

UNIT OVERVIEW

Unit Title	Exploring Common Roots
Unit Length	<p>Series of four one- hour Sessions with 1 hour of Extended Learning per session (8 participation hours)</p> <p>Session Topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sense of Belonging 2. What are the Roots of Your American Identity? 3. Using Children’s Literature as “Mirrors, Windows and Sliding Glass Doors” 4. Having Tough Conversations with Families <p>The unit also includes three mini-lessons that can be incorporated into this course or other courses.</p>
Grade Level(s)/Course(s)	Educators of Pre-K (4 - 5 year olds)
Subject(s)/Area(s) of Focus	<p>Primary Focus: Social Emotional Learning and Professionalism</p> <p>Virginia Early Learning and Development Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social Emotional Development (SED), ● Cognitive Development (CD)-Social Science, and ● Communication, Language and Literacy Development (CLLD) <p>NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● STANDARD 4 Developmentally, Culturally, and Linguistically Appropriate Teaching Practices (4c) ● STANDARD 6 Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator (6a)
Unit Overview	<p>Students will explore the concept of belonging in early childhood. They will be scaffolded to develop a greater understanding of the connection to an individual's American origin story. The diversity of the children and families in their early learning settings will be celebrated and common themes and narratives around identity will be highlighted.</p> <p>Students will practice using children’s literature to highlight the many U.S. identity origin stories possibly represented in their early learning environment. They will also practice research and reflective practices that allow them to develop an understanding of their own sense of belonging and the intersections with those whose roots in the U.S. reach back to the institution of slavery.</p>

Exploring Common Roots

Exploring Common Roots by Early Childhood Educators from the Exploring Common Roots team, part of the 2023 cohort of *The 1619 Project* Education Network

	<p>Finally educators will practice strategies to initiate and implement tough conversations with families who might state preferences to steer away from the topics highlighted in this unit. They will also develop language and practices for communicating the importance of the themes and texts in this unit for creating welcome spaces for all children and families.</p>
Objectives & Outcomes	<p>Educators will...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Explore and understand the legacy of slavery's impact on the sense of belonging for African Americans.2. Participate in reflective experiences that allow them to better understand their own American origin story and how it intersects with that of descendants of enslaved Americans.3. Use children's literature to create opportunities for adults and children in the early learning settings to come to a deeper understanding of their identities and an increased sense of belonging.4. Define next steps to create more inclusive and welcoming learning environments that engage texts exploring the lasting legacy of slavery5. Curate a list of classroom resources to support learning by educators and by the children.6. Be encouraged to confront personal limitations that inhibit their ability to have hard conversations with children and with families about identity and belonging, and create an action plan for taking the next brave step to engage with those conversations.
Standards	<p>Virginia Early Learning and Development Standards SED1. Positive Self-Concept SED1.1. Developing self-awareness CD2. Social Science: People, Community, and Culture CD2.3. Learning about differences CLLD2. Foundations of Reading CLLD2.2. Understanding ideas, vocabulary, and information in stories and texts</p> <p>NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• STANDARD 4 Developmentally, Culturally, and Linguistically Appropriate Teaching Practices (4c)• STANDARD 6 Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator (6a)
Facilitation Resources	<p>Exploring Common Roots- Reference Material to support Facilitator Preparation -printable resource document</p> <p>Texts from <i>The 1619 Project</i> The 1619 Project: Born on the Water by Nikole Hannah-Jones and</p>

Renée Watson, illustrated by Nikkolas Smith
"[The Idea of America](#)" by Nikole Hannah-Jones for "The 1619 Project" from *The New York Times*

