

# ANTI-BIAS EDUCATION IN ARIZONA



Spring 2014

A Collaborative Project between Indigo Cultural Center and the Community Action Research Experiences (CARE) Program in the T. Denny Sanford School of Social and Family Dynamics

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# WHO WE ARE

## The Community Action Research Experience (CARE)

CARE is a program for ASU undergraduate and graduate students who are looking for an opportunity to engage and collaborate with a non-profit community based organization (CBO). Students identify CBOs that are addressing a social issue they are passionate about and attempts to answer a research question that the CBO recognizes will fill a need in the organization's mission, capacity, or functioning. This mutually beneficial year-long collaboration allows students an opportunity to develop their skills in leadership, research, and community building, and provides CBOs with an opportunity to further their missions and visions through a research project that they might not otherwise have the capacity to address.

## Indigo Cultural Center

Indigo Cultural Center is a research and advocacy organization that focuses mainly on the study, enactment, and celebration of culture, especially in the lives of young children. The Institute for Development Research and Social Change, one of three divisions within Indigo, focuses on conducting community-based participatory action research with an emphasis on early child care environments.

## Connection between Indigo and CARE

This is the inaugural collaboration between Indigo and CARE, which began after Eva came to present to the ASU Family and Human Development graduate students on her role as a community researcher. With such similar research interests and a great potential for collaboration, the fit for a CARE project seemed inevitable, and the rest is history.

# INTRODUCTION

Indigo Cultural Center is focused on promoting equitable child-care for all children, through the recognition that culture is at the heart of all children's development, socialization, and worldview. By recognizing that quality child care does not have the same formula for all children from all backgrounds, Indigo insists that anti-bias education and culturally responsive care is necessary to promote development, especially for minority or at-risk children, who are more likely to be in danger of academic failure. Currently, Indigo Cultural Center provides community trainings regarding culturally responsive care and anti-bias curriculum to teachers, care providers, and parents, who are interested in addressing issues of race, ethnicity, culture, bias, and diversity in their classrooms and care centers.

These trainings are grounded in the Anti-Bias Education framework developed by Louise Derman-Sparks, an educator from Pacific Oaks, CA. The trainings emphasize that children are constructing their own perceptions of their social reality as they begin to form early relationships with their peers, teachers, and environments. First, these trainings attempt to provide child care providers, administrators, and parents, with the awareness that race is a salient aspect of a child's worldview. Secondly, they provide attendees with tools that can be used in early child-care settings in order to help children develop non-biased responses to racial differences and skills for challenging stereotypes.

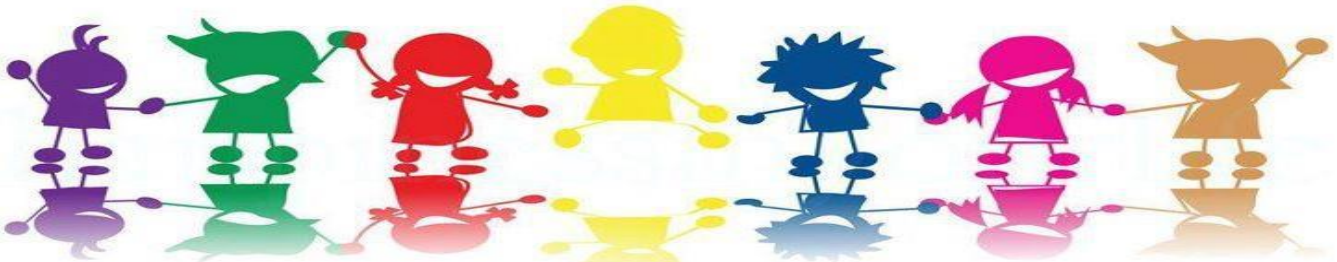
However, currently these trainings are based in national data and practices in other cities and areas throughout the country. Indigo is experiencing demand from their participants for more local examples of these practices in the Phoenix area that can be used to inform practices in their own centers. Indigo hopes to respond to this demand by studying the implementation of anti-bias curriculum and culturally responsive care in the unique cultural context of the Phoenix metropolitan area.

Therefore, the purpose of this project is to identify where and how culturally responsive care is being conducted in the Valley. In order to do so, Indigo needs to identify early childhood care providers who are currently implementing anti-bias practices in their center. This local and community-based information will be able to inform the redesigning of Indigo's community trainings, as a way to address the needs of the attendees. Additionally, this information can be used to advocate for the use of anti-bias curricula and culturally responsive care in and beyond Phoenix.

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) To what extent do early child care teachers and administrators in Arizona believe that race and bias should be integrated into early education curricula?
- 2) To what extent do early child care teachers and administrators in Arizona perceive they are implementing anti-bias education in their classrooms?
- 3) Is there a need for professional development opportunities regarding anti-bias education in Arizona?

When I see you through my eyes,  
I think that we are different.



When I see you through my heart,  
I know we are the same.

~Doe Zantamata

# METHODS

## Participants & Procedures

An online survey was distributed to child care teachers and administrators through the Association for Supportive Child Care (ASCC) and Arizona Association for the Education of Young Children (AZAEYC) listservs. All members of those listservs were able to view and take the survey; however, we excluded those who did not work directly with children in an early child care setting from our analyses. Our target population and sample was comprised of teachers, assistant teachers, and administrators. Our final sample consisted of 91 participants.

The survey consisted of a variety of questions in multiple blocks. First, participants were asked a series of background and demographic characteristics regarding themselves. In this section participants also indicated whether they were an administrator, teacher, assistant teacher, or family home-based provider. Next, participants were asked a series of questions regarding the demographic characteristics of their classroom or center (i.e., breakdown of ethnicities, percentage of English Language Learners, age range of students). Finally, participants responded to a variety of questions regarding their beliefs and practices surrounding culture, race, and anti-bias in the classroom. See Appendix 1 for the survey.

