

MULTICULTURAL RESOURCE CENTER

A collaborative project of Saint Paul Public Schools Office of Educational Equity and the East Metro Integration District

"The Problem Solver"
Nail Fetish from Congo



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Early Childhood Education

Young children begin to develop racial awareness and identity at age two, an even before. Along with this development of racial identity comes generalizations and stereotypes that lead to prejudice. It is for this reason that conversations about equity, diversity, race, and social justice need to begin happening at an early age. It is not enough to believe that because children are young or they do not talk about it, that they don't see race. Young children are very capable of having such discussions in developmentally appropriate ways. The Multicultural Resource Center (MRC) has a number of resources to support you in this.

Multiculturalism and Social Justice issues are prominent in much of Early Childhood (birth through age seven) pedagogy. Social Justice aspects are strongly embedded in the Reggio approach where creating nurturing environments where democracy and diversity are celebrated while young children explore and actively learn, using an abundant array of materials and resources is the ideal early childhood educative approach to learning. If you are not familiar with the Reggio approach or would like to learn more, we have two excellent books in our collection that are available for check out, ***We Are All Explorers: Learning and Teaching with Reggio Principles in Urban Settings***, by Daniel R. Scheinfeld and ***Possible Schools: The Reggio Approach to Urban Education***, by Ann Lewin-Benham.

In the event that some of you early childhood folks are under the impression that there is little available at the Multicultural Resource Center (MRC) that can be used in an early childhood setting, I have generated some ideas for just a few of the many ways you can make use of these wonderful resources. We have an excellent collection of picture books, curricular resources, and professional resources that would be useful in an early childhood setting. See a sample of just some of the resources we have related to support Early Childhood Educators on page three of this newsletter. You can browse our online catalog at <http://mylibrary.spps.org> to find additional titles or contact us and we will do the search for you. If you are interested in exploring the use of persona dolls in facilitating conversations about race and other equity issues, we have persona dolls and professional resources available for check out to support you in this.

The extensive selection of artifacts in our collection are intended to be used in a hands on manner with students. Worried about breakage... borrow some of the less fragile items such as the textiles. Please know that the objects in our collection are intended to be tools for teaching and learning and normal wear and tear (including some breakage) due to usage is par for the course. It is also an opportunity to teach children how to care for things they have borrowed. Not sure how to use the objects...check out one of the many trunks that we have that bundle literacy resources, objects and lesson suggestions. We have a number of objects that are paired with picture books for adding a kinesthetic, tactile experience to literacy development. Objects from our collection can be used in symbolic play to assist students in making sense of their world and practice communication and discovery within a constructivist context.

Please contact us or come by if you are interested in learning more.

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The staff at the MRC have helped me to see that I plan more thoughtful and engaging lessons and dialogues with my students. I enjoy being the learner alongside my students, and they are often the teacher.

I feel good knowing that I have a resource from which I can both educate myself continually about making my classroom a more comfortable place to feel included.

It has provided an awareness to those who are unfamiliar with other cultures by experiencing something new (windows) and reflecting on his/her own culture (mirrors). It has also helped students of these cultures understand a bit more about who they are and where they came from.

I have loved checking out the objects! It has been wonderful to have real objects to share with them to illustrate various cultures. The professional development resources (books from the MRC) have helped our school study group add strategies for working with urban learners.

Exciting Events Coming Up @ the MRC

FREE MRC SUMMER WORKSHOP—Critical Literacy: Reading and Writing the Word and The World will be offered at the MRC from August 17 through 20, 9 am to 3 pm each day. For more information regarding this opportunity and how to earn graduate credit at a reduced rate, visit our website or contact the MRC.

Back by popular demand...MRC Movie Nights. Each month during the school year, the MRC hosts a *free* community film screening. Students, staff, and community members are welcome to join us. Films have been selected to compliment monthly staff development offerings. Discussions will follow the films. Lemonade, snacks, and clock hours will be available. See below for a listing of featured films and dates. Check our website for complete descriptions of the films. While registration for the Movie Nights is not necessary, an RSVP would be appreciated. All films are from 4 pm to 6 pm at the MRC.

