

EFQ: Key terms and concepts

Authentic Assessment

Authentic assessment provides early childhood teaching teams, leaders and families a system to understand and support student's developmental progress across all domains of learning, as outlined in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) and the NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (PKFCC), to inform instruction.

Community

A group of people with diverse characteristics that share commonalities, including geography or social, political, or economic experiences.

Culture

The New York State Education Department understands culture as the multiple components of one's identity, including but not limited to: race, economic background, gender, language, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, and ability. Culture far transcends practices such as cuisines, art, music, and celebrations to also include ways of thinking, values, and forms of expression.

Culturally responsive-sustaining education

The DOE commits to culturally responsive-sustaining education (CR-SE), a cultural view of learning and human development in which multiple forms of diversity (e.g., race, social class, gender, language, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, ability) are recognized, understood, and regarded as indispensable sources of knowledge for rigorous teaching and learning. Culturally responsive-sustaining education uses educational strategies that leverage the various aspects of students' identities, including the rich cultural, racial, historical, linguistic characteristics of students to provide mirrors that reflect the greatness of who their people are and windows into the world that allow students to connect across cultures.

Diversity

Diversity is a reality created by individuals and groups from a broad spectrum of demographic and philosophical differences. These differences can exist along dimensions of racial background, socioeconomic status, home language, country of origin, immigration status, ability, special needs, religion, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, housing status and cultural background and experience. It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of difference contained within everyone. Finally, we acknowledge that categories of difference are not always fixed but can be fluid, and we respect individual rights to self-identification, as no one culture is intrinsically superior to another.

Equity

Equity is the state, quality, or ideal of being just, impartial, and fair. The concept of equity is synonymous with fairness and justice. To be achieved and sustained, equity needs to be thought of as a structural and systemic concept, and not as idealistic. Equity is a robust system and dynamic process that reinforces and replicates equitable ideas, power, resources, strategies, conditions, habits, and outcomes.

Family

A family is a group of two or more people related by birth, marriage, adoption, and/or residing together.

Family engagement

Family engagement is a collaborative and strengths-based process through which early childhood professionals, families, and children build positive and goal-oriented relationships. It is a shared responsibility of families and staff at all levels that requires mutual respect for the roles and strengths each has to offer. Family engagement focuses on culturally and linguistically responsive relationship-building with key family members in a child's life.

Inclusive

More than simply diversity and numerical representation, being inclusive involves authentic and empowered participation and a true sense of belonging. In an inclusive environment, the social and instructional space is designed such that all students have access to the curriculum and there are many opportunities for children to be successful.

Implicit bias

An implicit bias is any unconsciously-held set of associations about a social group. Implicit biases can result in the attribution of particular qualities to all individuals from that group, also known as stereotyping. Implicit biases are the product of learned associations and social conditioning. They often begin at a young age, and most people are unaware that they hold them. Importantly, these biases do not necessarily align with personal identity. It's possible to unconsciously associate positive *or* negative traits with one's own race, gender, or background.

Partner

Individuals, communities, and/or organizations that enter into a mutual agreement with a program. These may include but are not limited to: local, state, national, international, public, faith- and community-based, private and academic organizations.

Play-based learning

Play can be thought of as a spectrum that includes free play, guided play, and games. Children learn as they engage in unstructured play as well as other types of play, including those that are initiated and guided by the teacher. Free play and guided play are pedagogical tools through which children can learn in joyful and conceptually rich ways.



Race

Race is a socially constructed system of categorizing humans largely based on observable physical features (phenotypes) such as skin color and ancestry. There is no scientific basis for or discernible distinction between racial categories. The ideology of race has become embedded in our identities, institutions, and culture and is used as a basis for discrimination and domination.

Research-based curriculum

A research-based early childhood curriculum is in line with current studies and best practices on how children develop and learn. It focuses on domain-specific, developmentally appropriate content and skills. A research-based curriculum is also content-rich. It offers a sequence of learning experiences based on children's developmental progress. Education staff may use this resource to select and implement a research-based curriculum.

Screening

Developmental screening tools assist educators in learning about the various aspects of a child's development, such as language, cognition, perception, and motor development.

Staff

All the employees in the program—lead teachers, special education teachers, family workers/educators/advocates, co-teachers, assistant teachers, paraprofessionals, directors, education directors, program directors, executive directors, principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, mental health professionals, coordinators, parent coordinators, family service coordinators, business managers, administrative assistants, cooks, nurses, and so on.

Structural racism

Structural racism is the operation of racial bias across institutions and society. It describes the cumulative and compounding effects of an array of factors that systematically privilege one group over another. Since the word "racism" often is understood as a conscious belief, "racialization" may be a better way to describe a process that does not require intentionality. Race equity expert John A. Powell writes: "Racialization" connotes a process rather than a static event. It underscores the fluid and dynamic nature of race... 'Structural racialization' is a set of processes that may generate disparities or depress life outcomes without any racist actors."