Texts

Excerpt from "[Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors](#)" by [Rudine Sims Bishop \(scenicregional.org\)](#)
Journal- Zero to Three, Volume 39 No 3- [Identity and Belonging in Early Childhood Settings | ZERO TO THREE](#)
[Making Connections: "Who Looks Like Me?" Representation Matters to Our Children and Our Members by Michelle Kang | NAEYC Identity Resource Screening Tool for Educators | Sankofa Spirit team from The 1619 Project Education Network \(1619education.org\)](#)
[Identity and Belonging in Early Childhood Settings | ZERO TO THREE](#)
[Making Connections: "Who Looks Like Me?" Representation Matters to Our Children and Our Members by Michelle Kang | NAEYC Using The 1619 Project Books to Discuss Dominant and Counter Narratives | Pulitzer Center: 1619 Project \(1619education.org\)](#)
["Born on the Water' gives Black children in America their origin story" by Jason Fuller for NPR](#)
[Ask Hello. Different Approaches to Family Trees | NAEYC Discovering My Identity | Learning for Justice](#)
["The study of belonging in early childhood education: complexities and possibilities" by Elizabeth J. Erwin, Meredith Valentine & Michaella Toumazou for The International Journal of Early Years Education\(montclair.edu\)](#)
[Issues in Social Studies: Unity and Diversity - Annenberg Learner Educator's Guide to "In Search of Home" E-book by Caroline D'Angelo and Jennifer Nguyen | Pulitzer Center](#)
[Fourteenth Amendment | Browse | Constitution Annotated | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](#)
["From immigrants to Americans: race and assimilation during the Great Migration" by MARCO TABELLINI AND VICKY FOUKA | OUPblog](#)
[Special Rebroadcast: A Conversation on Juneteenth Featuring Dr Annette Gordon Reed - YouTube](#)
[The Historical Legacy of Juneteenth | National Museum of African American History and Culture](#)
[Reconstructing Citizenship | National Museum of African American History and Culture](#)
[Timeline: Immigration | Thomas Jefferson's Monticello](#)
[Freedom in Congo Square](#) by Carole Boston Weatherford, Illustrated by R. Gregory Christie
[Juneteenth for Mazie](#) by Floyd Cooper
[Juneteenth](#) by Anece Rochell
[Ask Hello. Different Approaches to Family Trees | NAEYC](#)

Videos

Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop- [Mirrors, Windows and Sliding Glass Doors - YouTube](#)

“Remember” by Joy Harjo

[\(652\) #BNStorytime: Joy Harjo reads “Remember” for Barnes and Noble - YouTube](#)

[\(652\) "Remember" by Joy Harjo / film by Jessica Sanders - YouTube](#)

Facilitator Resources

- [Sense of Identity and Belonging | ECLKC \(hhs.gov\)](#)
- [We Need Diverse Books – diversebooks.org](#)
- [The 1619 Project Books: Resource Guides from Penguin Random House | Pulitzer Center](#)
- [“Smithsonian Scholars and Researchers Share Works That Shed Light on the History of U.S. Racism” by Beth Py-Lieberman for Smithsonian | At the Smithsonian | Smithsonian Magazine](#)
- [Teaching Hard History: American Slavery | Learning for Justice](#)
- [Teaching Hard History From the Beginning | Learning for Justice](#)
- [Principles of Effective Family Engagement | NAEYC](#)
- [Planning for Equity-Focused Conversations | Virtual Lab School](#)

Background Information

American Origins

- [Americans’ origins and connections to their families’ roots | Pew Research Center](#)
- [Wrestling with the Question of American Identity and Whether Consensus is Possible | Insights \(loc.gov\)](#)
- [The Pilgrims and the History of American Origin Stories \(georgetown.edu\)](#)
- [Black Americans' family history, slavery and knowledge of Black history | Pew Research Center](#)
- [Opinion | Slavery descendants and Black immigrants aren’t opponents \(stanforddaily.com\)](#)

Centering Black Story

- [Centering Blackness in Early Education](#) by Nadiyah Taylor

Materials Referenced:

- [Whole Book Approach to Born on the Water | Pulitzer Center: 1619 Project \(1619education.org\)](#)
- [Discovering My Identity | Learning for Justice](#)

<p>Performance Task(s)</p>	<p>Culminating Projects</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Visual representation (collage)</u> of the American origin stories for students’ families, along with reflective statements on recognized connections/differences to the origin stories of students in their early learning environments and colleagues. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Completed in <i>Session 3</i>: Summary of Lesson Themes- <u>Using Children’s Literature as “Mirrors, Windows and Sliding Glass Doors”</u> 2. <u>Action Plan</u> detailing how students will support young children’s sense of belonging in the classroom. Plan will also identify additional learning needs and resources needed in their early learning environment. The plan will also define next steps to prepare for future “hard conversations” with families. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Completed in <i>Session 4</i>: Summary of Lesson Themes- <u>Having Tough Conversations with Families</u> <p>Project descriptions and evaluation rubrics for both summative projects are available here: Exploring Common Roots: Culminating Projects - Google Docs. [.pdf][.docx]</p>
<p>Assessment/Evaluation</p>	<p>Educators will be asked to reflect and apply their learning experiences to their awareness of how they show up in the classroom and how they see and experience the children and families in their learning environments. Facilitators will review and provide feedback on those reflective statements.</p> <p>Educators will be tasked to create a visual representation that demonstrates an understanding of their American origin story and how it connects to the stories of the learners in their early learning settings. These representations will be shared with classmates who will be scaffolded to provide peer reviews of the efforts.</p> <p>Project descriptions and evaluation rubrics for both summative projects are available here: Exploring Common Roots: Culminating Projects - Google Docs. [.pdf][.docx]</p>

