

Cyndi Lessner ([00:00:24](#)):

Good afternoon, everyone. We're going to get started in just a couple of minutes. While we're waiting for everybody to hop on, if you don't mind putting your name and where you're from, what program you're with, in the chat box so we all know who's here. This is great, I'm seeing so many familiar names and a lot of new names popping up in that chat box very quickly. All right, so I'm going to go ahead and get started. I want to thank everybody for joining us today. My name is Cyndi Lessner, I'm the collaboration and program improvement branch chief with the division of early childhood at the Maryland State Department of Education. Again, thank you for joining us. This is a start to a very different school year, so we understand the demands on everybody's time and we are very appreciative for all of you joining us.

Cyndi Lessner ([00:01:48](#)):

This is our 2020 Maryland Family Engagement Summit Series that is very different than our previous summits. While we were in the throws of getting this summit together and putting our theme together and all of our workshops, COVID happened, right? Just like it happened to everybody. And we had to pause and understand what was going on and then change directions quickly. While we are very disappointed that we cannot see everybody face to face this year and we miss that opportunity of connecting with one another and networking with one another, we are also very grateful that we have this platform, that we can still connect to everybody virtually and still offer this important information as we start our school year.

Cyndi Lessner ([00:02:39](#)):

So the other silver lining in being able to do this virtually is around this topic of equity. This is a huge topic. It impacts us in so many different ways, and doing this as a series over the next several months will allow us to look at each of these areas a little bit differently. It'll give us time to pause and reflect after each session. It'll give us time to talk with one another and discuss this information, and also apply it and practice it and see the change with our children and families. As we start to understand more, we start to engage with our children and our families differently and better, and we can see that impact. And then we can come back for more information. And if you're familiar with our family engagement work, that is the message that we've always put out there, is working with families is ongoing. It's a big job, and it's something that we always have to be working towards. So we need to learn more information, learn how to work with our families, apply that, practice it, see the change, and then come back for more.

Cyndi Lessner ([00:03:45](#)):

So we are actually very happy that we can present this family engagement summit this year over the next few months, and we are really looking forward to all of these different topics. So, I'm sorry, if you could advance the next slide?

Cyndi Lessner ([00:04:08](#)):

So just to hit on our theme for a second, the small changes for big results. With this opportunity to go through everything and have this opportunity to practice this, to listen to one another and to learn more and to really apply what we're learning over time, those small changes that you make with your families will have those big results. And as we were putting this together and realizing the opportunity we have, we wanted to make sure we put that message out there, that it's these small changes. We're overwhelmed by the big topic, but it's these small changes that lead to these big results. So again, we

are looking forward to getting this started. And if you could go to the next slide, please. Just to get us going, I want to make sure that I acknowledge several people who were very helpful in starting this.

Cyndi Lessner ([00:04:54](#)):

And first I want to acknowledge the Maryland Family Engagement Coalition. If you are familiar with family engagement, this is something that started back in 2013 with the release of the Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework. This group was charged with that task of developing that framework and has stayed together all these years just to support with that message that family engagement is essential, and it is the foundation to a child's success. So we are very thankful for this group and all of their work. And I also want to acknowledge MAEC, the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium. They are supporting us and hosting the webinar today and supporting us with that technical support. Kate Farby will be behind the scenes with the technical assistance. And I also want to acknowledge Mariela Puentes and Nikevia Thomas, who will be monitoring the chat box for us today.

Cyndi Lessner ([00:05:49](#)):

So just a couple of more logistics, if you could go to the next slide, thank you. To view the closed captions, make sure you click on the CC button in the control bars, and use the Q&A to ask any questions, and use the chat box for any comments. And we may stop periodically to take any questions, and we will also have time at the end of the webinar to take any questions and comments at that time. So with that, go to the next slide, please, I just want to also introduce and thank Dr. Carol Williamson. She is our deputy state superintendent of teaching and learning. She is a huge supporter of our work in early childhood as well as all of our work in family engagement and equity. And I thank her for being here today. And with that, I'll turn it over to you, Dr. Wilkinson. Thank you.

Carol Williamson ([00:06:40](#)):

Thank you, Cyndi. It's always a pleasure to be at these events. And good afternoon everyone, and thank you all so much for being here today. You may recall that we began a conversation around equity at last year's summit, and with the protests, demonstrations, and heightened awareness in our communities around racial inequities, it's critical that we continue our conversation through this summit. The pandemic has highlighted the need for equitable access to quality education, childcare, and technology, and so many other programs and services that are critical to families and children. The violent death of George Floyd exposed long institutionalized racial inequities and the urgency for us to hold ourselves responsible for working towards solutions.

