

MNDEC Newsletter <http://www.mndec.org/>

Minnesota Division of Early Childhood

Inside this issue:

President's message	1	Call to Action Responses	4-6
2020 MNDEC Grant recipient	2	Article Summary	6
News	2	Resources, organizations	7-8
Practitioner of the Year	3		
Spring Conference	3		



July 15, 2021

Volume 8 Issue 1

President's message

Michele Kvikstad, MNDEC President, Bloomington Public Schools



Dear Colleagues,

I would like to start my letter to you with acknowledgement and offer deep gratitude to the (Wa-he-kute) people that allow me to live where I do. The MN Division of Early Childhood invites and encourages you to watch these videos and explore these resources as a starting point to learning about the Ancestral Lands and the treaties that allow you to live where you do, <https://native-land.ca/>. The Ancestral Lands and Languages of **Mni Sota Makoce** (Dakhóta for Minnesota): “Land Where the Waters Reflect the Clouds” <https://www.mnhs.org/mnhspress/books/mni-sota-makoce>

I want to also acknowledge the nearly 4 million enslaved and resilient African People by which this country's wealth and prosperity was built. Our Black, Indigenous, and People Of Color continue to face daily adversity. MN DEC denounces racism and inequity in all of its forms. <https://www.dec-sped.org/single-post/2020/06/03/dec-message-about-racism-and-inequity> Please join us in acknowledging our role and responsibility to be consciously aware, change our behavior and the impact of these biases. Let's support each other and hold one another accountable for our actions. NAMI of MN has resources that address the impact of racism, https://2a392k31wksy2wkejf1y03dp-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/188/2020/06/Culturally-Responsive-Resources_2020.2.pdf

Our colleagues, students, and the families we work with have faced many things this past year. I have witnessed and read about great acts of kindness and integrity. For over a year we have continued to educate in our communities during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Here is our National DEC's webpage for additional information and resources, <https://www.dec-sped.org/covid-19>. This is the MN Department of Health's Situation Update page for state-wide COVID-19 resources, <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/situation.html>.

We have been innovative and resilient during these unprecedented times. The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center shares ongoing training and support for our ever-changing field, <https://ectacenter.org/topics/disaster/tele-intervention.asp>. The MN Centers of Excellence created a Distance Learning page, <https://sites.google.com/metro-ecsuo.org/mncoedistancelearningresources/home>. PACER is a Minnesota Parent and Training Information Center, here is their COVID Resource page for families, <https://www.pacer.org/special/covid-19.asp>.

Our MN DEC Membership is strong. With one of the largest subdivision memberships in the country, Minnesota continues to be a leader in Early Childhood. When you are a member of MN DEC you are actively contributing to the policies and practices that support families and enhance the optimal development of young children. <https://www.dec-sped.org/>

As we shift to warmer days and summer, please know you make a difference. Thank you to each and every one of you for creating space in your hearts for those you serve, and for joining me on the journey of being conscious about our actions and their impact. We will take all we have learned and together we will provide high-quality services to children with disabilities and special needs and their families.

Wishing you well, Michele Kvikstad, MN DEC President

News, Events and Announcements

Mini grants are an excellent way for practitioners to receive additional funds to address an area of student need identified by classroom/student data. Thanks to all the team who have submitted applications and congratulations to the teams awarded grants.

2020 MNDEC Grant recipient report

Mankato Area Public School Early Learning Program, Jennifer Gates newsletter contributor

Within our Early Learning Department, we focused on increasing social emotional skills during the 2019-2020 school year by adding Second Step into our tier one teaching. During this year, we discovered that we needed to include more diverse books to support our social emotional instruction. The areas identified by our Teaching Strategies 2019-20 Data and teacher input indicated the following areas of need:

- Follows limits and expectations
- Interacts with peers
- Makes friends
- Solves social problems
- Engages in conversations
- Uses social rules of language
- Shows flexibility and inventiveness in thinking

There are a number of books related to these topics, however we wanted to focus on building our classroom libraries with culturally rich books. Using information from Implicit Bias training with Dr. Rose Marie Allen and Equity Literacy Institute, team members chose 6 books to add to the classroom and itinerant teacher libraries. After the books were chosen, interactive read alouds were planned to intentionally address these objectives. Two of the six books were taught during the fall data collection period.

