (emotion coaching). Once the teacher began to view emotions positively, then the coach progressed to practices that encouraged the teacher to teach alternate means for expressing emotions and/or intervening in the cause of the emotion experience and problem solving with the child. One of the four practices emphasized providing the child with an environmental or instructional support (i.e., a pillow or feelings chart) and was not part of the above sequence unless the child had minimal verbal abilities.

The model consisted of a needs assessment, focused observations, development of action plans and goal, reflection and feedback, and a maintenance phase. The coaching sessions and focused observation were guided by the coaching manual which included theory of change, description and definitions of practices and negative emotions, examples and non-examples of practices, frequency count form, coaching integrity and implementation fidelity worksheets, and social validity questionnaire. The teachers manual included a description and definitions of practices and negative emotions,

examples and non-examples of practices, reflection worksheet, and a social validity questionnaire.

Focus observations of the practices were coded using an event-recording frequency count form. An occurrence was coded if a focal child experienced a negative emotion indicated by both gestures (i.e., crying, frowning, withdrawal) and verbalizations ("I am sad"), and the teacher responded with the target practice. If there was no response after 15 seconds, the response was coded as ignore. In approximately 30 percent of the observation sessions (across all phases), interobserver agreement was assessed for the occurrence or nonoccurrence of the four practices. Interobserver agreement was collected by a trained secondary observer at the same time as the researcher.

Table 1
Examples of Four Emotionally Supportive Responses

Practice	Definition	Example
Emotion coaching	The teacher validates and acknowledges child's negative emotion expression and/or demonstrates acceptance by viewing negative emotion expressions as a time to teach about emotions.	Child is dropped off in the morning and starts crying, the teacher sits with the child and asks what's wrong. How do you feel? The teacher then labels emotion and says "are you sad? It's okay to be sad, mommy will be back later but until then you have all your friends waiting on you."
Teaching alternative means for expressing emotions	The teacher guides child to use words or provides constructive means to express negative emotions	Teacher says to a child: "you have to talk to and tell your friends what's going on because they don't understand crying..."
Intervening in the cause of a negative emotion	The teacher assists child with solving the source of the problem	Child starts crying. Teacher responds: "Are you okay? Tell your friend he hurt your finger, say, you hurt my finger."
Environmental and instructional supports	Refers to practices that address aspects of the physical (space, equipment), social (play), and temporal environments (routines).	Child is getting frustrated/antsy during circle time. Teacher recognizes the child's behavior and offers him the opportunity to go to a calmer area. When child comes back to join the circle, teacher offered child bean bag/pillow to hold. Child starts screaming, teacher prompts the child to use feelings chart to express how he is feeling and to take deep

	breaths.

Procedures

The procedures were generally the same for each teacher. The coach worked with the teachers for up to 6 weeks including providing brief, daily, and weekly coaching support and focused observations of target practice in the classroom setting. For instance, if the target practice was on emotion coaching, the teacher would receive coaching support for one week and daily observations of implementation of the target practice. Observations were on average 30-60 minutes and were conducted three times per week during teacher-led activities and free play.

There were three phases: baseline, intervention, and maintenance phase. During the baseline phase, teachers were provided the teachers manual. Also, there was a needs assessment conducted with each teacher and baseline observations of teachers' responses to focal children's negative emotion expressions. Based on the needs assessments and baseline observations, the coach and teacher developed action plans and goals that guided each coaching session. At the end of the baseline phase teachers received the teachers manual. The intervention phase began immediately after baseline phase.

During the intervention phase there were four types of coaching sessions: initial, brief, daily, and weekly. The initial coaching sessions were on average 30 minutes long and took place via phone. These sessions covered the contents of the teachers manual and included discussions about examples and non-examples of the four practices. After the initial coaching session, the teachers were observed implementing the practices based on the action plans. Prior to each observation session, the coach met with the teachers for a brief coaching (five minutes) to reiterate goals and to go over examples and non-examples of the practices.