Carol Williamson ([00:07:27](#)):

As educators, we have a responsibility as well as an opportunity to integrate equity into our work as we engage with children and families. The more we struggle around issues of implicit bias and equity, the closer we can come to meeting the needs of our community and improving outcomes for our children and families. The Maryland State Department of Education has made a commitment to having a better understanding of equity and ensuring equity in our work. The Maryland State Department of Education has recently approved the new equity COMAR and its guidance document, which is posted on our website. We have an equity committee that meets monthly to share information, and I'm pleased to say that it has representation from each of our counties and from our divisions within the department. The division of early childhood has adopted the NAEYC's advancing equity and early childhood education position statement and its work. NAEYC states that to advance equity in early education, it requires an understanding of the ways in which historical and current inequities have shaped this profession.

Carol Williamson ([00:08:40](#)):

These biases and inequities are rooted in our nation's social, political, economic, and educational structures. NAEYC also states that because these biases are both individual and institutional, addressing structural inequities requires attention to both interpersonal dynamics, the day-to-day relationships and interactions at the core of early childhood education practice, and systemic influences, the uneven distribution of power and privilege inherent in public and private systems nationwide, including in early childhood education.

Carol Williamson ([00:09:21](#)):

This is what we hope to begin to do with this series, to look at equity from different approaches. Throughout the series we will be discussing implicit bias, structural inequality, racial inequity, and inequities in education and teaching. We will cap off the series with strategies of how to take this information and implement it in our work so that we can see change in classrooms, programs, and schools. As I said earlier, last year we started this conversation around implicit bias and engaging families in culturally responsive ways. We heard from our communities that more information around this was needed. And with our nation's current events, it's apparent we need this information now more than ever.

Carol Williamson ([00:10:10](#)):

So let's go ahead and get started. Our keynote speaker, Dr. Walter Gilliam, is the Elizabeth Mears and House Jameson professor of child psychiatry and psychology at the Yale University Child Study Center and the director of the Edward Ziegler Center in child development and social policy. It is my distinct pleasure to introduce Dr. Walter Gilliam. And we're very honored that he could be with us today kicking off our Family Engagement Summit Series. So Dr. Gilliam, I'm turning it over to you.

Walter Gilliam ([00:10:46](#)):

Thank you very much, Dr. Williamson, and hello, Maryland. It's wonderful to be here with you today. And also thank you to the Maryland Department of Education, the MAEC, Collaborative Action for Family Engagement, and the Maryland Family Engage for inviting me to be able to come here and speak to you today about a topic that's very important to me, and I'm sure important to you too or you wouldn't be here. And that's basically how we can best treat everyone who is part of our community, all of our learners and their families and the staff and the teachers and administrators and everybody else who is part of the educational endeavor, which ultimately is an endeavor to give children and families the best set of opportunities possible for them to be able to succeed. And so thank you all for inviting me and allowing me to be here.

Walter Gilliam ([00:11:39](#)):

Some of the times when I give presentations like this I like to start off with something to set a bit of a mood or to try to get us thinking in a particular way. And today I thought I'd start off with a riddle, if you can progress the slide. So here's a riddle, and I hope I tell it correctly. I'm not a very good joke teller or a riddle teller so I might mess this up, but I'll try. And please also, if you've heard the riddle before, just please bear with me to the end and let's see how the riddle basically impacts everybody. So here's the riddle. There's two men who are driving down the road in a car, and unfortunately there's a terrible accident. And in the accident, one of the men dies.

Walter Gilliam ([00:12:27](#)):

The two men were a father and a son. So there's a father and a son driving in a car, and terrible accident, and the father is the one who dies. And the son is alive but in critical condition. And so they take the son quickly to the nearby hospital, and he shows up in the emergency room and they take him immediately to surgery and contact the hospital's top surgeon, because this is going to be a very complicated surgery. And the father is of course gone, but the son is there in the hospital. And the surgeon is on the way in and the surgeon finally gets there, and the surgeon scrubs in, is getting all ready to do the surgery, and the nurses are already there and they've already scrubbed in. And the nurses are all standing around the son as the son is laying there on the hospital bed and on the operating table.

Walter Gilliam ([00:13:26](#)):

And the surgeon walks in and looks down at the patient and then looks up at the nurses and says, "I can't do this surgery. That's my son." The surgeon looks down at the patient, says, "I can't do this surgery. That's my son." And at first when I tell riddles like this to people, some of the times it might sound very perplexing to folks. They might say, "Well, how could that be the son of the surgeon when the father died in the automobile accident? How could that be? How could this be?" And I've asked folks in presentations before, when it was more in person and we could exchange a little bit easier than over a Zoom, I asked, "What do you think?"