DAILY LESSONS AND RESOURCES

Session 1:
Exploring Sense of Belonging

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)
<p>What is belonging and why is it relevant to early childhood educators?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators will explore definitions of belonging. <p>How can books be used to create a sense of belonging in the early childhood environment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators will... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Examine the work of Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop on the importance of diversity in children’s literature. ○ Reflect on childhood literacy experiences that supported the educator’s identity development.
Lesson Materials & Resources
<p>Articles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excerpt from “Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors” by Rudine Sims Bishop (scenicregional.org) • Journal- Zero to Three, Volume 39 No 3- Identity and Belonging in Early Childhood Settings ZERO TO THREE • Making Connections: “Who Looks Like Me?” Representation Matters to Our Children and Our Members by Michelle Kang NAEYC • Identity Resource Screening Tool for Educators Sankofa Spirit team from The 1619 Project Education Network (1619education.org) <p>Website Unit on Belonging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of Identity and Belonging ECLKC (hhs.gov) <p>Video</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop- Mirrors, Windows and Sliding Glass Doors - YouTube • “Remember” by Joy Harjo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (652) #BNStorytime: Joy Harjo reads “Remember” for Barnes and Noble - YouTube ○ (652) "Remember" by Joy Harjo / film by Jessica Sanders - YouTube <p>Facilitator Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How Do You Honor Ancestors? 12 Family History Celebrations (genealogypals.com)
Lesson Activities
<p>Prework</p> <p>Students review assigned reading on belonging specific to the early learning environment. Sample reading excerpts to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity and Belonging in Early Childhood Settings ZERO TO THREE

- [Making Connections: “Who Looks Like Me?” Representation Matters to Our Children and Our Members by Michelle Kang | NAEYC](#)

In-Session Learning Experiences

Students engage in small group discussions, followed by a whole group reflection, exploring the following questions:

- What is belonging?
- Why is it important in the early learning environment?
- What experiences in your early learning environment support children’s development of a healthy sense of belonging?
- What questions do you still have on belonging?

Watch the video of **Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop**- [Mirrors, Windows and Sliding Glass Doors - YouTube](#) and discuss the following question:

- How can children’s literature support the sense of belonging for the children and their families?

Review the following resource during the class session. Look at the sections labeled “Know, see, do, and improve.” Consider the strategies suggested and how they apply to students’ work with children and families.

- [Sense of Identity and Belonging | ECLKC \(hhs.gov\)](#)

Extended Learning: Post-Session

- Assignments”
- 1. Students explore the origin stories for their own families. Collect any available family stories on their American identity.
- 2. Students watch the following video recordings of the poem “Remember” by Joy Harjo
 - a. [\(652\) #BNStorytime: Joy Harjo reads Remember - YouTube](#)
 - b. [\(652\) "Remember" by Joy Harjo / film by Jessica Sanders - YouTube](#)
 - i. Resource for the facilitator- [How Do You Honor Ancestors? 12 Family History Celebrations \(genealogypals.com\)](#).
- 3. Students assess their classroom/ program book collections to identify gaps in representation.

Session 2:
What are the Roots of our American Identities?