Daily coaching sessions occurred after each observation session and were often shared via email. After each daily coaching, teachers were provided a reflections worksheet where they could share barriers or successes to implementing the practice and/or their overall general feelings about the practice/s. Weekly coaching sessions occurred at the end of each week, typically on Fridays, and included feedback on the week's observations and the development of the next week's action plan. On average, weekly coachings were 30 minutes and took place during lunch, nap time, or at the end of the day. The coach also assessed teachers' implementation fidelity or the degree to which teachers implemented the practices as intended.

At the end of the intervention phase, coaching ended and the maintenance phase began. The maintenance phase lasted three weeks; two weeks without coaching support or observations and one week of observations without coaching support. At the end of the maintenance phase, both teachers completed a social validity worksheet to assess how teachers felt about the procedures, feasibility of the intervention, effectiveness, and the willingness to continue using the strategies after the intervention ended.

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher served as the primary observer and coded occurrences of teachers' use of practices using a frequency count form. For example, if the target practice was emotion coaching and a focal child demonstrated a negative emotion expression and the teacher responded with empathy or helped the focal child to verbalize the emotion being experienced, the coach would code this as an occurrence. In this same instance if the teacher responded dismissively (i.e., "crying is silly") this response would be coded as unsupportive.

Also, if the teacher responded supportively, but not with the targeted practice, this was recorded as an occurrence. For example, the teacher gives the child a hug, but does not teach about or discuss the experience. If a focal child experienced a negative emotion and the teacher responded supportively but it was not the target practice for that week the response was coded as part of the coach's field notes. The coach also collected data on the quality of teachers' implementation of practices using the implementation fidelity checklist.

After each observation period, quasi-qualitative data were gathered using a reflection worksheet to assess teachers' responses to the practices, perceptions of the practices, and ease of use of the practices, teachers completed a daily reflection worksheet. In addition to the reflection worksheet, teachers also completed a social validity questionnaire. The quality of the coaching sessions, across both participants, was assessed by a graduate student using the coaching integrity checklist. Data were recorded and analyzed visually using line graphs. The researcher assessed the graphs for trends, stability, immediacy of effects and percentage of non-overlapping data or the number of intervention data points that fell within baseline range.

Results

The following section offers a summary of findings from the current study. The goal of the study was to examine whether a PBC model (Snyder et al. 2015) increases preschool teachers' use of emotionally supportive responses to the negative emotion expressions of preschool-aged Black boys. Using a single-subject multiple baseline across participants design, both teachers showed an immediacy of effect and increased from little to no emotionally supportive responses to an average of three to four from baseline to intervention phase.

Also, during the maintenance phase, without coaching support, teachers were observed implementing the practices at similar rates as the intervention phase. Findings reveal that with coaching support teachers increased their use of emotionally supportive practices and maintained the use in the absence of coaching. However, types of coaching support, duration of coaching support, and number of practices observed varied across participants.

Baseline Phase

During the baseline phase, the needs assessment revealed very different teacher and child needs. The needs depended on several factors including existing curriculum, resources, and supports, teachers training and preparation, child's existing verbal and social-emotional skills, and caregivers support of child's needs. For example, Participant A had extensive formal training and professional development on the developmental needs of children with a delay or disability and was using an evidence-based emotion-focused curriculum (i.e., PATHS). The teacher also had classroom environmental and instructional supports including visual aids and a cozy corner.

Additionally, during baseline focused observations, Participant A was observed responding as emotionally supportive to all other children in the classroom, including other Black boys. She was observed using various responses. For example, she would use visual aids, the cozy corner, lots of physical touch, books, and other activities that encouraged children to discuss emotions. During the initial coaching she expressed that she valued emotions in her classroom and felt she had access to adequate resources and supports that led to her high use of emotionally supportive practices. Because of this strength, the teacher required little coaching support and significantly benefitted from the opportunities to reflect.

Further impacting Participant A's need was that she felt that the focal child had a disability; however, the caregiver did not share this same belief. This led to the teacher's inability to get sufficient classroom supports to meet the needs of the child. The teacher expressed frustrations that resulted in negative and unsupportive responses during opportunities for reflection. Also, the focal child had very limited verbal abilities and did not respond to teacher's verbal commands. The teacher relied heavily on her aid to respond to the child's negative emotion expressions.