Walter Gilliam ([00:14:17](#)):

And I've had some pretty creative answers to this. I've heard some people say, "Well, maybe the son is adopted and he has a biological father and an adoptive father." Well, that's possible. Or I've heard some people say, "Well, maybe the son has two gay dads." Well, that's possible too. And I've heard somebody say, "Well, clearly the son is Catholic and the man in the car was his priest." Well, I suppose that's possible too, and I just see one of the answers coming in right there. The surgeon also could just be his mother. But for many people that's a hard answer to come to. Because for many people that's not the first image that pops into their head when they think of what a surgeon would be, or especially the top surgeon in the hospital.

Walter Gilliam ([00:15:22](#)):

And when you think about it, this riddle only works because of implicit bias. That is the only reason that this can work. The riddle works because for many people there's an image that pops into our mind as to what a surgeon would be, who a surgeon would be like. If you can progress the slide, if this were the image of what surgeons look like in America, then I wouldn't be able to tell that joke that way. I'd have to tell that joke in a very different way. I'd have to say, "There are two women in a car driving down the road, a mother and a daughter." That's how I would have to tell this story if the predominant image in people's minds regarding what a surgeon looks like was something similar to what you see there in that image. So what's interesting to think about here is the fact that this can really only work because of an image that people have in their mind, or an expectation they have in their mind.

Walter Gilliam ([00:16:27](#)):

And some of the times implicit biases have to do with the things that we assume about a person, and some of the times implicit biases can also have things to do with the things we would never assume about a person, for instance, that we wouldn't necessarily, or some of us wouldn't necessarily assume that that a woman would be the top surgeon at a hospital. And because these images tend to persist in people's minds and then they get reinforced and media and television and movies tend to reinforce the stereotypes that already exist, and to a large degree these art forms, to the degree that we could call

them art forms, reflect already existing stereotypes, then over time they just get reinforced as images of what a certain kind of person would be like or look like or act like or come from.

Walter Gilliam ([00:17:23](#)):

Progress the slide if you would, please. This movie came out several years ago, Wonder Woman. And I remember going to see the movie with my daughter and my wife. And at the time my daughter was 19 years old. And we went to the movie theater and I was sitting here, and next to me was my daughter, and then next to my daughter was my wife. And the three of us were sitting there, we were watching Wonder Woman. And I remember looking over at my daughter, who doesn't particularly get into action movies very much, but she did want to see this. But she doesn't typically want to see action movies. That's not really typically her thing. But when I was looking over at her and she was watching this, she just had this big smile on her face. And she was just really enjoying whatever it was that she was seeing on the screen. And it was basically Wonder Woman saving the day.

Walter Gilliam ([00:18:23](#)):

And I looked over past our daughter and I looked over at my wife, and she was sitting a little bit farther away. And Wonder Woman's on the screen and she's saving the day, and I'm looking over at my wife and my wife's sitting there and she's going ... She's just fighting along with Wonder Woman. And it was just such an interesting thing for me to see. I'd never seen her behave that way with a movie, where she literally just got into it and started just assuming the role of the person that she was seeing on the screen. And as I thought about it more, it became more clear to me that I was seeing something really very special and unusual. And in a way, what I was seeing was I was getting a chance to see my daughter in a rare opportunity and my wife in an especially rare opportunity get a chance to experience what every little white boy in the '70s like me got a steady dose of every single Saturday morning.

Walter Gilliam ([00:19:32](#)):

Every Saturday morning I could get out of the bed and I could go to the television set. I could turn it on Saturday morning and I can turn on the cartoons and I could get a steady diet for the next two, three hours of images of male figures, white male figures that looked a lot like the man that I thought that I would likely grow into, having all the special powers and all the special abilities and always being on the side of right, and always winning and always saving the day and fighting people who didn't look like the man that I thought that I was going to grow up to be. But my daughter didn't get that as much and my wife really not hardly at all, very little of that was available at that time. And it was just so fascinating for me to see what an impact, even on a nearly 50-year-old woman at that time watching Wonder Woman on a screen, would make.