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)
<p>Students will be able to (SWBAT) describe their American Identities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SWBAT reflect on definitions of American Identity ○ SWBAT Explore the history and significance of Juneteenth <p>Guiding questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How familiar are you with your family’s American origin story? 2. What celebrations and recognitions are most culturally significant? 3. Are there children’s books that specifically connect to your understanding of your family’s legacy?
Lesson Materials & Resources
<p>Facilitator References:</p> <p>Using The 1619 Project Books to Discuss Dominant and Counter Narratives Pulitzer Center: 1619 Project (1619education.org)</p> <p>“Born on the Water’ gives Black children in America their origin story” by Jason Fuller for NPR</p> <p>Ask Hello. Different Approaches to Family Trees NAEYC</p> <p>Discovering My Identity Learning for Justice</p> <p>“The study of belonging in early childhood education: complexities and possibilities” by Elizabeth J. Erwin, Meredith Valentine & Michaella Toumazou for <i>The International Journal of Early Years Education</i>(montclair.edu)</p> <p>Issues in Social Studies: Unity and Diversity - Annenberg Learner</p> <p>Educator's Guide to "In Search of Home" E-book by Caroline D'Angelo and Jennifer Nguyen Pulitzer Center Fourteenth Amendment Browse Constitution Annotated Congress.gov Library of Congress</p> <p>“From immigrants to Americans: race and assimilation during the Great Migration” by MARCO TABELLINI AND VICKY FOUKA OUPblog</p> <p>Special Rebroadcast: A Conversation on Juneteenth Featuring Dr Annette Gordon Reed - YouTube</p> <p>The Historical Legacy of Juneteenth National Museum of African American History and Culture</p> <p>Reconstructing Citizenship National Museum of African American History and Culture</p> <p>Timeline: Immigration Thomas Jefferson's Monticello</p> <p>"The Idea of America" by Nikole Hannah-Jones for “The 1619 Project” from <i>The New York Times</i></p>
Lesson Activities
<p>Prework: To be completed in the online learning management system</p> <p>Individual Reflection:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students discuss their reflections on Session 1 using the questions below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What traditions/connections did you think about that reflect your family’s practices? ○ How well does your classroom book collections represent your story? What gaps did you identify in your classroom book collections?

- If you were able to identify books that connect to your family's origin story, what are they?
- Were you able to identify stories that represent the lives of your students?
- What did you already know about Juneteenth? Are there elements of the celebration that connect to your family origin story?

Discussion Board Postings- Have students read a selection or two from a collection of storybooks focused on American origin stories. Ask them to write a 1 to 2 sentence summary of the books along with journaled notes on connections between the origin stories of the different characters and between their own/ their family's origin stories. A selection of books can be located in facilitator resources section of this [unit](#) from *The 1619 Project Education Network* ([Uncovering and Reclaiming Historical Identities | Pulitzer Center](#)).

- Additional Book Options
 - [Coming To America](#) by Betsy Maestro
 - [A History Of Me](#) by Adrea Theodore
 - [Standing in the Need of Prayer](#) by Carole Boston Weatherford
 - [My America](#) by Karen Katz
 - [Stolen Words](#) by Melanie Florence
 - [Mama's Nightingale - A Story of Immigration and Separation](#) by Edwidge Danticat
 - [All The Way To America Read](#) by Dan Yaccarino
 - [Eyes That Kiss In The Corner](#) by Joanna Ho
 - [Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story](#) by Kevin Noble Maillard
 - [We Are Water Protectors](#) by Carole Lindstrom
 - [Watercress](#) by Andrea Wang
 - [My Name is Not Refugee](#) by Kate Milner
 - [Dreamers](#) by Yuyi Morales
 - [The Proudest Blue](#) by Ibtihaj Muhammad and S. K. Ali
 - [The Kindest Red](#) by Ibtihaj Muhammad and S. K. Ali
 - [Watch Me: A Story of Immigration and Inspiration](#) by Doyin Richards
 - [When This World Was New](#) by D. H. Figueredo
 - [The Arabic Quilt: An Immigrant Story](#) by Aya Khalil
- Respond to the following questions on the Discussion Board. Then, respond to the comments from at least three classmates.
 - Which of the children's books that you read or listened to connect to your family's experiences? What was familiar? What was new and or different from your personal experiences or family history?
 - What connections and differences did you notice between how the characters in the books experience identity and belonging?

Large Group Facilitated Discussion/ Lecture:

Highlight how the unit will now explore the following questions:

1. How can the teaching of Black history and the lasting legacy of enslavement (and how lasting resistance and advocacy is also part of that legacy) support belonging in the classroom?
2. How can discussions of historical events be safely held and avoid pitting one story of struggle, resistance, and survival to thriving over another?

Make the connections between the African American struggle for American citizenship and the citizenship opportunities for contemporary immigrants.