Fifty-nine (64.8%) of our participants were White/Caucasian, 15 (16.5%) identified as Latino, and six (6.6%) identified as Black/African American. Less than five percent identified as Native American, East Asian/Pacific Islander, and Middle Eastern. Ages of our respondents ranged from 19 to 72 ( $M = 42.63$ ,  $SD = 11.99$ ), and years of experience ranged from 1 – 35 ( $M = 12.62$ ,  $SD = 9.07$ ). There were 37 (40.7%) teachers, 30 (33%) directors/administrators, 14 (14.3%) assistant teachers, and nine (9.9%) family/home based providers. Fifteen (15.4%) respondents held a masters or doctoral degree. Teachers and administrators came from 19 private preschools, 17 non-profit preschools, 16 public preschools, 14 faith-based care centers, 10 Head Start centers, 7 corporate child care programs, and 6 family/home-based centers. Of the 91 centers represented, 55 programs are participating in Quality First (First Things First, 2013), a statewide program that partners with centers to make quality improvements. Thirty-four are nationally accredited, 22 through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

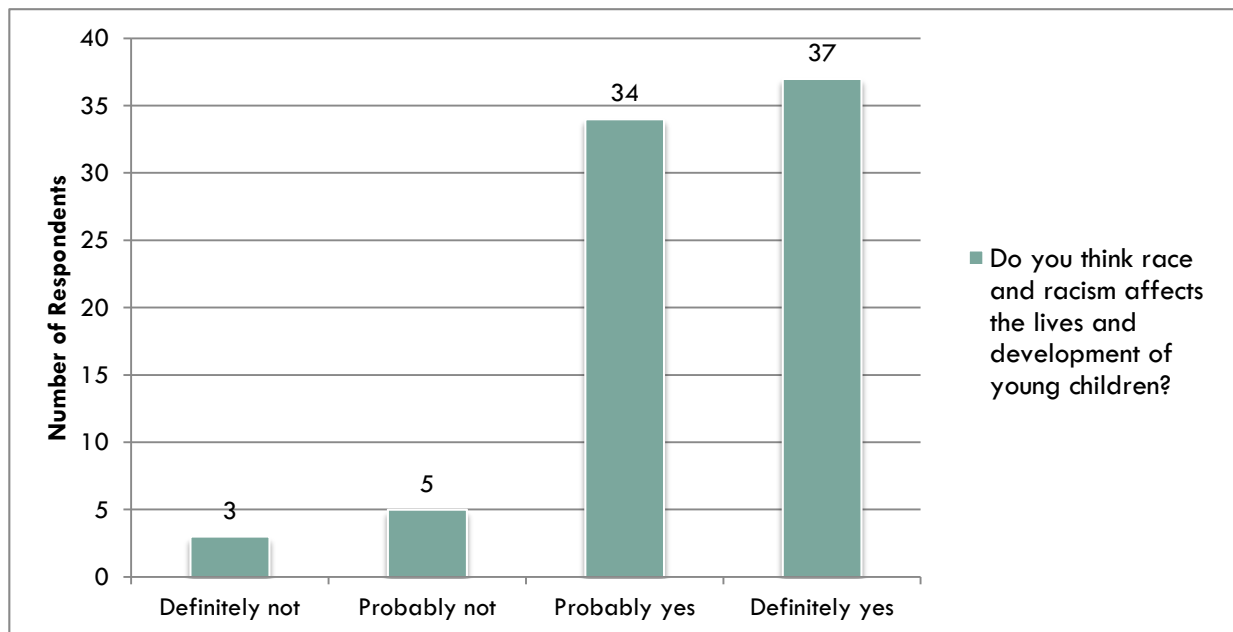
# RESULTS

## RQ 1: To what extent do early child care teachers and administrators in Arizona believe that race and bias should be integrated into early education curricula?

- In general, participants scored high on the Diversity Orientation Scale (DOS; Sanders, 2008), a measure of an individual’s openness and acceptance of a non-majority orientation in early childhood programs.

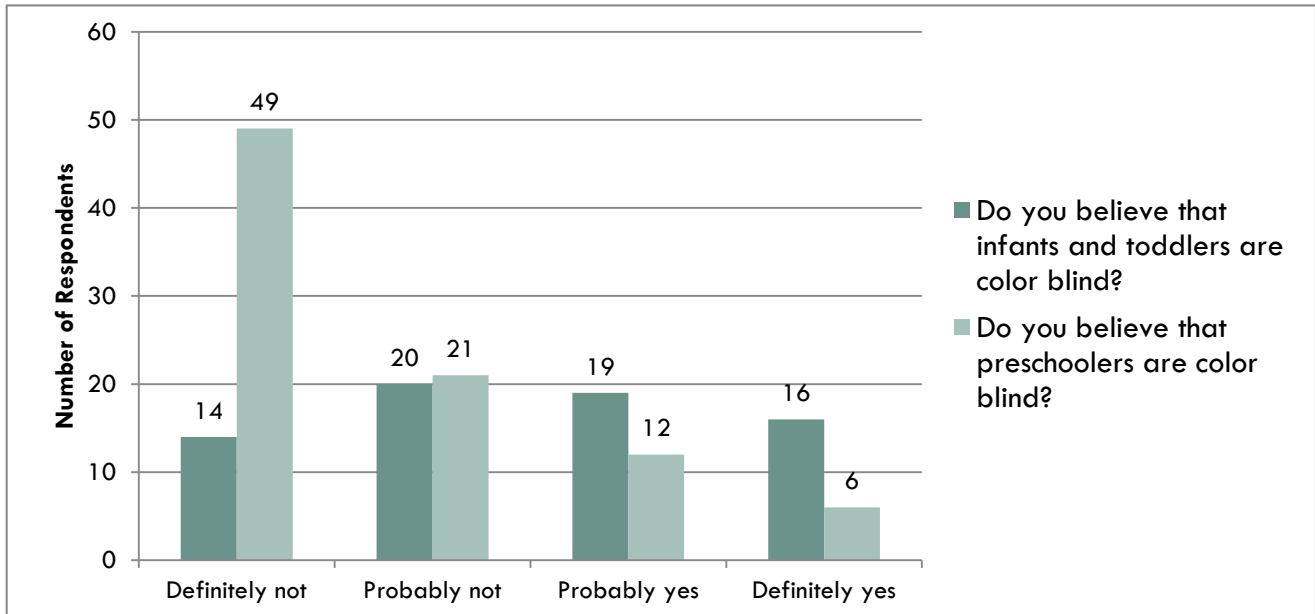
Item	Average (out of 5)
I believe that children who come from other cultures should keep their culture while also learning about American culture.	4.31
I believe that a child's family is a great resource to help me teach children about differences.	4.46
I believe that young children can learn prejudice.	4.20
I believe that too much talk about differences will make young children prejudiced.	2.41
I believe that, as a teacher, it's important to be aware of the prejudices that I myself may have.	4.29
I believe that all young children, regardless of who they are, benefit greatly from learning about others who are different from them or their experiences.	4.47
I believe that young children don't really see the differences in others.	2.81