TSG Objective	Fall Data	Winter Data
	% of students meeting or exceeding expectations ● green - 3 year olds ● blue - 4 year olds	
1b. Follows limits and expectations	61.11%	71.42%
	76.59%	85.43%
2c. Interacts with peers	62.96%	83.61%
	62.59%	79.86%
2d. Makes friends	49.99%	68.86%
	55%	70.95%
3b. Solves social problems	51.85%	79.68%
	59.28%	77.85%
10a. Engages in conversations	55.36%	72.31%
	75.18%	88.16%
10b. Uses social rules of language	75.01%	78.46%
	75.17%	78.96%
11e. Shows flexibility and inventiveness in thinking	91.07%	95.32%
	91.43%	95.35%

MNDEC Practitioner of the Year 2021

We would like to congratulate Chastity Engelstad on being awarded the MNDEC Practitioner of the Year 2021. We celebrate your many contributions to the field, the families you serve, and your dedication to connecting with your students and helping them to become their best versions of themselves. We appreciate you Chastity!

2021 Spring Practitioner Conference - Being an Anti-Racist ECSE Educator

Sarah Wille, MN DEC President-Elect and Almas Merchant, Minneapolis Public Schools

MNDEC wanted our first virtual symposium to be grounded in our DEC Recommended Practices <https://ectacenter.org/decrp/decrp.asp> and this year we chose to align ourselves with F1. Practitioners build trusting and respectful partnerships with the family through interactions that are sensitive and responsive to cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity.

The MNDEC board would like to thank our evening presenter Dr. Maccare Traynham, our panelists Maya Nishikawa, Chey Gruse, Lacey Davis, Lucy Littlewolf Arias, and our moderator Cat Tamminga for an engaging evening for our first virtual MNDEC Spring Symposium, and finally our MNDEC board of volunteers in planning this opportunity to engage ourselves in learning more in becoming an anti-racist early educator.

Dr. Traynham urges us to consider that "becoming an anti-racist starts with" us. She noted we can use: "self reflection, raise our critical consciousness, catch and reject deficit thinking, develop awareness of when we are judging and making comparisons, use our voice and in listening to others, and interrogate our actions and behaviors that perpetuate systems of oppression and inequities."

Dr. Traynham referenced the research article <https://www.theedadvocate.org/the-foundational-principles-of-anti-racist-early-childhood-education/> which identifies foundational ideas on the work we have to do in becoming an anti-racist early educator.

We have members that were inspired by learning opportunities they participated in at Bank Street College in their 2018 spring symposium. Thank you Louise Rath for urging us to try our first MNDEC Virtual Symposium.

Additional resources you might want to access are at:

CEC <https://exceptionalchildren.org/>

Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility <https://www.morningsidecenter.org/>

NAEYC <https://www.naeyc.org/resources>

MNAEYC <https://mnaeyc-mnsaca.org/page/mnaeyc>

ECTA <https://ectacenter.org/>

NIEER <https://nieer.org/>

MDE and MESPA offer a series of 5 one hour recorded webinars with Dr. Rosemarie Allen on [Acknowledging the Role of Implicit Bias as a Barrier to Reaching All Children](https://www.mespa.net/bias/) found here <https://www.mespa.net/bias/>

This is a brief list of resources, the MNDEC board plans to offer more connections to other landing pages on our website this summer/ fall and hope to site further connections for your use.

Have a safe summer.

"Call To Action" after Spring virtual Symposium 2021

The following are MNDEC members' responses sharing at least one thing you plan to do in your "Call To Action" after attending our Spring virtual Symposium 2021. We encourage you to review these as they may inspire your next actions. Join us in our work in becoming an Anti-Racist Early Educator.