- Review [Reconstructing Citizenship | National Museum of African American History and Culture \(si.edu\)](#), [Timeline: Immigration | Thomas Jefferson's Monticello](#), and "[The Idea of America](#)" by Nikole Hannah-Jones for "The 1619 Project" from *The New York Times*.

African American Journey to Citizenship

- Consider these results of resistance and struggle of African Americans.
 - "Immigrants have also looked to the 14th Amendment to claim rights to due process and protection from discrimination, while also seeking more equal pathways to citizenship."
 - "The right of individuals to marry the person of their choice, regardless of their race or gender, gained protection under the 14th Amendment through two landmark legal cases."
[Reconstructing Citizenship | National Museum of African American History and Culture \(si.edu\)](#)

Reflection Questions

- What is my relationship to America? What does your family celebrate and remember about their American origin story?
- What do stories teach us about our identities?
- What do I know/ need to know about the identities of the children and families in my early learning program?
- How is my identity similar and different from others in my setting?
- What are connections between the African American struggle for American citizenship and citizenship opportunities for contemporary immigrants?

Homework

- Based on the classroom book inventory, create individual plans to expand collections of books and materials to address any gaps in representation. Identify a list of resources to support this activity.

Pre Work for Session 3

1. Read [Born on the Water](#) by Nikole Hannah-Jones and Renée Watson, illustrated by Nikkolias Smith
2. Research Juneteenth using their own sources and the sources below:
 - a. [18 Books To Read Leading Up To Juneteenth by Keyaira Boone for Essence](#)
 - b. **Juneteenth for Mazie** by Floyd Cooper
 - i. [Storytime with The Met: "Juneteenth For Mazie" by Floyd Cooper \(youtube.com\)](#)
 - ii. [\(652\) Read Out Loud JUNETEENTH FOR MAZIE read by Crystal Allen - YouTube](#)
 - c. [Special Rebroadcast: A Conversation on Juneteenth Featuring Dr Annette Gordon Reed - YouTube](#)
 - d. [The Historical Legacy of Juneteenth | National Museum of African American History and Culture](#)

Session 3:
Using Children’s Literature as “Mirrors, Windows and Sliding Glass Doors”

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How is Born on the Water similar/ different from other American origin stories for children? ● What are the similarities/ differences in American origin stories?
Lesson Materials & Resources
<p>American Origin Stories- Children’s Story Books</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The 1619 Project: Born on the Water by Nikole Hannah-Jones and Renée Watson, illustrated by Nikkolas Smith ● Remember by Joy Harjo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (652) #BNStorytime: Joy Harjo reads Remember - YouTube ○ (652) "Remember" by Joy Harjo / film by Jessica Sanders - YouTube ● Freedom in Congo Square by Carole Boston Weatherford, Illustrated by R. Gregory Christie <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (652) World Read Aloud 2021 - Freedom in Congo Square - YouTube ● Juneteenth for Mazie by Floyd Cooper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (652) Read Out Loud JUNETEENTH FOR MAZIE read by Crystal Allen - YouTube ● Juneteenth by Anece Rochell <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Juneteenth for Kids Children's Book Read Aloud: Juneteenth by Anece Rochell (youtube.com) <p>Facilitator Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We Need Diverse Books – diversebooks.org ● The 1619 Project Books: Resource Guides from Penguin Random House Pulitzer Center
Lesson Activities
<p>Discuss the role that children’s books serve to introduce children and adults to the wide range of American origin stories. (Reference article- Using Picture Books about Refugees: Fostering Diversity and Social Justice in the Elementary School Classroom NAEYC)</p> <p>Ask students to discuss their reading of Born on the Water. What details and themes stood out from the book? How might students identify with the story, and what support might they need to engage with the book? How can this book support identity and belonging? What books did they identify that connected to their family’s American origin stories? What connections did they see between those books and Born on the Water?</p>

Direct students to use the following resources to identify a book that supports their understanding of their American identity story:

- [Booklists - Social Justice Books](#)
- [We Need Diverse Books – diversebooks.org](#)
- [Transnational Lives of Asian Immigrant Children in Multicultural Picture Books | NAEYC](#)
- [15 Best Multicultural Children's Books About Belonging - We Are Teachers](#)
- [Diverse BookFinder | Identify & Explore Multicultural Picture Books](#)
- [Resources for Teachers and Librarians | CBC Diversity](#)
- [Booklists • Worlds of Words \(wowlit.org\)](#)

Large Group Reflection:

Ask students the following questions...