- Almost all participants believed that race and racism affects the lives of young children.

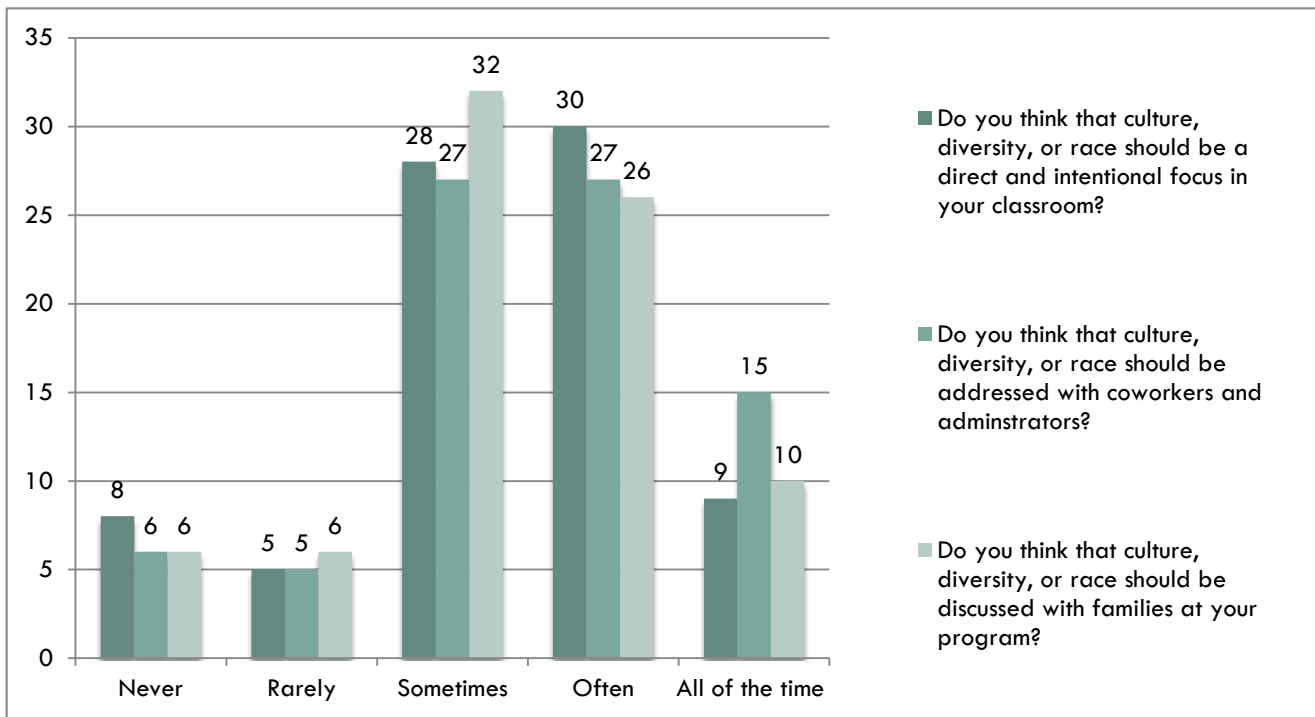




- Although most participants believe that preschoolers are definitely not colorblind (i.e., do not notice differences between individuals of different races), the sample had mixed opinions regarding whether infants and toddlers are colorblind.