Children of Heaven, March 24, 2009

Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible, April 22, 2009

Lone Star (R), May 26, 2009

The MRC offers monthly, evening staff development workshops focusing on a variety of issues. These classes are *free* to staff in Saint Paul Public Schools and other EMID-member districts. A light supper and clock hours will be available to participants. To register for these workshops, complete a registration form (available on our website) and mail or fax to the MRC by the Friday before the workshop. Suburban staff may register online at <http://mrc.spps.org> and SPPS staff through <http://pdexpress.spps.org>. Workshops will be held at the MRC from 4:30-7 pm.

A listing of workshops remaining for 2009 are below.

Moving Towards a Social Justice Education Framework, April 14, 2009.

Scandinavian Culture, May 20, 2009

Can We Talk About Race?: A Forum for Dialogue About Race Join us for the third and final dialogue session for the school year on Tuesday, April 21st from 4:30 TO 6:30 pm at the MRC. For more information on this FREE event, visit our website at <http://mrc.spps.org/calendar.html>.

Learn More About Early Childhood Equity Online...

<http://www.teachingforchange.org/profdev/ecei> Early Childhood Equity Alliance
<http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v3n2/mendoza.html> Excellent Resource on Selecting Multicultural Children's Literature

http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/23_01/embr231.shtml Introduction essay to Rethinking Early Childhood Education

<http://www.journal.naeyc.org/btj/200511/DermanSparksBTJ1105.asp> Louise Derman Sparks article about her book *What if All the Children are White?*

<http://www.journal.naeyc.org/btj/200511/DiversityResourcesBTJ1105.asp> NAEYC resource guide on embracing diversity in early childhood settings.

http://www.achievementseminars.com/seminar_series_2007_2008/readings/sparks_goals%20and%20teaching%20guidelines.pdf Article by Louise Derman Sparks on "Goals and Teaching Guidelines for Anti-Bias Education With Young Children"

http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED348152&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED348152 Electronic version of *Common Bonds: Anti-Bias Teaching In a Diverse Society*.

Check It Out...Resources on Early Childhood Education Available at the MRC

Celebrate!: An Anti-bias Guide to Enjoying Holidays in Early Childhood Programs by Julie Bisson. *Celebrate!* was designed to present the meanings and purposes of holidays in our lives and the lives of children. Author Julie Bisson looks at the problems with the approaches to handling holidays that can be seen in current curricula. Innovative and important steps are then put forth to help improve the approach to holidays in individual programs and classrooms. Readers are empowered with the skills for making sound decisions regarding holiday programming in various childhood programs.

Starting Small: Teaching Tolerance in Preschool and the Early Grades (DVD Kit) by TeachingTolerance. The vision of community that the early childhood classroom provides can color children's ideas and expectations about equity, cooperation and citizenship. This 58 minute DVD features classroom activities, teacher insights and commentary from noted childhood development specialists and Teacher's Guide that includes classroom profiles, commentary, activities, and resources.

Lessons from Turtle Island: Native curriculum in early childhood classrooms by Guy Jones. Provides a framework for understanding the complex issues surrounding the inclusion of Native American cultures and peoples in early childhood programs. The authors offer clear guidelines and specific resources to help teachers incorporate Native American perspectives and experiences into the daily life of the classroom in ways which both acknowledge similarities and affirm differences among people.

Diversity in the Classroom: New Approaches to the Education of Young Children by Frances Kendall. Addresses anti-bias education from the stages of child development to strategies for educating parents. It focuses on the teacher's role as an agent of change.

Diversities in Early Childhood Education: Rethinking and Doing by Celia Denishi. This collection, edited by leaders in the field of early childhood education, is a valuable resource for those studying and working with young children. Chapters emphasize the relationship between theory, research, and practice, and provide illustrations of equitable and inclusive practices that move us toward social justice in the critical field of early childhood education. Drawing from the current literature on ability, class, culture, ethnicity, gender, languages, race, and sexual orientation, the book presents a forward-looking account of how diversity could improve the educational experience of children from birth to age three.