- How are they similar to and different from the characters in the stories they read?
- How did that make them feel?
- What does this experience suggest about diversifying the materials and books present in early learning environments?

Explore connections to African American's history.

[K-8 Resource from The 1619 Project from The New York Times](#)- Use this graphic image to support the students to develop their own visual that displays key dates and milestones for their family/ ethnic group. Ask the students to consider where their families' stories intersect with any of the dates on this graphic. Ask students to also reflect on how their stories intersect with those of the children and families that they serve.

Introduce students to their homework assignment, Project 1: Exploring Common Roots: Culminating Projects - Google Docs. [[.pdf](#)][[.docx](#)] Instructions are also outlined below.

Project 1: Create a visual of their family's American origin story.

1. Study this graphic- [1619 kids.pdf \(pulitzer center.org\)](#).
2. Create a visual representation (physical or virtual) that demonstrates an understanding of your family's American origin story and how it connects to the African American experience and the stories of the learners in your early learning setting. These representations will be shared with classmates who will provide peer reviews.
 - a. Create an opening paragraph detailing how your work on Exploring Common Roots influenced the content of your visual.
 - b. Consider the following questions as a guide to creating the visual. Include summaries and reflections of your family's defining milestones, values, beliefs, successes, challenges, and any other important information. Some students may have access to data that spans multiple generations and locations. Other students may only have access to information related to their immediate family members. Below are some questions to help you get started on deciding what content is most relevant to your visual.

Exploring Common Roots

Exploring Common Roots by Early Childhood Educators from the Exploring Common Roots team, part of the 2023 cohort of *The 1619 Project* Education Network

- i. Who is (are) your earliest known relative?
 - ii. What are some of the significant dates of your family's journey?
 - iii. Who are the members of your family who are the storytellers and keep the family legacy alive for current generations?
 - iv. What are some of the most meaningful family stories that have been passed along?
 - v. What does your family celebrate and remember about their American origin story?
 - vi. What early images exist that are important to the journey?
 - vii. What are important messages that have been passed down from earlier generations of your family?
 - viii. What are cultural events that are most significant to your family?
 - ix. What are some myths or mistaken beliefs that you have encountered about your culture?
- c. Create a closing reflection that focuses on how this experience will impact your work with children and families. How will your understanding of your family story support your efforts to understand the stories of the children and families that you serve. Consider the strategies introduced in Exploring Common Roots. What strategies to promote belonging and connection will you add to your professional toolkit?

Session 4:
Having Tough Conversations with Families

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)
<p>Under the umbrella of protecting children, adults sometimes make decisions that children should be protected from content and experiences that might be troubling. Conversations around identity and belonging too often fall into the class of content that adults choose to shield children from. Unfortunately, the efforts to protect certain children and families can lead to other children and families being othered. Their stories are left outside of that protective umbrella.</p> <p>Today’s lesson will prepare educators to initiate and have tough conversations with families on the importance of inclusive practices.</p>
Lesson Materials & Resources
<p>Facilitator Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Smithsonian Scholars and Researchers Share Works That Shed Light on the History of U.S. Racism” by Beth Py-Lieberman for <i>Smithsonian</i> At the Smithsonian Smithsonian Magazine ● Teaching Hard History: American Slavery Learning for Justice ● Teaching Hard History From the Beginning Learning for Justice ● Principles of Effective Family Engagement NAEYC ● Planning for Equity-Focused Conversations Virtual Lab School
Lesson Activities
<p>Small Group Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask educators if they have yet faced a parent who was unhappy about content that was taught in the classroom or about their child’s engagement with specific materials or activities? ● How prepared had they been for those encounters? ● Are there topics that they are concerned about sharing with children? <p>Lecture and Large Group Discussion- Preparing for Hard Conversations</p> <p>Coach students to learn to use the questions in this activity (adapted from Virtual Lab School) to help plan for a conversation with a family member about the attitudes, expectations, or beliefs (about children, families, discipline, curriculum) that they are holding that are not aligned with their program's values on diversity, equity and inclusion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is the belief that they are holding? How would you describe the belief? ● What have you seen or heard that reflects this belief?