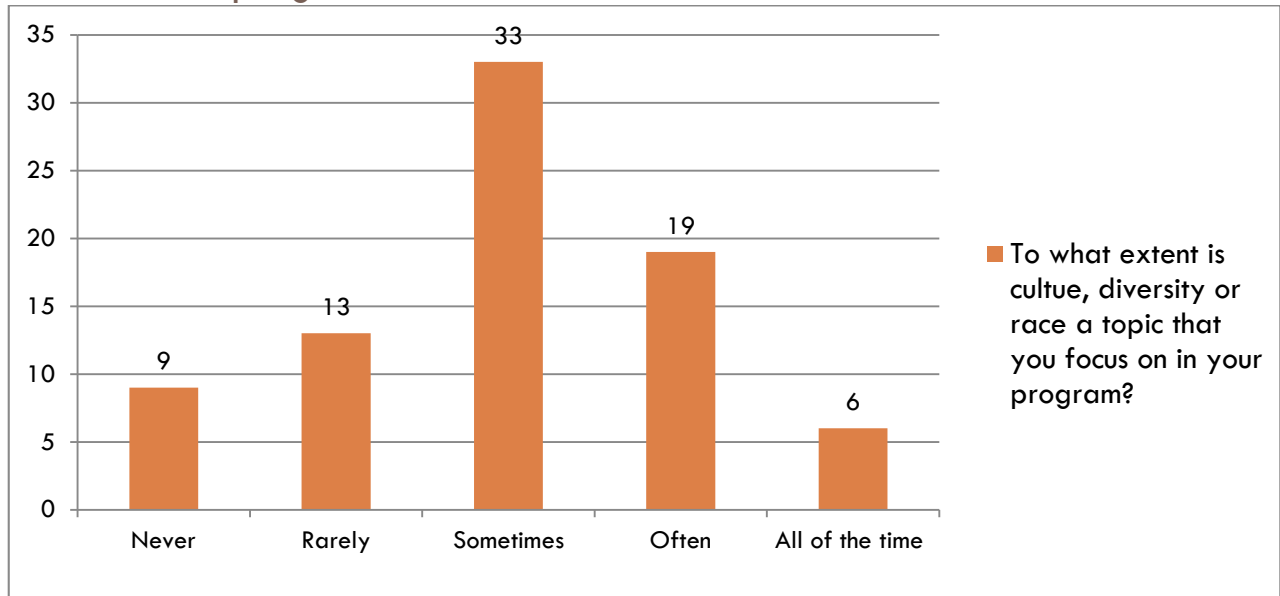


- The majority of participants believe that issues of diversity and race should sometimes or often be a direct and intentional focus of their classroom, addressed with coworkers, and discussed with families in their programs.

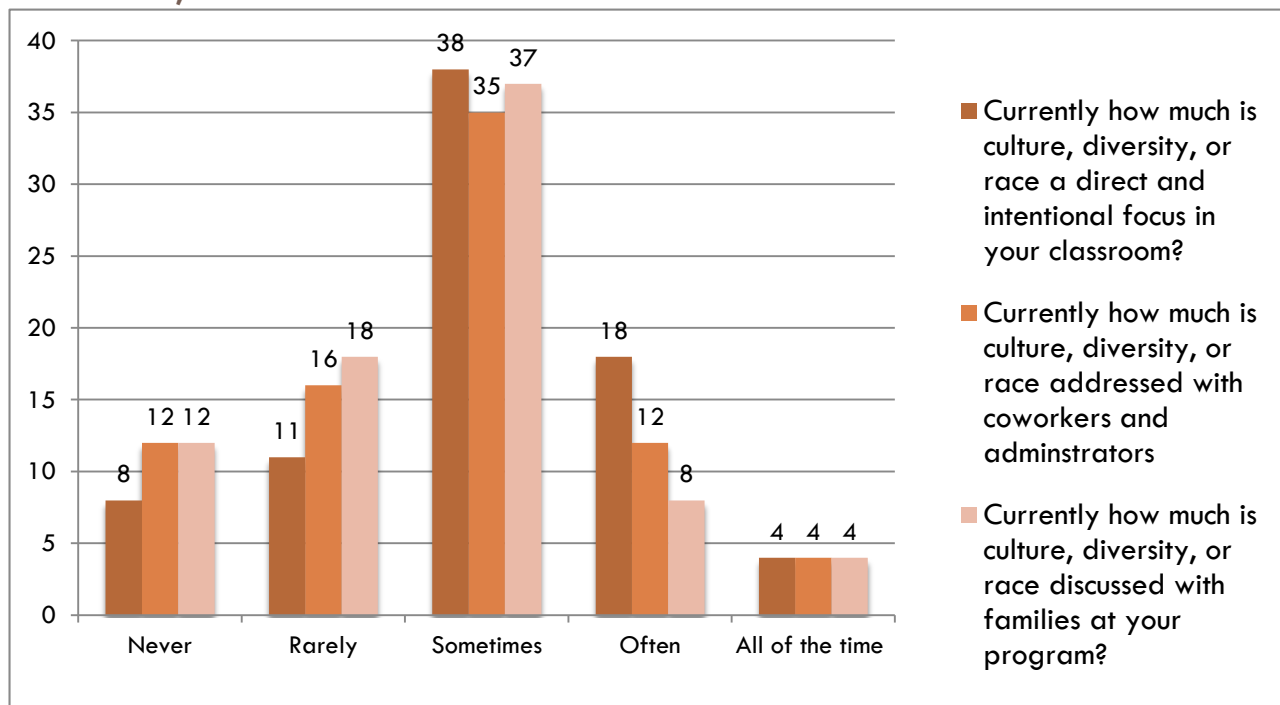


## RQ2: To what extent do early child care teachers and administrators in Arizona perceive they are implementing anti-bias education in their classrooms?

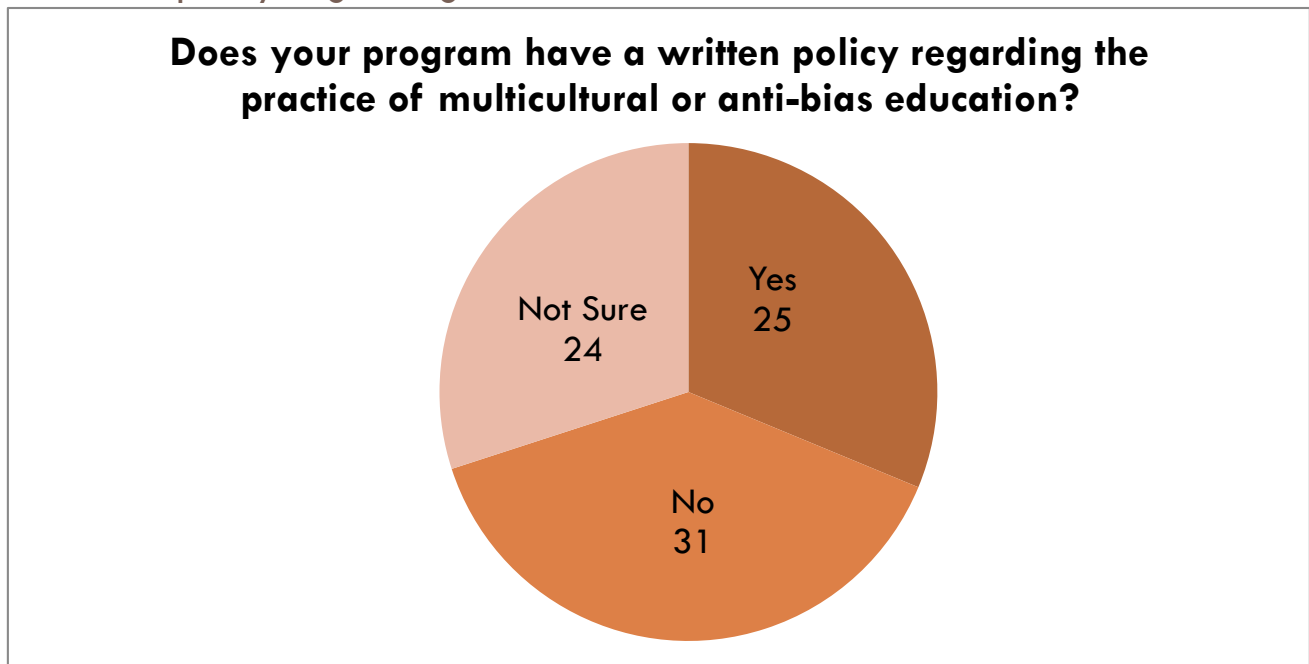
- The majority of respondents indicated that diversity or race is *sometimes* a focus in their program.