Walter Gilliam ([00:20:36](#)):

And it goes back to the point of representation, I suppose, and it goes back to the point of how stereotypes are built in the first place, and how it is that on the basis of the things that we see or the things that we think we've seen, or the things that we've heard or the things that we think we've heard, we create images in our minds of what a good person would look like or be like or do, what a competent person would look like, what a surgeon might be like, what a superhero would look like, or somebody who fights the bad guys and wins the day for the good guys and good girls. That's the kind of stuff that happens in the background within societies that helps us be able to form these images in ways that we might not even be aware of. And then after we form these images, they can give us blind spots that

make it harder for us to be able to see certain people in certain ways and easier for us to be able to see other people in other ways.

Walter Gilliam ([00:21:46](#)):

And that ultimately is the basis of implicit biases. Biases are based on these associations that happen typically in the background of our mind that we don't really think about, we just kind of learn it and we pick it up just without even attempting to learn it. How many people remember this movie, when that came out? Do you remember when Wonder Woman came out? And when Wonder Woman came out, did you find yourself thinking, "Wow, that's a great thing, that a movie like this could come out for our young girls to be able to see"? Or maybe you also thought, "What a great thing that a movie could come out like Wonder Woman for our young boys to see," so that boys can see a woman in a strong leadership role.

Walter Gilliam ([00:22:38](#)):

And if you did feel that way, well, how did you feel when Black Panther came out? Did you feel the same way when Black Panther came out in terms of how important, as somebody's saying right there, that was for representation and for the image that that makes? And we could certainly debate whether or not it's a good thing for children to be getting quite so many images of violence.

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:23:04]

Walter Gilliam ([00:23:03](#)):

Quite so many images of violence. But if we set that aside for a moment, just to be able to have some images and representations of what good looks like, and that good can look like the images that you're seeing on your screen right now, just as much as it could look like Wonder Woman, just as much as it could look like the predominance of the cartoons that I saw when I was growing up, mostly in the 70s.

Walter Gilliam ([00:23:29](#)):

These are all incredibly important things because it sets in motion within the minds of children, and adults, what good people can look like, and what troublemakers can look like. And what top surgeons can look like. And what good teachers can look like. And what a nice parent would look like, and on, and on, and on, and on.

Walter Gilliam ([00:23:53](#)):

So if you would go on to the next slide, I was interested about that in studying children being expelled from preschool programs, in large part because I was interested in children getting into high-quality preschool programs. And then I became keenly aware of the fact that in many cases, after a child gets into a high-quality preschool program, oftentimes they're pushed back out the back door.

Walter Gilliam ([00:24:18](#)):

And when we were studying this and trying to understand what it means to be literally expelled, kicked out of a preschool program when you're three or four years old, some of the things that were unavoidable were this. One, African American boys were about twice as likely as non-African American children to be expelled from preschool program. Boys were about four times as likely as girls. Larger children were more likely than smaller children to be expelled. We found that there were certain patterns that had to do with who it is that's just more likely to get the decision to be expelled. And

another thing that we noticed too was how similar the rate of expulsion was to the rate of adult incarceration. And how similar the racial disproportionality in preschool expulsion is to the exact same degree of racial disproportionality in adult incarceration. And the same degree of gender disproportionality and preschool expulsion, as opposed to adult incarceration.

Walter Gilliam ([00:25:28](#)):

And I'm not going to say that that proves that there's a preschool-to-prison pipeline, but if there is one, it's amazing how consistent the diameter of that pipe is the whole way through, from preschool-to-adult incarceration. Pretty much the exact same children that are getting expelled from preschool grew up to be the exact same demographic of adults who become incarcerated.

Walter Gilliam ([00:25:54](#)):

And when I started noticing that more, it became inevitable that we're going to have to study that, we're going to have to try to understand that better. And try to understand what kind of role perhaps implicit biases might have in the way in which we view children and children's behaviors.

Walter Gilliam ([00:26:13](#)):

You can go on to the next slide, please. There was a lot of different studies that we started looking at to try to understand where this might come from and how this might relate to the biases that we have for children and families.

Walter Gilliam ([00:26:28](#)):

And so one of these studies was a study by Russell Skiba. He is a researcher from Indiana University, and he did this interesting study. He did, actually, several interesting studies, but this one that I'm going to tell you about is one where he got a hold of disciplinary records from elementary schools and middle schools. And in the disciplinary records, he knew the age of the child and the grade level of the child, and boy or girl, and race, and free or reduced lunch. And knew also a description of what did the child do to get in trouble? And then in addition to that, also there was in the dataset, a description of what happened as a result. Did the child get sent to the principal's office? Did the child get suspended? If suspended, was it in school or out of school? Did the child get expelled?