Think - before I speak.....

I'm going to speak up more.

Be an accomplice as well as an ally.

Have the hard conversations. .

Multiple perspectives. .

Start with examining my own thoughts and bias.

Share what I have learned with my colleagues.

Speak up when I witness inequity.

Have courageous conversations.

Tell others / share highlights.

Family collaboration

Communication with families.

Interrupt when interruption is needed.

I want to be more aware of naming race.

I plan to use language such as "she's Black like you!" when reading books.

I want to ask more questions about what families want and how I can support them without it always being my agenda.

Engage in difficult conversations, review our environment/materials (Is there representation?). Talk, talk, talk. I want to engage in the difficult conversations that we so often shy away from!

I plan to acknowledge my biases in my classroom around routines and our expectations. I want to be more mindful of the cultural practices of my students at home to ease that transition at school. Be open and engage families to talk about their family routines, traditions, culture.

Share the information and my learning from this symposium with our building's Equity Team and discuss and decide how we can be "brave". What are our action steps? Currently we're good at finding and sharing resources but we haven't done a good job of helping teachers as individuals dig deep into their personal values and biases.

Continue to build awareness on my part of what my families and student feel they need vs. just my own agenda for meeting goals and objectives. About 3 or 4 years ago I received a Donors Choose grant to begin to build a multicultural library collection that we could use with students and families - bringing books into homes that more accurately reflect the population we service. I would like to continue that work of creating/using materials that reflect a more diverse population.

Ensure that my students feel represented in the classroom books, materials, activities. Increase the number of books with diverse characters I have in my classroom library. Find more diverse materials to make sure families feel reflected in our programs and schools. I am working to provide more diverse topics/books/toys/experiences to my students.

Work to develop respectful relationships with everyone in the community - be aware that I may be uncomfortable at times, but stretching myself in this way will help me grow

Become more involved, continue to learn through books/conversations/webinars/articles. Expand my coaching questions to include more of this work with my teachers. Begin to look at absent or silenced narratives in curriculum. Continue to work on my critical consciousness and securing my own mask. Center equity in conversations and district systems.

I want to be inquisitive, ask more questions. I want to gain confidence to stand up more and not be a spectator in this fight against systemic racism and inequality.

I plan to collaborate with other professionals around me and to do research on my own about my own identities so I can further my anti-racist work.

Continue interrupting racist systems and to continue building relationships with the students and families I serve.

Member responses continued page 5

Member Call to Action responses continued from page 4

I think that Dr. Macaree Traynham's presentation could benefit my whole district and we hope to have her as a speaker to continue to inspire our work as special educators.

Add books and toys to my evaluation materials that represent more students. Create a question/answer sheet for evaluation intakes.

..... and I continue to become actively involved in our district's move to narrow the gap for BIPOC students.

Be more thoughtful about race and how I am responding to different situations.

I would also like to have more conversations with my families about their race and cultures.

I am working to provide more diverse topics/books/toys/experiences to my students.

Expand materials I use with my students to be more racially diverse.

Be more aware of the diversity in images in the classroom and books, including gender.

Learn more about my students' backgrounds and cultures and bring it to my classroom.

Think about power and privilege in my interactions with families and colleagues and work to mentor and promote those with less power and privilege.

Take the time to listen and learn about other races and cultures.

Ask more questions of our families to better understand.

Continue talking with families to learn more about their cultures.

Learn more about the cultures of the students in my school. Building relationships with students and families and be open to conversations about race even when they are/will be uncomfortable.

I will "talk more openly about race- with my coworkers as well as my families. It does not have to be a topic that we ignore."

I plan on asking families more about their culture and how it impacts their ideas on when and how their child participates in daily routines.

Continue my own personal journey and how to apply this to my work/team/community. Recognizing my own bias that I bring to relationships with families.