- The majority of respondents reported that issues of diversity or race are *sometimes* a direct and intentional focus of their classroom, addressed with coworkers, and discussed with families.

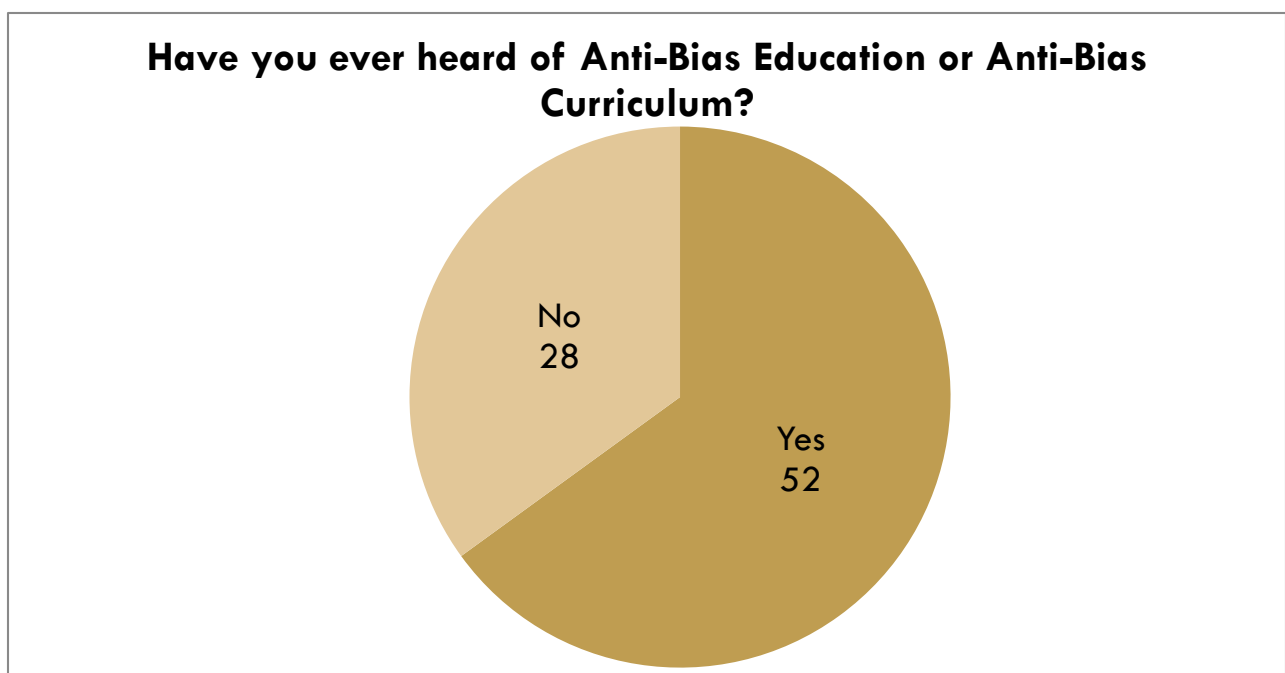


- Centers were almost evenly divided between those who do and do not have a written policy regarding multicultural or anti-bias education.

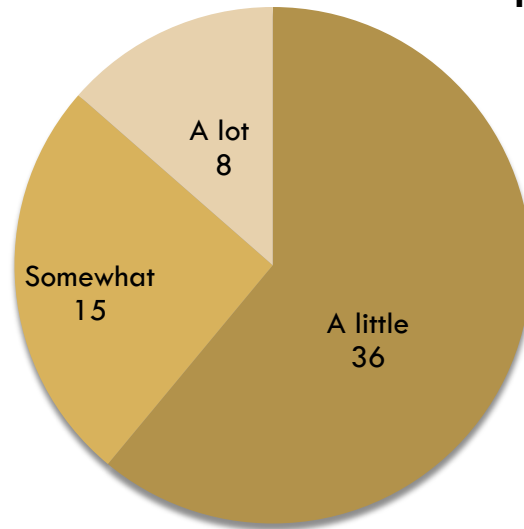


**RQ 3: Is there a need for professional development opportunities regarding anti-bias education in Arizona?**

- Although the majority of participants had heard of anti-bias education and the work of Louise Derman-Sparks, most indicated that they were not very familiar with the framework.