Rethinking Early Childhood Education edited by Ann Pelo. This book is alive with the conviction that teaching young children involves values and vision. This anthology collects inspiring stories about social justice teaching with young children. Included here is outstanding writing from childcare teachers, early-grade public school teachers, scholars, and parents.

Roots & Wings: Affirming Culture in Early Childhood Programs by Stacey York. York's book has a wonderful store of activities to use with young children, an authoritative discussion of how prejudice develops, and a sensible approach to the process of creating personal and social change.

What if All the Kids Are White?: Anti-bias Multicultural Education With Young Children and Families by Louise Derman Sparks. How do I teach about racial and cultural diversity if all my students are white? The authors propose seven learning themes to help young white children resist messages of racism and build identity and skills for thriving in a multicultural country and world. The text includes strategies, resources, and classroom examples for implementing the learning themes in early childhood settings. Also by Derman-Sparks... ***Anti-bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children.***

Equality in Action: A Way Forward with Persona Dolls by Babette Brown. Persona Dolls are used to promote social justice. They help to empower children and give them the skills and confidence to stand up for themselves and others when they encounter discrimination. Drawing on evidence from hitherto unpublished research, the book highlights the impact of the Persona Doll approach and validates what has until now been assumed but not substantiated.

That's Not Fair!: A Teacher's Guide to Activism With Young Children by Ann Pelo. Explains how teachers can use children's sense of fairness to guide them toward changing the world and making it a better place to live.

White Teacher by Vivian Gussin Paley. A moving, personal account of the author's experiences teaching kindergarten in an integrated school and learning to face her own perceptions of race as well as those of her students. Also by Paley on a similar topic, ***Kwanzaa and Me: A Teacher's Story.***

Browse our on-line catalog to discover more great resources for your classroom!
<http://mylibrary.spps.org>

Multicultural Resource Center

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See us at:

www.mrc.spps.org



Saint Paul
Public Schools



About the Multicultural Resource Center...

Multicultural education is a progressive approach for transforming education that holistically critiques and addresses current shortcomings, failings, and discriminatory practices in education. It is grounded in ideals of social justice, education equity, and a dedication to facilitating educational experiences in which all students reach their full potential as learners and as socially aware and active beings, locally, nationally, and globally. Multicultural education acknowledges that schools are essential to laying the foundation for the transformation of society and the elimination of oppression and injustice. ~Paul Gorski (<http://www.edchange.org>)

The Multicultural Resource Center (MRC) facilitates access, for teachers, to the necessary tools to infuse learning experiences with Multicultural Education. The MRC is part library, part museum, mostly a place where educators can come to build their capacity in working with diverse students and find resources to support this new capacity.

The goal of the MRC is to promote the creation of equitable learning environments infused with multiple, authentic viewpoints that confront the norming of whiteness. Through curricular support, lending out materials to support such an environment, and providing modeling through class visits and staff development opportunities, social change will occur. Please explore our website to gain a better understanding of the MRC's various roles.

Browsing Hours...Stop On By!

While the MRC is available for class visits and meetings during the day, we have set aside the specific times below for patron browsing and check-out. It is best to call before you come to ensure that someone will be available to assist you.

Mondays & Thursdays, 1-4 pm

Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 2-6 pm

Other times, by appointment.

Check out our website for policies and procedures for reserving the MRC.

Interdistrict Partnership Coach.....

Thanks to the many SPPS teachers who participated in Interdistrict Classroom Partnerships, trainings, and workshops with the EMID suburban districts. Please let my office know if you are interested in continuing with or creating an Interdistrict Partnership for the next school year so we can get the materials to you. ***The deadline for partnership proposals for the next school year is May 22nd.***

Come learn more about exciting opportunities through Interdistrict Classroom Partnerships at our Open House on March 26th from 4-5:30 pm at the MRC.

You can contact me with questions at stephen.severance@spps.org or 651.487.7363.

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