

## Practice Guideline on Child Development – Section 5

### Pause and reflect on Dwayne’s experience

Dwayne Locke RECE says that members of the profession need to consider the beliefs and biases they hold about Black people and communities. In particular, he asks RECEs to consider the ways they may be labeling the actions and behaviours of Black boys as negative and problematic.

“Honest critical self-reflection on the ways that RECEs may potentially impede children’s growth and development is vital for change. It’s important for RECEs to create positive foundations for children to thrive and grow to their full potential. Black people’s values, opinions, research and stories, need to be read and heard in order to support understanding. We are all on different levels of comprehending anti-Black racism in the early years sector. It’s important to be **true** to this statement and again to be honest and open to solutions concerning a very important issue – anti-Black racism has been occurring too long in our society.” (Dwayne Locke RECE, personal correspondence May, 2022)

In Dwayne’s experience, “Black boys are always being spoken to, timed out, singled out or being segregated from peers. I’ve seen segregation – a Black boy in his ‘private space’ learning and playing away from his peers. This kind of segregation is well-documented in research by Black communities. This indirect conditioning may have devastating implications for a Black boy’s self-image and how others view Black boys and Black people. This early segregation needs to be addressed as it is responsible for further discrimination, such as Black children being disengaged from learning and their social communities. Moving forward, this approach can lead to school suspensions and expulsions, leaving school, group homes, unemployment and eventually imprisonment.”

Think about what comes up for you and consider the following reflective questions.

- Do you have beliefs and biases about what Black children *might* do before they’ve *actually* done anything? Have you ever punished a Black child before they’ve acted as a result?
- What assumptions do you make about what Black children are *actually* doing? Are your observations accurate? How do you know?
- Think about the last few times you’ve blamed or separated a child from their peers. How often was the child Black? Do you think your action was based on assumptions or biases about the child or their family? How do you know?

You can add your thoughts and reflections in the space below.