FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE

KC Ready 4s Multicultural Education Newsletter

The KC Ready 4s Funds of Knowledge Newsletter is a new publication for the Early Childhood Education sector.
The name is intentional: to honor the funds of knowledge each person contributes to the teaching and learning environment.
We welcome your insights and encourage you to submit questions, future topics for consideration,
and things you do to create inclusive and equitable learning spaces for all.
Please submit to: mpeake@kcready4s.org

Exploring Messaging and Communication

Consider…

Social messages can be covert and overt; including "written" and "unwritten" expectations for children, families, and staff.

Depending upon one's levels of consciousness, experiences, identities, and communication preferences, interpretations and assumptions are vast for all parties involved.

Additionally, incorrect and incomplete information is shared with one click of a button; all of this contributes to misunderstanding, disconnect, and disengagement.

Avoid…

Assuming that information is received as intended, what is clear to the person sharing may not resonate with or be clear to the audience.

Sharing information in one format only, and relying upon a format that is the comfortable "default" for the communicator.

Using words, phrases, acronyms, and references that are not explained, are specific to those within a field, and require certain bodies of knowledge.

Repeating and sharing information presented as factual without fact checking and providing context.

Embrace…

Knowing the audience to the extent possible and utilizing Universal Design and accessibility tools.

Checking for clarity and understanding: rather than asking, "Does anyone have questions?" (passive) consider, "Ask me two questions" (active).

Seeking reviews and feedback from individuals who are familiar with the content and those unfamiliar with the content; allowing for check points in content accuracy and clarity.

Researching and fact checking info from various sources prior to sharing, including information that supports and challenges content.

Exploring Resources for Learning

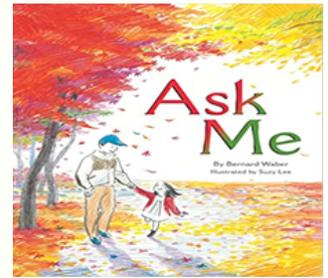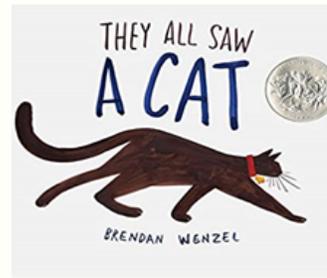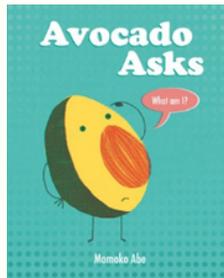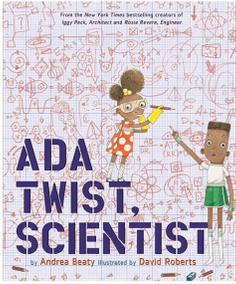## Books to support discussions about communication and critical thinking

Image description L-R: front cover of the books: Ada Twist, Scientist by Andrea Beaty (Author), David Roberts (Illustrator),Just Because by Mac Barnett (Author), Isabelle Arsenault (Illustrator), Avocado Asks by by Momoko Abe (Author), They All Saw A Cat by by Brendan Wenzel (Illustrator), and Ask Me by by Bernard Waber (Author), Suzy Lee (Illustrator).

Self-Reflection Activity

Inaccurate and incomplete information contribute to early mental maps that later can be challenging for learners to deconstruct and reconstruct. These mental maps are influenced by educator knowledge and skills so it is important for educators to first examine some of their own misconceptions, misunderstandings, vernacular meanings, and beliefs. The goal is to identify how these things contribute to our interactions with children and families, and to check the accuracy of the information we share so as to not contribute to the continuity of inaccurate or incomplete information.

Educator Self-Reflection and Inquiry Activity:

1.What overt and covert messages do I convey about teaching, learning, and relationships with children and families?
2.What factors have contributed and/or continue to contribute to these messages?
3.What sources have I researched and what evidence do I have that supports or refutes these messages?
4.How do I prefer to share information? Do I often encounter questions and/or notice confusion in the recipients?
5.Do I know how to research and check for accuracy and context to provide accurate information?

Educator Scenarios:

Educator Scenarios: Although children thrive in the land of the art of the possible with imagination and curiosity, language skills can be concrete and literal. Some of us learn this through experience. Educators sometimes forget to adjust the message for the recipient. Early in my career, I asked a child if they would be a helper and "Run this envelope to the office?" The child eagerly agreed, took the envelope, and quickly exited the room. I immediately heard fast, pounding feet on the hallway floor, went to the hallway and said, "What are you doing? Did the hallway get turned into the gym and no one told me?" With all sincerity, the sweet child stopped, and said, "You asked me to run this envelope to the office, I thought it was an emergency!" Whelp, there it was: my failure in recognizing my word choice, the comprehension of the child, and creating a misunderstanding of my own making.

Misunderstandings also occur between adults. This can be more challenging to reconcile because of assumptions about what adults "should" know. I was collaborating with a librarian at a research university to teach undergraduate students how to conduct research and use the vast collection. I overheard a loud debate between my colleague and a student who quickly returned with a book for a library scavenger hunt. I knew the student fairly well and could note from a distance in voice volume, body posture, and facial expressions, that what I was witnessing was not going to resolve without intervention. I joined them and asked how I might assist. The librarian insisted that the student selected an incorrect book and was frustrated that the student could not grasp this "simple error and go find another book." The student was adamant that the book was an appropriate title for their selected topic. I asked to both, "What is the topic?" The librarian responded, "Meteorites" and the student responded with "Media Rights" and the book was titled, "Media Rights in Chile". I realized the disconnect immediately and asked each to write down the topic and share with one another. When they did this, both recognized the miscommunication and acknowledged their own and one another's frustration. The student was a pre-service teacher so this experience likely provided far more insight than the entire library tour!

Adult Skill Building, Guidance & Resources

To learn more about messaging and communication in teaching:

https://greatlakesequity.org/resource/early-childhood-education

https://greatlakesequity.org/resource/examining-school-connectedness-and-communication-new-american-parents

https://vkc.vumc.org/assets/files/resources/teach-com-skills.pdf

https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/good-ways-to-communicate-with-teachers

To learn more about skill building in the areas of self-evaluation of inquiry and investigating information and to teach it to learners:

The Stanford Education Group of Stanford University offers a FREE online course, videos, and lessons here: https://cor.stanford.edu/

To learn more about building inquiry skills in pre-school aged children, visit these resources:

https://www.pbssocal.org/education/inquiry-projects-start-childs-question-let-curiosity-lead-way

https://www.edutopia.org/article/inquiry-based-learning-resources-downloads

https://childrenslibrarylady.com/inquiry-books/

https://www.good2knownetwork.org/g2k-info-hub/2021/1/21/childrens-books-to-spark-curiosity-and-inspire-inquiry-in-young-scientists

https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/books/from-childrens-interests-to-thinking

https://classroomessentials.scholastic.ca/en/search?cgid=root&navFilterId=coolTheme&navFilterValue=Inquiry-Based%20Learning