- Why do you suspect they are holding this belief? Where do you think it came from?
- What do you see as the negative impact on children or the unintended consequences of the staff member holding this belief?
- What data could you gather or share to help them see the negative impact?
- Are there any aspects of the program that foster this belief, or which don't interrupt it? Are there messages coming from someone that affirms—or denies—this belief?
- What could you do to support the staff member to try something different? What could you say? What could you facilitate, demonstrate, share, show, offer or present?
- What do you appreciate about the staff member? What are their strengths?
- What are your next steps in order to have this conversation?

Introduce Project 2: Create an Action Plan detailing how they will support young children's sense of belonging in the classroom. [[.pdf](#)][[.docx](#)]

Small Group Discussion

Consider the questions and then collaborate with classmates on what might be a next step to becoming better equipped for tough conversations that might arise with families. What else do you need to know? What skills do you need to further develop?

Homework Assignment:

Define next steps to prepare for future “hard conversations” with families. Revisit the assignment in lesson 1 for evaluating the books in your classroom/ program collections. Consider what other books might be included to provide a welcoming and inclusive experience for your students. The final plan will also identify additional learning needs and resources needed in their early learning environment.

Mini- Lesson 1 (Embed in Early Childhood Literacy or Social Studies Course):

Stories and Identity- Exploring Common Roots

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)

How can children’s books support belonging and connection in early learning environments?

Lesson Materials & Resources

Learning Platform- Canvas, Blackboard, etc.

- Embed lessons in a literacy or social studies course. Content will include articles, recordings of books and videos, and assignments (Discussion Board postings and responses to classmates.)

Book: [The 1619 Project: Born on the Water](#) by Nikole Hannah-Jones and Renée Watson, illustrated by Nikkolas Smith

Article: [Ask Hello. Different Approaches to Family Trees | NAEYC](#)

Video: **Mirrors, Windows and Sliding Glass Doors** with Rudine Sims Bishop

Facilitator Resources:

- *An Educator’s Guide to The 1619 Project- Born on the Water* [9780593307359.pdf \(randomhouse.com\)](#)
- [Sense of Identity and Belonging | ECLKC \(hhs.gov\)](#)

Lesson Activities

Small Group Discussion:

- Consider these questions. Discuss in your small group.
 - What is my relationship to America? What does my family celebrate and remember about their American origin story?
 - What do stories teach us about our identities?
 - What children’s books have I read that connect to my family’s origin experience?

Large Group Facilitated Discussion

- Listen to this book- [Born on the Water](#) and ask students to discuss.
 - What details and themes stood out from the book?
 - How might students identify with the story, and what support might they need to engage with the book?
 - How can this book support the identity and belonging of African American students and of students of other ethnic backgrounds?

Individual Assignment

- Review this post- [Ask Hello. Different Approaches to Family Trees | NAEYC](#)
- Respond to the following questions on Discussion Board:
 - What do I know/ need to know about the identities of the children and families in my early learning program?
 - How is my identity similar and different from others in my setting?
- Watch this video of **Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop-[Mirrors, Windows and Sliding Glass Doors](#)**
 - Respond to the following questions on the Discussion Board.
 - How can children’s literature support the sense of belonging for the children and their families?
 - What can I do in my early learning environment to increase the sense of belonging of all learners?
- Use the following resources to identify a book that supports your understanding of your American identity story. Share the name of your discovery on the Discussion Board. Read and respond to the postings of at least three of your classmates.
 - [Booklists - Social Justice Books](#)
 - [We Need Diverse Books – diversebooks.org](#)
 - [Transnational Lives of Asian Immigrant Children in Multicultural Picture Books | NAEYC](#)
 - [15 Best Multicultural Children's Books About Belonging - We Are Teachers](#)
 - [Diverse BookFinder | Identify & Explore Multicultural Picture Books](#)
 - [Resources for Teachers and Librarians | CBC Diversity](#)
 - [Booklists • Worlds of Words \(wowlit.org\)](#)
 - [ICDL - International Children's Digital Library \(childrenslibrary.org\)](#)

Mini- Lesson 2 (Embedded in CHD Observation Course):

