



## How Can Outdoor Play Increase Children's Anti-Bias Skills?

### *Early Childhood Question Corner*

Children's outdoor play offers many opportunities to teach and reinforce anti-bias behavior. To get you started, incorporate some of the below tips excerpted from *Bias-Free Foundations: Early Childhood Activities for Educators* (2005, 28):

- Take advantage of these opportunities by helping children to learn skills such as taking turns, sharing toys, and inviting new children to play. For example, when two children are on a see-saw you could say, "Melissa, Randy, it looks like Shelly wants to play on the see-saw, too. Why don't you ask her to play with you? Then you can decide together how to play on the see-saw in a fair way."
- Encourage children to stand up for someone who's getting teased or chased. You might model saying, "Stop that! You're hurting Juan's feelings!"
- As children play, take advantage of opportunities to point out and praise the ways children work together successfully, and to gently offer them suggestions when they need help getting along.
- Discuss with children situations that occur during their outdoor play.
- Ask children if there are rules or agreements that might be needed to make sure everyone gets along when playing outside, for example, "Everyone gets a turn to play on the slide if they want to." Help them to write down their ideas and post them.

- While engaged in outdoor play, help children avoid stereotypical gender roles. For example, if you see only boys playing t-ball, you might encourage some girls to join the game and/or if you see only girls playing with the jump rope, ask them to invite some boys to have a turn.
- During outdoor play, questions and comments about differences children notice will probably crop up from time to time. For tips on addressing this, see Question Corner installment, "[How should I respond when children notice differences in others?](#)"
- Help children develop the skills to get along with a variety of people by changing the size and members of groups of children; groups should have a diversity of ethnic backgrounds, gender, personality styles, abilities, and interests.