I liked when Dr. Traynham said that we need to ask ourselves --> When do you need to speak up and when do you need to listen?

I plan to purposefully introduce the children I work with to material representing their own backgrounds and backgrounds of others, racial and otherwise.

Keep "We are all in the same storm, but we are not all in the same boat" as a motto for myself while planning and carrying out lessons or interacting with my students.

I am going to try to have more conversations with families I work with around their experiences and backgrounds and try to not shy away from these conversations because they are so important.

Be open and willing to talk about race, embrace the awkwardness that may occur. Catching & rejecting deficit thinking and looking to see who is being centered in the work I do. I will take time to learn from others their culture and their family histories rather than lumping everyone into the same historical account...

Expand our classroom library to include all races and cultures. Be sure to include representations of all of my students.

Have a conversation with the rest of my teaching team on the topic and their views. Discuss options for classroom changes.

Share more read aloud (books) by authors of color; make a point to mention during the read aloud time how the characters in the book look like the kids and families that I serve; survey my families about their home culture and bring "those" into the classroom (music, art work, artifacts, etc.).

Member responses continued page 6

Member Call to Action responses continued from page 5

Not be afraid to talk about race and culture in the classrooms with young kids. I'm realizing that it is so important to talk about these topics at a young age even if the kids are all the same race. It shouldn't matter, because like we learned yesterday kids notice differences and are already forming opinions. It's important to educate them early! :) Excited to get started!

Take inventory of all the books I have in the classroom. Ensure students see themselves in books. This includes the books I use for read aloud as well as books in the library and throughout centers. Be vulnerable and have difficult conversations with coworkers, families, and students. Continue to look at my own beliefs and actions. Involve others in the discussion. I will continue to discuss DEI issues with my colleagues and find ways to be more inclusive. Increase my understanding of my individual student's culture.

Send a questionnaire to the student's families I service and ask them to share cultural snack ideas, music, books that I can incorporate into my S/L activities. Engage in regular conversations with colleagues to further explore the topic. I am planning to talk to my coworkers about what I learned. Share the information from this training with my co-workers. I plan to do the work on myself before I try to help others in their work of being anti-racist.

Article Summary

Liz Barnett, MN DEC newsletter editor, website manager

Members of DEC receive the ***Journal of Early Intervention*** and the magazine ***Young Exceptional Children*** and have access to professional development opportunities in webinars, conferences, and learning decks, as well as timely recommendations to articles and resources specifically relevant to young children and their families.

Practitioners serving community settings will be interested in the [Journal of Early Intervention](#) article "What Early Intervention Looks Like in Child Care Settings: Stories From Providers" (Volume 42, Number 3, September 2020, page 244) by Jenna M. Weglarz-Ward (University of Nevada, Las Vegas), Rosa Milagros Santos (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), and Loretta A. Hayslip (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign). The authors interviewed practitioners and codified their responses in order to summarize real perceptions in the field by practitioners and their community collaborators. Perhaps this article will help you reflect on your own experiences. As we all strive to better ourselves and our skills, it is helpful to get a sense of how other practitioners/collaborators see their successes and challenges.

Liz

Job Postings

Be sure to check out MNDEC's [Job Postings webpage](#) To have a Job posted on our website- please complete the linked document- <http://goo.gl/4ioFOy> NOTE- after completing the form, you must email "info@mndec.org" with the subject line, "job posting" and state you have submitted a job.

Do you have an ECSE question?

The Minnesota Department of Education Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) leadership team has a general mail address that can be used to submit any ECSE question, birth to five. The emails will be answered in a timely manner by members of this team. Email questions to: mde.ecse@state.mn.us

About the MN DEC **The Minnesota Division for Early Childhood (MN DEC)** is a statewide membership organization for those who work with or on behalf of young children with disabilities and other special needs.

Become a DEC member

To become a member of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) you first need to become a member of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and choose DEC as one of CEC's Special Interest Divisions.