Exploring Intersections of Backgrounds- Exploring Common Roots

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)
Students will read, reflect on, and then discuss Born on the Water . They will then create and share their “Where I Am From” poem to celebrate the common themes that connect them to each other. This experience is a model for a method of making connections to co-teachers, children and family members in their early learning classrooms.
Lesson Materials & Resources
Learning Platform- Canvas, Blackboard, etc. to post assignments. The 1619 Project: Born on the Water by Nikole Hannah-Jones and Renée Watson, illustrated by Nikkolas Smith YouTube: A poem by George Ella Lyon Where I'm From, a poem by George Ella Lyon, writer and teacher “I Am From” Activity Guide: - A Tool to Foster Student Interaction in the Classroom developed by the University of Minnesota’s Global Programs and Strategy Alliance and the Center for Educational Innovation. Compiled by Mary Lynn Montgomery and Mary Jetter.
Lesson Activities
Independent Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Read/listen to Born on the Water.● Submit responses to the following reflection questions.<ul style="list-style-type: none">● What is my relationship to America? What does your family celebrate and remember about our American origin story?● Have I read any children’s books that connect to my family’s experience? Which ones?● Consider using the following resources to identify a book that connects to your American identity story:

Exploring Common Roots

Exploring Common Roots by Early Childhood Educators from the Exploring Common Roots team, part of the 2023 cohort of *The 1619 Project* Education Network

- [Booklists - Social Justice Books](#)
- [We Need Diverse Books – diversebooks.org](#)
- [Transnational Lives of Asian Immigrant Children in Multicultural Picture- Books | NAEYC](#)
- [15 Best Multicultural Children's Books About Belonging - We Are Teachers](#)
- [Diverse BookFinder | Identify & Explore Multicultural Picture Books](#)
- [Resources for Teachers and Librarians | CBC Diversity](#)
- [Booklists • Worlds of Words \(wowlit.org\)](#)

Small Group Discussion

- Discuss [Born on the Water](#).
- Share responses to the reflection questions.
 - What is my relationship to America? What does your family celebrate and remember about our American origin story?
 - Have I read any children's books that connect to my family's experience? Which ones?
 - What are the connections between Born on the Water and the books that are connected to my family's experience?

Out of Class Assignment:

- Create a "Where I'm From" poem.
 - Watch this [video](#).
 - Read and study the structure of the [poem](#).
 - Fill out this [form](#) to prepare to write your own version of this poem.
 - Write your own version of this poem. Record yourself reading it and post it.
- For additional information on the Where I'm From Project- [i am from faculty guide.pdf \(etsu.edu\)](#).

Mini- Lesson 3 (embedded in CHD Literacy Course):

Belonging and Children’s Literature- Exploring Common Roots

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)

What is belonging and why is it relevant to early childhood educators?

- Explore definitions of belonging.

How can books be used to create a sense of belonging in the early childhood environment?

Lesson Materials & Resources

Learning Platform- Canvas, Blackboard, etc. to post assignments.

- Articles to share with the large group.
 1. [Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors \(scenicregional.org\)](https://scenicregional.org/mirrors-windows-and-sliding-glass-doors)
 2. [Journal- Zero to Three, Volume 39 No 3- Identity and Belonging in Early Childhood Settings | ZERO TO THREE](#)
 3. [Making Connections: “Who Looks Like Me?” Representation Matters to Our Children and Our Members | NAEYC](#)

Lesson Activities

Small Group Assignment:

Based on your group number, read the assigned article. Identify a group recorder and a reporter. Create a summary of the big ideas from the article to share with the large group.

1. [Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors \(scenicregional.org\)](https://scenicregional.org/mirrors-windows-and-sliding-glass-doors)
2. [Journal- Zero to Three, Volume 39 No 3- Identity and Belonging in Early Childhood Settings | ZERO TO THREE](#)
3. [Making Connections: “Who Looks Like Me?” Representation Matters to Our Children and Our Members by Michelle Kang | NAEYC](#)

Facilitated Large Group Discussion:

- Each small group will present a summary of their article and reflections.

Out of Class Assignment- Independent Assignment:

- Read/listen to [Born on the Water](#).
 - Submit responses to the following reflection questions.
 - What is my relationship to America? What does your family celebrate and remember about our American origin story?
 - Have you read any children's books that connect to my family's experience? Which ones?
- Respond to the following questions on Discussion Board:
 - What do I know/ need to know about the identities of the children and families in my early learning program?
 - How is my identity similar and different from others in my setting?
 - How can children's literature support the sense of belonging for the children and their families?
 - What can I do in my early learning environment to increase the sense of belonging of all learners?

Optional: Review [student work samples](#) from educators who engaged with this reflection in 2023 at Northern Virginia Community College