In contrast, Participant B was not implementing an emotion-focused curriculum. In fact, the teacher was using a curriculum that covered "feelings" (emotions) as a lesson and she did not lesson plan for emotional development outside of that lesson. Also, the program had little financial resources which limited their ability to obtain developmentally appropriate supports including preschool furniture and visual aids. The classroom also did not have space for "centers"; most of the instruction was teacher-led or small group. The children also did have a safe designated play area outside. It was also determined during the needs assessment that the teacher needed support with planning or designing lessons and activities around emotional development.

In addition to the above factors, baseline focused observations of teachers' responses to focal children's negative emotion expressions showed that both teachers used little to no emotionally supportive responses with focal children. The most frequent responses ignored, dismissed, or minimized focal children's negative emotion expressions. For example, during a baseline observation period, a focal child became sad and started crying because he lost a game and did not receive a sticker. Participant B responded with "crying over stickers is silly." Participant B was also observed using "shh" frequently (i.e. over 10 times during an observation period) when a focal child would experience a negative emotion or would physically move them away from the source.

Based on findings from the baseline phase, Participant A received minimal coaching support including the initial coaching session and weekly coaching sessions. Participant A did not receive daily coaching after each observation period. Participant A also only received coaching support on two of the four practices: environmental and instructional supports and teaching alternate means for expressing emotions.

This decision was made due to focal child's limited verbal abilities and need for visual aids and lack of response to teacher's verbal prompts. The teacher did not receive training on emotion coaching because she demonstrated awareness and understanding of emotional development through her high use of emotionally supportive responses with other children and background. Because of focal child's limited verbal abilities, the teacher was unable to intervene for the purpose of problem solving, yet instead relied on the teaching alternate means practice for redirection by using visual aids.

For example, the child was asked, "what letter is this?" and became frustrated when he could not answer. The teacher responded by saying "it's okay don't get frustrated, let's go point to the letter." The teacher would then walk him over to the letters and point and say "K". In another instance, during play time, when the focal child wondered away from his station and the teacher asked the child to return to his station, the child started to cry. The teacher walked him over to a picture of his face that was attached by velcro to his station and said, "this is your station, see" and pointed to his picture. While the study did not assess children's responses, the use of the environmental and instructional supports and teaching other means practices decreased the duration and frequency of the child's negative emotions and the number of times he was removed from the learning environment.

Intervention Phase

Participant

A. During the intervention phase, Participant A immediately increased her use of environmental and instructional supports and teaching the focal child alternate means for expressing negative emotions The teacher was observed primarily using visual aids with the child. The teacher already had access to these supports, yet prior to coaching did not use them with the child. The teacher consistently showed a stable accelerating trend in the use of the practices and very little overlap with baseline data, meaning the teacher only responded negatively in eight percent of observations across both practices between baseline and intervention phase. Findings from the implementation fidelity and social validity checklist showed that the teacher implemented the practices with fidelity and felt that the practices were easy to use and that the coaching support was beneficial.

The teacher received coaching support for two weeks on both practices simultaneously. The teacher was encouraged to talk with the child and offer him pictures to help describe how he was feeling or an opportunity to go to the cozy corner. The child was offered the cozy corner when the teacher felt the child was getting over stimulated (i.e., throwing his body around). This often led to the teacher using the two practices simultaneously. The child would frequently throw/place his body on his peers which would lead to crying or screaming when his peers would push him away.

During reflections and feedback the teacher expressed that she did not implement or encourage the focal child to use the curriculum's supports (i.e. visual aids and feelings chart). The teacher expressed frustrations and concerns that the existing supports and curriculum were not sufficient to meet the needs of the child in the classroom and contributed to her unsupportive responses to the focal child's negative emotions. She also expressed that, "In the real world, [he] will not be able to point to his feelings or ask for time to calm down." The teacher instead would ignore the focal child's negative emotions or remove him from the learning environment. When the teacher would ignore the child, he would escalate which often was an immediate removal. Also, because the focal child's family did not view his behavior as a possible delay or disability, leaving the teacher unsupported, the teacher expressed that she held him to the same emotional standard as the other children.

Participant B.

