


Young Children and Racism: Strategies for Educating and Rearing
Children in a Toxic Society
White Privilege Conference 10
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Presenters: Fran Davidson, Kim Francisco, Wendy Harris,
Cheryl render-Brown, Tilman Smith

Racist Approaches:

- ✚ **Colorblind** ~ **Colorblind approaches** are potentially one of the most damaging approaches in the educational arena. A Colorblind approach in working with young children implies that one does not see color or differences in children. This approach builds from the belief that one is so enlightened, not racist, or lacking prejudice to such a degree that all children are perceived to be the same, as in: "I see no differences ~ red, black blue or green all children are the same". The danger and potential harm in this approach is does not allow for children to explore their world or environment in the most basic of manners, recognizing differences. Furthermore, when this approach is applied, it is not that differences are not seen or recognized, it is that the world is viewed through the lens of the dominant culture.
- ✚ **Tokenism** ~ **Tokenism approaches impart a** policy or practice of making only a symbolic effort or gesture , as to desegregate or in offering minimal opportunities to people of color compared to those from the dominant culture. A Token approach is any legislation, admissions policy, hiring practice, etc., that demonstrates only minimal compliance with rules, laws, or public pressure. This approach in a curricular setting or classroom setting is represented through the use of materials which are not relevant, or truly representative of the cultures attempting to be depicted. This approach might be

further represented by using cartoons in representation of Indigenous people ... the turkey with a Headdress, celebration of '89er Days in Oklahoma - reassignment of Indian Territory, Pilgrim & Indian dress at Thanksgiving.

 **Tourist ~ Tourist approaches** will likely teach about cultures through celebrations and through such artifacts of the culture as food, traditional clothing and household implements. Educators will embrace this approach as it melds well with a thematic approach to curriculum. A Tourist approach will emphasize that learning about a culture becomes a special event during the week. Thus, Chinese New Year is the activity that teaches about Chinese-Americans. Tourist curriculum is patronizing, emphasizing the “exotic” differences between cultures, and trivializing, dealing not with the real-life daily problems and experiences of different peoples, but with surface aspects of their celebrations.

Sources: *Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children*. Louise Derman-Sparks and the A.B.C. Task Force. 1989