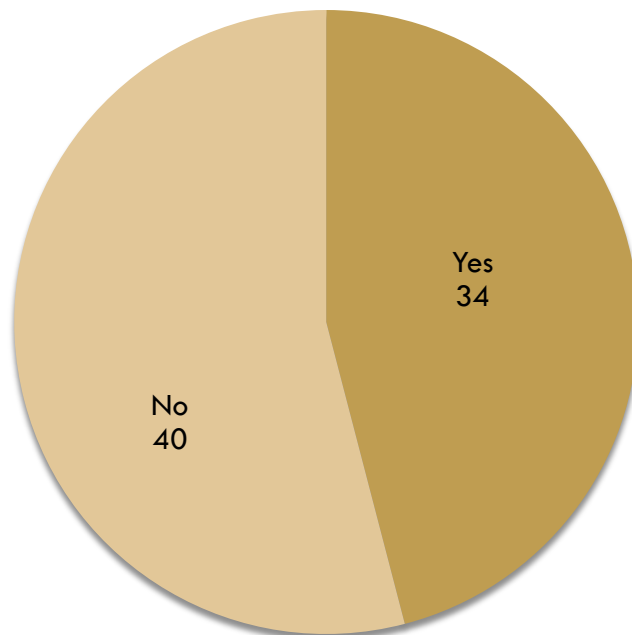


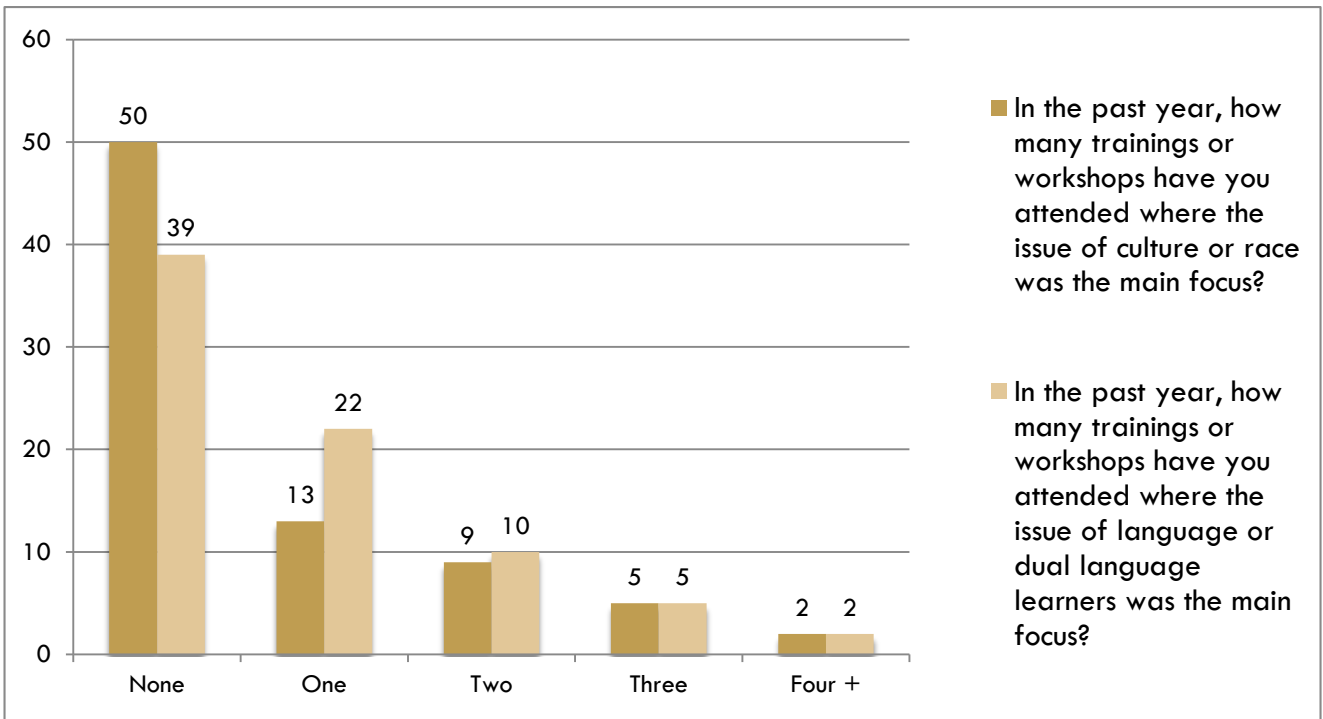
**If so, how familiar are you with anti-bias education and the work of Louise Derman Sparks?**



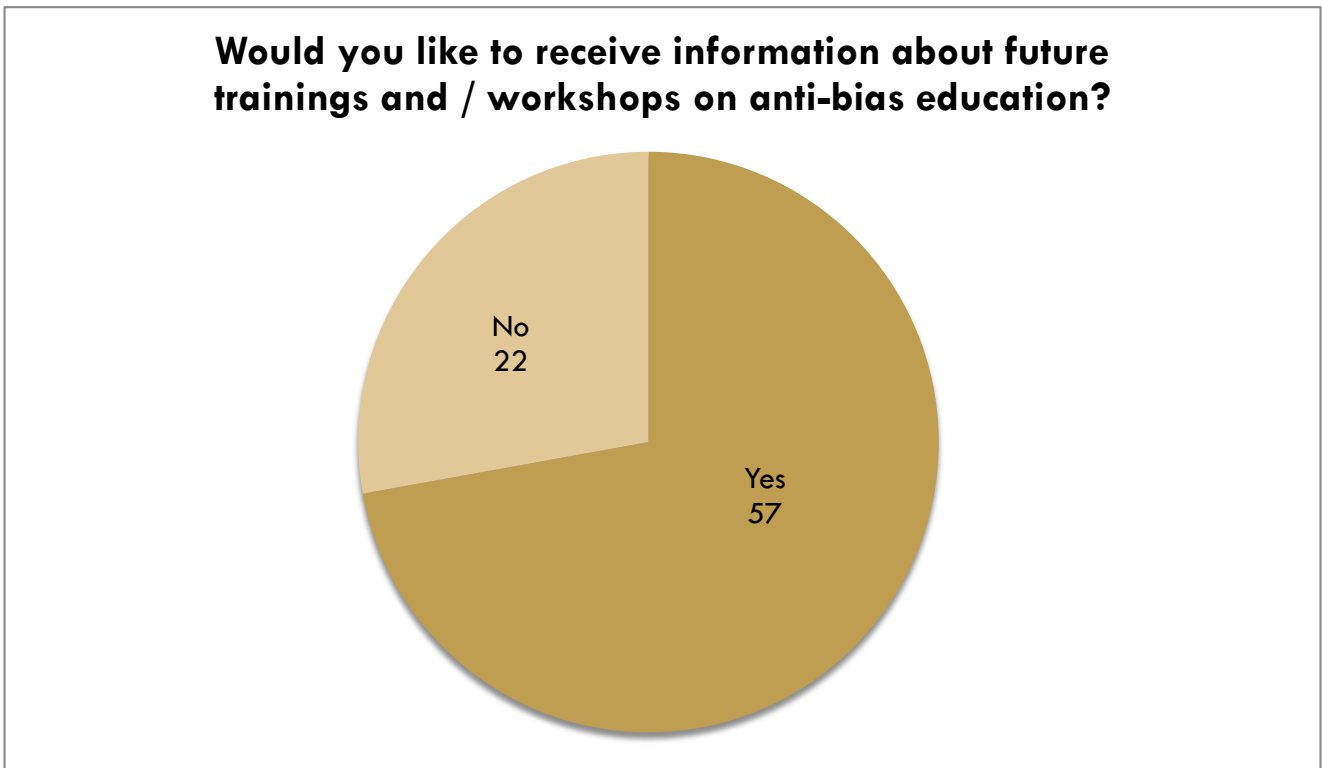
- Although many of respondents reported that they had, at some point, attended a training on anti-bias education/curriculum, almost all of the participants had not attended a workshop that directly focused on culture/race or dual-language learners in the past year.