<https://www.dec-sped.org/become-a-member>

Professional Organizations

The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) <http://www.dec-sped.org>

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) <http://www.cec.sped.org>

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) <http://www.naeyc.org>

Resources

***Covid-19 related:**

***Resources to Support Early Intervention & Early Childhood Special Education during COVID-19**

<https://www.dec-sped.org/covid-19>

***ECTA Center Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)** <https://ectacenter.org/topics/disaster/coronavirus.asp>

***Covid-19 : Remote Service Delivery and Distance Learning** <https://ectacenter.org/topics/disaster/tele-intervention.asp>

***The Early Childhood Personnel Center Covid-19 resources** for Part C, preschool, IHE Faculty and families.

https://ecpcta.org/covid-19-resources/?mc_cid=8ed289f195&mc_eid=9733c11e80

Resources to move toward DEC Best Practice: Family F1. (Practitioners build trusting and respectful partnerships with the family through interactions that are sensitive and responsive to cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic diversity.) <https://ectacenter.org/decrp/decrp.asp>

<https://www.theedadvocate.org/the-foundational-principles-of-anti-racist-early-childhood-education/>

<https://www.mespa.net/bias/>

CEC <https://exceptionalchildren.org/>

Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility <https://www.morningsidecenter.org/>

NAEYC <https://www.naeyc.org/resources>

MNAEYC <https://mnaeyc-mnsaca.org/page/mnaeyc>

ECTA <https://ectacenter.org/>

NIEER <https://nieer.org/>

https://2a392k31wksy2wkejf1y03dp-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/188/2020/06/Culturally-Responsive-Resources_2020.2.pdf

<https://www.dec-sped.org/single-post/2020/06/03/dec-message-about-racism-and-inequity>

Resources continued on next page

Resources *continued from previous page*

Looking for a job in ECSE? <http://www.mndec.org/jobs.html>

Prospective Employer? Complete the document to post on MN DEC's website:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1XPHA15yLJWaLeTMKe5TZmLkgerQFLTr1Asx-s3wSipM/viewform>

Center on Developing Child: <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/contact/>

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/>

Division for Early Childhood Recommended Practices: <https://www.dec-spced.org/dec-recommended-practices>

Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Products to support the use of the DEC Recommended Practices

<http://ectacenter.org/decrp/>

Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Resources to support the Inclusion of Young Children with Disabilities <http://ectacenter.org/topics/inclusion/default.asp>

Faculty Finds: <http://eepurl.com/ggHi3j>

Head Start Center for Inclusion <http://depts.washington.edu/hscenter/>

Help Me Grow <http://www.helpmegrowmn.org/> An interagency initiative of the State of Minnesota (Department of Education, Department of Health and Department of Human Services) partnering with all local service agencies.

Minnesota Centers of Excellence The statewide professional development system for early childhood special education (ECSE). Professional Development Facilitators (PDF) in each of the state's eight economic development regions work to connect, support and empower local leaders to build capacity. Through these joint efforts, young children and their families are accessing and benefiting from high-quality programs and services throughout the state. <https://www.mncoe.org/>

Minnesota ECSE Licensure Programs <https://sites.google.com/a/umn.edu/mn-ecse-programs/>

National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) <http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/> Go to their website and you will find a resource titled [Implementation Drivers: Assessing Best Practices](#) .

PACER's Early Childhood website <http://www.pacer.org/ec/>

Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children (TACSEI)

<http://www.challengingbehavior.org/>

Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Effective School-wide Interventions and Supports <http://www.pbis.org/>

ZERO TO THREE Journal Stay current on best practices and the latest knowledge about early childhood development and your work with children and families.. Practical advice and professional development tools. Print or digital versions. <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/series/zero-to-three-journal>

Please do not forget to follow us:

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Minnesota-DEC/132315643458975?v=wall>

Twitter https://twitter.com/mndec_info

MNDEC is Minnesota's Chapter of The Division For Early Childhood