Participant B also immediately began implementing the practices after coaching sessions. Because of the teacher's lack of training and experience with emotional and understanding of the value of negative expression, she received training on three of the four instructional practices beginning with emotion coaching followed by teaching alternate means and intervening in the cause. Also, because of a lack of program, curriculum, and classroom resources, the coach was not able to focus on the use of environmental or instructional supports.

The teacher received coaching support over three weeks and was also provided support with lesson planning. Lesson planning support included resources or materials to support emotional learning and development (i.e., feeling charts, picture labels, and feeling activities). The level of coaching provided to the teacher extended beyond the initial and weekly coaching sessions and also included brief and daily coaching. This was due to the teachers lack of experience, lesson planning, and understanding of emotional development. For example, the teacher received on-going feedback (daily coaching) on use of the practice that discuss the success and barriers of implementation and reiterated the theory of change.

Coaching began with the emotion coaching practice. The teacher immediately became an emotion coach with the focal children by displaying intimacy, finding time to discuss emotions, and teaching focal children ways to express their negative emotions. For example, during a coloring activity, a focal child got frustrated and got out of his seat because there was not a blue crayon. The teacher responded by getting on the child's level and asked him what was wrong. The teacher then responded by saying, "I see you are frustrated, your friend isn't using the blue crayon, ask your friend if you can use the blue crayon."

In general, the teacher had a stable and accelerating trend during implementation and only responded negatively in seven percent of the occurrences. Focused observations of the teaching alternate means practice revealed a decelerating trend and that she responded negatively in about 33 percent of occurrences. There were a couple of reasons why this was the case. When the teacher started to encourage the focal children to use their words, the other children in the classroom began telling the focal children to use their words, preventing the teacher from responding. Also, the teacher communicated that implementing this practice was challenging because the children were not used to discussing their emotion/feelings or had limited emotion vocabulary.

Focused observations of the intervening in the cause practice revealed a stable but flat trend. This in part was due to the limited opportunities to intervene since there was not much play time and most of the instruction was teacher led. During these observations the teacher did not respond negatively and relied on the emotion coaching practice. In general, the teacher implemented all the practices with fidelity and agreed that the practices were easy to use, and coaching was beneficial to her and the children.

Reflections and Feedback

After each observation period, both teachers completed a reflection worksheet on their experiences implementing the practices. During weekly coaching sessions, the teachers were also provided the opportunity to reflect on the coaching process and implementation of the practices. There were common themes across teachers' reflections including the need to protect Black boys, existing curriculum and supports, and the openness to discuss issues of race, gender, culture, and emotional learning.

Both teachers frequently spoke about their motivation to protect Black boys when reflecting on their unsupportive responses. They shared that society's historical perception of Black males as older, aggressive and threatening influenced their responses to Black boys' emotional expressions (Goff, Jackson, Lewis Di Leone, Culotta, & DiTomasso, 2014). For example, instead of viewing their emotional expressions as moments for intimacy and discussion, they often ignored, dismissed, or minimized their expressions with the intention of protecting them from larger societal bias and stereotypes. The teachers also acknowledged that they were aware these practices could be harmful to Black boys' emotional well-being, however expressed that they felt in the face of racism, discrimination, and bias, they had a responsibility to protect Black boys.

Additionally, Participant B expressed that lack of training, support, and resources primarily influenced her ability to respond as emotionally supportive to focal children's negative emotions. She acknowledged that she "shh'd" the children because if the director heard the children having negative emotion expressions, the director would remove the child from the classroom. The coach advised the teacher that not allowing the focal children to express their negative emotions could lead them to suppress their emotions. The teacher responded by saying "I will definitely be more mindful of addressing emotions with the boys instead of ignoring them." The coach also pointed out how the children's behavior would escalate when she would "shh" them.

Also, at one point the teacher said, "a lack of resources is probably the biggest struggle that I have with this group of kids." She expressed that when focal children would experience negative emotions that the goal was to end it quickly. Since, most of the instruction was teacher-led, the focal children would often become sad or frustrated when they were not selected to participate or answer and when they would lose a game or activity. The researcher also shared with the teacher the importance of including emotional learning in the daily routine as a preventative measure, particularly activities that label emotions and teach children how to recognize emotions. She agreed and stated that "making discussions of emotions part of the daily routine has really allowed for the kids' emotional maturity to increase. I am so proud of how far they've come in such a short time."