**Have you ever attended a training or workshop on anti-bias education/curriculum?**





- Most participants indicated that they would be interested in receiving information regarding future trainings regarding anti-bias education.



# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In general, these results indicate that our participants hold a broad worldview and believe that a discussion regarding differences in others is beneficial. Our participants believe that issues of race, culture, and diversity affect the lives of young children, and should be addressed in the classroom, as indicated by the high scores on the DOS. However, participants were less likely to report that they actually endorse these beliefs in the classroom; there was a large discrepancy between the amount of participants who responded that culture, diversity and race should *often* be a direct focus in their classroom, discussed with coworkers, and addressed with families, and the number who reported that they *often* address these issues currently. Finally, there appears to be a gap in the amount of knowledge that teachers have regarding anti-bias education, as well as interest in learning more.

## IMPLICATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

### 1) Need for training

There is a clear need for training regarding issues of diversity, culture, and race in early childhood education settings in Arizona, as most participants indicated that they would like to attend a workshop on these topics, but have not done so in the past year. Providing professional development opportunities that reach a diverse audience of teachers across the Valley and state could help to further Indigo's mission. Contacting those teachers and administrators who expressed interest in receiving information regarding future trainings would be a potential means for attracting new attendees who may not otherwise know about Indigo and its mission. Given the large gap between how much our participants believe issues of race should be integrated in the classroom environment and the degree to which these practices are implemented, training could focus on providing concrete examples on how to implement anti-bias education principles.

### 4) Additional analyses of this data

There is additional data that the survey captured, that were not included in the analyses of these research questions. Future research could examine how

beliefs and practices surrounding anti-bias education differ based on context, including the ethnic diversity of the students, the type of program (e.g, public, private, home-based), and location of program, and accreditation status. This can also inform trainings, by understanding which students are being most frequently served by anti-bias education, and which types of centers should be targeted for additional outreach.

## **2) Need for future research**

In order to provide more in-depth trainings that include concrete examples regarding “Best Practices” of Anti-Bias Education, more research is needed. The teachers and administrators who reported that they use anti-bias education principles often or all of the time can be identified and contacted if they indicated that they would be willing to participate in future research. Conducting focus groups and observations with these teachers will allow Indigo to gather data that can be used in future trainings to provide other educators with tips and examples. Conducting this research in Arizona will be helpful in order to ground this research in the local population and educational context.

## **3) Edits to survey for future dissemination**

Some limitations to the present study could be addressed for future data collection. First, reaching out to additional listservs or groups of teachers could allow for a more representative and broader sample. Secondly, by using the specific phrase “anti-bias,” I may have missed out on participants who use ABE practices but do not know the terminology. Either using more general terminology or providing a definition of “anti-bias education” may clarify the particular concept of interest. Finally, for the questions that asked about the frequency with which race, culture, and diversity should be or are addressed in classrooms, it seems that more nuanced answer options are necessary. The vast majority of respondents selected “Sometimes,” which is a very broad category. Using scale mid-points with under seven answer choices has been shown to potentially skew results as the middle, or neutral, option is seen as most socially desirable to participants. I would suggest either utilizing an even amount of answer options or an odd number of anchors greater than five.

## REFERENCES

First Things First (2013). "About Quality First." Retrieved from <http://qualityfirstaz.com/about/>.

Sanders, K. (2008). *Diversity Orientation Survey*. Unpublished measure.

This report was made possible with the support of the Community Action Research Experiences (CARE) program in the School of Family and Social Dynamics at Arizona State University. If you wish to contact the student researcher, please email [larissa.gaias@asu.edu](mailto:larissa.gaias@asu.edu)



# APPENDIX A

## *Awareness of Anti-Bias Early Education in Arizona*

I am Larissa Gaias, a graduate student under the direction of Professor Larry Dumka in the T. Denny Sanford School of Social and Family Dynamics at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study in conjunction with Dr. Eva Shivers at the Indigo Cultural Center in order to understand the prevalence of awareness and endorsement of anti-bias early education in Arizona.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve completing a 10-20 minute online survey. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop participation at any time. Once you have completed the survey, you will be entered into a raffle to receive \$100 worth of anti-bias materials from Lakeshore Learning as a token our appreciation for your time and effort.

You must be at least 18 years old to participate. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty, and it will not affect your relationship with ASU, early childhood professional organizations, or your child care center.

