

## **FELC DIVERSITY STATEMENT**

“We recognize that all children have the right to equitable learning opportunities that help them achieve their full potential as engaged learners and valued members of society. Thus, all early childhood educators have a professional obligation to advance equity. This can best be done when educators are effectively supported by the early learning centers in which we work and when the community embraces diversity and full inclusion as strengths, promote principles of fairness and justice, and work to eliminate structural inequities that limit equitable learning opportunities” (National Association for the Education of Young Children).

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the mission of Fisher Early Learning Center, as we are committed to developing a community that embraces children and adults of all abilities and identities. Fisher serves as a model early childhood center throughout the Denver Metro area and continues to strive to be at the forefront of anti-bias education for children birth to five.

Through research, Fisher educators understand that children are noticing differences in humans as early as infancy. We utilize a combination of primary and responsive care giving that values the shared and unique qualities of our families and invites them to bring their cultures into the classrooms. The primary care giving model supports infant and toddler teachers in fostering rich conversations and connections with families.

Developmentally appropriate practices, which include play-based learning, modeling, and peer interactions, are utilized to teach DEI. We support children in conversations embracing each person’s uniqueness with the support of rich and diverse literature intended for young learners from birth through Pre-K.

While we are committed to emergent curriculum, we are also dedicated to our shared beliefs of anti-racism and social justice. Through this lens, we look for opportunities in the children’s day to expand their critical thinking about ability, gender, ethnic, cultural, family and class bias. Our goal is to grow these discussions naturally from topics children are already engaged in, but because of our belief in the importance of this work,

we won't always wait for the content to emerge from the children. At these times, we carefully and intentionally introduce new activities or topics of conversation to share with the children in our classroom communities.

Our work in creating a more accepting and loving world does not end within the classroom walls. Fisher staff are committed to partnering with families to broaden our shared understanding of anti-bias work and how they can contribute to our mission. We strive to work collaboratively with every family in supporting their child's development to be a compassionate, open-minded, and critical thinking member of society.

Fisher staff routinely engage in ongoing professional development to create a more inclusive community. We have a committee of educators focused on enhancing our anti-bias practices and increasing the involvement of families within the conversation. Utilizing the resources available at the University of Denver, Morgridge College of Education and the community, we foster conversations to support our growth and understanding. Through these connections, we strive to challenge our own thinking and learn from the differing life experiences of all members of our community.

Fisher Early Learning Center does not tolerate bigotry, hatred or exclusion of any kind including and not limited to racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, ageism, or any other form of oppression. We are committed to providing an emotionally and physically safe space for each of our children, their families, and our staff.

As members of the University of Denver community, we acknowledge that the University of Denver resides on land held in stewardship by the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes. We recognize the descendant communities of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe of Montana, the Northern Arapahoe Tribe of Wyoming, and the Southern Cheyenne and Arapahoe Tribes of Oklahoma who were forcibly removed from this land.