Further, both teachers also described the impact of the four practices on the children. For example, the teachers communicated how receptive the children were to the practices. The teachers made statements such as, "I see a change in the kids and their interactions with each other, before the training they were either lashing out at each other or, more so, "tattle telling," now they tell each other when they don't like something their friend is doing and are consoling each other when they notice a friend feeling bad." Another statement that communicated how the children responded was "I was surprised how quickly they picked up the [emotion] vocabulary and could use it in their daily communications with their peers." The teachers also made reference to the children using visual aids to communicate their emotions after implementing the feelings chart.

Lastly, findings from teachers' reflections revealed that the coaching support provided opportunities to discuss issues of race, gender, culture, and learning. During these intimate conversations, the researcher and teacher were both able to share their experiences with racism, bias, and discrimination. The researcher's shared racial background with the teachers and experience as a mother of a son with a disability that affected his ability to positively express negative emotions, created a safe and nonjudgmental space to discuss these issues. The teachers shared that there were limited opportunities and professional development on topics that included issues of race, gender, culture and learning, specifically emotional learning. They also shared that the white staff were not comfortable talking about issues related to race and culture.

Maintenance Phase

The maintenance phase was three weeks and began immediately after the last coaching sessions and focused observations. After two weeks the researcher returned to each of the teachers' classrooms and conducted observations of teachers' use of the practices. Observations followed the above procedures and were conducted three times a day for 30 minutes over a one-week period. Teachers did not receive any coaching support during the maintenance phase. Also, during the maintenance phase teachers completed the social validity checklists.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to examine whether a practice-based coaching model increased teachers' use of emotionally supportive practices to negative emotion expressions of preschool-aged Black boys. With relatively brief coaching, over 4-6 weeks, the teachers came to recognize that while well intended, their lack of support for the negative expressions of Black boys needed to change so that boys learned more acceptable ways of expressing these emotions, including the language to name feelings and the growing skills to manage and express them.

Findings revealed that both teachers demonstrated an immediate effect to the coaching model and increased their use of emotionally supportive responses. Prior to coaching support both participants typically responded negatively or unsupportively to focal children's negative emotion expressions. Both participants implemented the emotionally supportive practices with an accelerating and stable trend and did so with fidelity.

Also, during reflections and feedback it was revealed that teachers' use of negative responses was influenced by teachers' belief that they were protecting focal children from Black male bias or society's view that Black boy's and male's expressions and behaviors are more aggressive and hostile than other males, namely white males (Goff et al., 2014). Both teachers consistently described how society's view of Black male's emotions and behaviors as aggressive led to ignoring and dismissing their negative emotion expressions. It is likely that the ways that Black males are perceived play a significant role in the ways teachers respond to their negative emotion expressions. This has implications for future research on implicit bias in early learning settings.

These findings are consistent with the literature on emotion socialization theory, specifically racial/ethnic emotion socialization. The current study was guided by mainstream emotion socialization or how teachers respond to negative emotion expressions in the early learning context (Denham et al., 2012). Further, given that existing research indicates that race and gender can influence adults' responses, this study also uses meta-emotion theory to guide interpretation of the findings. Meta-emotion theory suggests that adults' beliefs about the benefits of negative emotions influence how they respond (Gottman et al., 1996, 1997). For example, adults who view negative emotion expressions as harmful to the child respond negatively, such as ignoring, dismissing, or minimizing expressions.

Similarly, racial/ethnic emotion socialization suggests that Black parents tend to respond negatively to their children's negative emotions as a means to protect them from bias and discrimination (Dunbar, Leerkes, Coard, Supple, & Calkins, 2017; Lozada, Halberstadt, Craig, Dennis, & Dunsmore, 2016). This belief is associated with parents own experiences with racism and discrimination and society's negative view of Black people's expressions and behaviors. During the process of emotion socialization, Black parents teach their children to suppress their negative emotions when encountering white authority figures including teachers and police. This finding is nuanced and may not be seen with white teachers who work with Black children or other children of color.