Participants are not expected to benefit individually as a result of study participation; however, participating in the survey will contribute our efforts to train early childhood professionals in these practices. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Your data will only be available to project team members and will be protected through the use of a password protected server. Your responses will remain anonymous. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used. Results will only be shared in the aggregate form.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact Larissa Gaias (ASU researcher) at [larissa.gaias@asu.edu](mailto:larissa.gaias@asu.edu) or Dr. Eva Shivers (director of Indigo Cultural Center) at [eshivers@indigoculturalcenter.com](mailto:eshivers@indigoculturalcenter.com). If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

**I have read the letter of informed consent. I am at least 18 years old. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I may withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any time without penalty. By typing my name below, I am giving consent to participate in the survey.**

**Full typed name to serve as electronic signature:**

**Today's Date:**

### **Section 1: Background**

**Q1: What is the name of your child care center/program?**

**Q2: Where is your program located (City, State)?**

**Q3: Which of the following options best describes your child care center?**

- Privately owned (e.g., only 1-3 different locations)
- Corporate child care (e.g., Kindercare; Tutor Time; La Petite Academy, Bright Horizons)
- Head Start
- Non-profit center
- Public Pre-K (part of an elementary school)
- Faith-based
- Family Child Care/ Home-based center

**Q4: What is your age?**

**Q5: What is your ethnic background?**

- White/Caucasian
- Latino/Hispanic

- Black/African American
- Native American/American Indian/Alaska Native/Hawaiian Native
- East Asian/Pacific Islander
- Asian Indian
- Middle Eastern
- Other:

**Q6: What is your highest level of education?**

- Eighth grade or less
- Some high school but no diploma
- High school diploma/GED
- Some college but no degree
- Child Development Associate's degree (CDA)
- Associate's degree/two-year degree (AA)
- Bachelor's degree (BA or BS)
- Some graduate school but no degree
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree
- Other:

**Q7: How many early childhood education courses did you complete at the college level or above?**

**Q8: Is your program accredited?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**Q9: Name of accrediting organization (e.g., NAEYC, NAC, ASCI, NECPA, NMI, NCEA)**

**Q10: What is your role in your child care program?**

- Teacher
- Assistant Teacher
- Administrator/Director
- Family Child Care/ Home Based Provider

## **Section 2: Administrator/Director (Teacher) [Home-Based Provider] Questions**

**Q1: How many years have you been an early childhood administrator/director (teacher) [home-based provider]?**

**Q2: How many years have you been at your current center [location]?**

**Q3: How many children are in your center (classroom) [do you currently care for]?**

**Q4: What is the age range of the children in your center (classroom) [you currently care for]?**

**Q5: The majority of the families in my program (classroom) fall within the following income range. (What is your best guess?)**

- Below \$23,500
- \$23,500 - \$35,000
- \$35,000-\$47,000
- \$47,000-\$70,600
- Above \$70,600

**Q6: What is your best guess of the ethnic of the children in your center (classroom) [care]? (in %)**

- White/Caucasian:
- Latino/Hispanic:
- Black/African American:
- Native American/American Indian/Alaska Native/Hawaiian Native:
- East Asian/Pacific Islander:

- Asian Indian:
- Middle Eastern:
- Other:

**Q7:** What is your best guess of the percentage of children in your program (classroom) [care] who speak a language other than English as their home language?

**Q8:** What is your best guess of the percentage of children in your program (classroom) [care] who have special needs?

**Q9:** What is your best guess of the percentage of children in your program (classroom) [care] who are currently in foster care?

### Section 3: Diversity Orientation

Below are a series of statements with which you may either disagree or agree. For each statement, please express the degree of your disagreement or agreement by circling the appropriate number from 1 thru 5 (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree).

- a. I believe that children who come from other cultures should keep their culture while also learning about American culture.
- b. I believe that a child's family is a great resource to help me teach children about differences.
- c. I believe that young children can learn prejudice.
- d. I believe that too much talk about differences will make young children prejudiced.
- e. I believe that, as a teacher, it's important to be aware of the prejudices that I myself may have.
- f. I believe that all young children, regardless of who they are, benefit greatly from learning about others who are different from them or their experiences.
- g. I believe that young children don't really see the differences in others

Please select the option that best describes your beliefs. (1 = definitely not; 4 = definitely yes)

- a. Do you believe that infants and toddlers (age 0-3) are "color blind?"
- b. Do you believe that preschoolers (age 3-5) are "color blind?"
- c. Do you believe that race and racism affects the lives and development of young children?

Have you ever heard of Anti-Bias Education or Anti-Bias Curriculum?

- Yes
- No

If so, how familiar are you with Anti-Bias curriculum or the work of Louise Derman Sparks?

- A little
- Somewhat
- A lot

Have you ever attended a training or workshop on anti-bias education/curriculum?

- Yes
- No
- I don't remember

In the past year, how many trainings or workshops have you attended where the issue of culture or race was the main focus?

In the past year, how many trainings or workshops have you attended where the issue of language or dual language learners was the main focus?

To what extent is culture, diversity or race a topic that you focus on in your classroom or program?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- All of the Time

Does your program have a written policy regarding the practice of multicultural or anti-bias education?

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

Do you think that culture, diversity, or race should be... (1 = Never, 5 = All of the time)

- a. A direct and intentional focus in your classroom
- b. Addressed with co-workers and administrators
- c. discussed with families at your program

Currently, how much is culture, diversity, or race... (1 = Never, 5 = All of the time)

- a. A direct and intentional focus in your classroom
- b. Addressed with co-workers and administrators
- c. discussed with families at your program

#### Section 4: Future Contact

Would you like to participate in future research studies regarding anti-bias education?

- Yes
- No

If so, please provide your contact information below.

Name  
Phone  
Email

Would you like to receive information about future trainings and workshops on anti-bias education?

- Yes
- No

If so, please provide your contact information below.

Name  
Phone  
Email

Would you like to be entered into our raffle for Anti-Bias materials from Lakeshore (\$100 value)?

- Yes
- No

If so, please provide your contact information below.

Name  
Phone  
Email