Further, both participants also expressed that how having space to talk about the intersection of race and gender and emotional development was beneficial to their understanding of the importance of emotional development with Black boys. While the teachers were motivated to protect the focal children from bias and discrimination, talking about this in the context of emotional learning and the goals of the early learning environment assisted teachers with their awareness of using negative responses. The teachers also expressed the equally important benefit of having a Black coach to discuss these issues.

Emerging research suggests that when teachers are supported by a coach or consultant that shares the same race/ethnicity or who have prior knowledge in cultural diversity develop stronger collaborative relationships (Shivers et al., 2021). These relationships lead to positive relational and social-emotional outcomes with children of color, especially Black boys (Shivers et al., 2021). These relationships also provide space for teachers to discuss issues of race and gender openly and in nonjudgmental space.

Lastly, the study's findings also indicate that even when existing curriculum and supports are emotionally supportive, the motivation to protect boys of color against bias and discrimination affect teacher's use of emotionally supportive practices. Despite having access to an evidence-based emotion focused curriculum and formal training in social emotional development, particularly with children with delays or disabilities, Participant A still did not respond emotionally supportive to focal child's negative emotion expressions. In fact, she was not implementing the emotion-focused curriculum with the focal child at all.

In contrast, Participant B primarily used an academic-focused curriculum that included a single lesson on "feelings." She held a CDA and did not have formal training in social emotional development. Additionally, the program offered little to no supports or resources to manage negative emotion expressions. This led to daily and weekly coaching support and support with lesson planning. The coach also provided the teacher with instructional supports including visual aids (i.e. feelings chart) and example activities focused on emotional development. These differences in existing curriculum across teachers influenced the duration and level of coaching support. She required more frequent coaching and supports with lesson planning.

In summary, by focusing on teachers, a number of nuanced issues were revealed regarding their responses and intentions when preparing young Black boys emotionally (Catherine, 2019). Prior to intervention, rather than viewing negative emotion expressions as a time for intimacy or teaching about emotions, the teachers were observed ignoring or dismissing focal children's negative emotion expressions. These responses were communicating to the focal children that it was not safe to express negative emotions, thereby causing them to suppress their negative emotions (Lozada et al., 2016).
Additionally, the reflections component of the PBC framework proved to be vital to understanding teachers' beliefs and understandings of the value of supportive emotional development. Providing teachers safe spaces to discuss issues of race and gender, alongside bias and discrimination, demonstrated changes in teachers' beliefs and therefore their responses to negative emotion expressions. This study also revealed that teachers of color need support when faced with bias and issues of race and gender. Studies like this one make visible these nuanced and often unexamined responses to negative emotions in Black boys and provide support for focused coaching that foregrounds race and culture while supporting teachers.

Limitations

The current study had several limitations, particularly in the design and participant selection. The study used convenience sampling and program directors were asked to select a teacher who had focal children who matched the study's criteria. When the study began there were three participants, however one participant dropped out. According to the guidelines of the study's design, implementation of the intervention should be concurrent and replicated six times. Given that the study ended with two participants, this was not achieved, limiting the ability to make causal inferences. Further the study focused on Black boys limiting the generalizability of the findings. Lastly, focal children were selected based on director's and teacher's report of child's emotional competence. There were no direct assessments of focal children's emotional competence.

Implications and Recommendations

While there were some limitations to the study, the findings have implications for enhancing professional practice through collaborative professional development frameworks. Our work supports focusing on the critical role that coaches play in the

classroom setting. Current research and the experience of both authors (e.g., Catherine, 2019; Ciyer, Nagasawa, Swadener, & Patet, 2010) indicates that when teachers participate in professional development experiences on social and emotional instructional practices in the classroom setting, they implement the practices with fidelity (Martinez-Beck & Zaslow, 2006; Snyder et al., 2015; Sutherland, Conroy, Vo, & Ladwig, 2015).

Additionally, teachers report that they are better able to retain the skills acquired through professional development that occurs in the classroom setting as opposed to at conferences, in workshops, or online (Sheridan, Edwards, Marvin, & Knoche, 2009). Also, the findings showed that teachers were immediately able to master use of instructional practices modeled and encouraged by the researcher and continued their use with fidelity throughout the maintenance period. Therefore, future research should continue to examine the effect of practice-based professional practice-development models delivered in the classroom setting.

Further, teachers shared that lack of training on topics related to social and emotional development inhibited their ability to meet the focal children's needs. One national representative survey found that only 20% of early childhood providers received training in social and emotional development in the previous year (National Survey of Early Care and Education, 2013). While early childhood professional development and teacher education core content have long included social emotional development, more focused training is needed for supporting young children's emotion awareness and expression (Catherine, 2019; Durlak Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011).

We recommend that future studies examine the effect of the practice-based coaching (PBC) model within a social learning framework. Unlike the laboratory context, in the early learning context other children witness how teachers respond to focal children. Findings from this study showed that other children responded to the study's practices evidenced by their increased use of words to express their negative emotions and their responses to peers' emotion expressions. This unique finding showed that preschool-aged children model teachers' emotional socialization responses with their peers.

Also, further studies are needed to explore the curriculum materials and professional development supports needed to foster supportive emotion socialization and need to take into account the lower level of formal education and training that characterize the child care and preschool teaching force. Small private and non-profit community-based settings have few resources for professional development, though more have been made available through state and federal grants. One of the teachers had difficulty with model implementation because of a lack of lesson planning and programming around emotional development. Furthermore, due to the implementation of the current model alongside the existing curriculum, future studies need to examine the roles of coach and consultant in the natural environment.

During the current study the researcher acted as both a coach and consultant. The research indicates that coaching in early learning settings include components such as focused observations, action planning, self-reflection, and feedback (Hanft, Rush, & Shelden, 2004) and that consultation in early learning settings is a collaborative approach that focuses on assisting the teacher in their natural setting to obtain a goal (Sheridan et al., 2009). As coach, the researcher collaborated with one of the teachers to develop action plans and goals, provided consistent and ongoing feedback, and assisted with lesson plan designs and activities. As a consultant, the researcher simply encouraged and supported the teacher's use of emotionally supportive practices. This flexibility in implementation of the model shows promise for integration with the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) model (Hepburn et al., 2013.)

Lastly, we recommend the use of professional development models that includes supervised reflections. Part of the solution is to have a more open, direct discussion of motivations/implicit bias - in other words WHY teachers are not doing more with Black boys (Kohli, 2014). Being intentional is critical to being able to fully "see" and support the expression of Black boys' emotions. Social psychologists assert that when an individual does not see or support another's emotions or share emotions with those not perceived as part of their social identity, dehumanization is likely to occur (Goff et al., 2014). Engaging in direct discussions with teachers can provide opportunities for acknowledging and understanding bias and for understanding our behaviors when interacting with those not part of our social identity.

The research on culturally relevant education shows that a primary component is conceptions of self and others (Iruka et al., 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2014). In the current study, the researcher provided opportunities for teachers to see themselves in relation to their students through reflections and feedback based on data from systematic observations. Professional development that directly confronts issues of bias and emotion expression combined with classroom coaching with trusted and culturally informed professionals can increases teachers' efficacy and willingness to change (Catherine, 2019; Shivers et al., 2021). This, in turn, contributes to greater commitment to social and racial justice in early childhood classrooms and programs. This has been demonstrated in the present study and emerging research on the role of mental health consultation in reducing racial disparities (Shivers et al., 2021).

Conclusion

In these times of crisis, including growing awareness of systemic racism and its impacts on children, families and communities, early childhood care and education offers a context in which focused anti-racist strategies can provide new possibilities for interrupting the preschool to prison nexus. The research and experiences shared in this article demonstrate effective ways that coaches, consultants and others involved in professional development can support teachers in examining implicit assumptions and intentions and facilitate children's emotional learning and expression, particularly for Black boys. Having more open conversation that, as reflected in the title of a recent anti-bias book, "don't look away" (Iruka, et al, 2020), encourage both white teachers and teachers of color to examine their intentions, implicit bias, gaze and discipline patterns and work toward more equitable and inclusive classrooms. Culturally focused practice-based consultation offers a promising approach to enhancing the early childhood experiences of all children, with particular benefit to boys of color. We would argue that this is but one of many promising approaches to social and racial justice in early childhood and beyond.

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