Walter Gilliam ([00:27:24](#)):

And he had all of this data, and what he did with it was really quite, quite smart. He masked over it to where you couldn't see it, all of the data in the dataset, except for just one variable. And that's, what did the child actually do? A description of what was the child's behavior? What did the child do that got the child in trouble? And he gave these descriptions to other teachers at other schools. And he didn't let them know the age of the child, or the gender of the child, or the race or the ethnicity of the child, or what happened as a result of his child's behavior. The only thing they got a chance to see was what did the child do? And then he asked them to rate on a rating scale, how severe is this misbehavior? How bad would this be if a child were to do something like this in your classroom or your school?

Walter Gilliam ([00:28:21](#)):

And then after he got the ratings, he put the data back into the data set that he had, and then he analyzed it. And what he found was this. Even when the degree of severity is identical, absolutely the same rating of how bad that behavior would be, even then, the black child, as opposed to the white child, was more likely to be sent to the principal's office, more likely to be suspended. If suspended,

more likely to be given an out-of-school suspension, more likely to be expelled. That's what he found that even when the behaviors are the same, for some reason, the black child, especially the black boy, was more likely to get a harsher disciplinary action as a result of that.

Walter Gilliam ([00:29:10](#)):

Now there was another study that was done by a man named Phillip Goff. And Phillip Goff mostly mostly does research having to do with police departments and things like that. But in this one study, he was looking at perceptions of young and adolescent children. And in the study, what he did was he wrote these stories. And there was a story about a child who may or may not have done the bad deed, may or may not have maybe broken [inaudible 00:00:29:40], or may or may not have lost the ball, or may or may not have done some kind of thing that was not good. And when you read it, you can't really tell whether the child did something bad or didn't do something bad.

Walter Gilliam ([00:29:56](#)):

But what he did after that was he showed these vignettes, these little stories, to people who then read the story and they didn't really know whether the child did the bad thing or not. But while they were reading it, they saw a picture of a child, and they were randomized. In some cases, it was a picture of a white boy, or maybe a black girl, or maybe a black boy, or a white girl, or a brown boy or girl. And when they saw the pictures, he would then say, after you've read the story, tell me how likely do you think it was that the child really did it? And they had them rate how likely the child was to have done the bad thing.

Walter Gilliam ([00:30:44](#)):

And what he basically found was that even when the story was identical, just seeing a black or brown face, especially a black boy, made the story sound a little more guilty. Just watching, reading that story, made the child seem little bit more guilty if they were looking at a black or brown face at the time.

Walter Gilliam ([00:31:10](#)):

And then at the end of the study, he showed them all the pictures of the children and the children were all ranging in age between 10 and 17. He asked them to guess how old the children were. And on average people tended to overestimate the age of black children by about four and a half years.

Walter Gilliam ([00:31:32](#)):

And so what was basically happening was that one, seeing a black face just made the story sound a little bit more likely to be guilty. And also seeing a face of a black child tended to make a lot of people assume that that child was older and bigger. And not only maybe more culpable, but maybe more possible to do work damage or harm because of the fact that they were seen as bigger and maybe were dangerous than white children. And that's basically what he had found with that study.

Walter Gilliam ([00:32:12](#)):

There was another study that was done by group and what they did in this study was a bit different than the other ones. They had real children come into a laboratory and they taught the children how to rate pain, how to rate how much something would hurt. And these children were all young. Some of them were about five-ish. Some of them were about seven-ish, and about nine-ish. And what they found was when they taught them how to rate pain is they then gave them some things to think about. They said, pretend that you bit your tongue. How much would that hurt? And they had them rate how much it

would hurt bite their tongue. And then they said, pretend that you stub your toe. How much would that hurt? Pretend that you hit your head on something. How much would that hurt? And they had to rate how much it would hurt. And then they showed them pictures of children, some of them black, some of them white, some of them brown, some of the boys, some of them girls.

Walter Gilliam ([00:33:15](#)):

And after they showed them a picture, they would have a look at that picture. And he would say, he hit his head. How much do you think it hurt? And then they would show them another picture and say, she stubbed her toe. How much do you think it hurt? Or he bit his tongue. How much did you think it hurt? And what they found was that at five years old, no real differences. But by the time the children were about seven years old, whenever they saw a picture of a black or brown child, especially a black boy, they assumed that that child would feel less pain than any other child experiencing the same thing. And less pain than they themselves would have experienced had the same thing happened to them. In other words, they were assuming that by the time they were seven years old, that black children, especially black boys, feel less pain.

Walter Gilliam ([00:34:13](#)):

And by the time the children were nine years old, it was a very strong finding. And when you think about it, this is not really a study about pain at all. It's a study about something else. It's a study about something that we have a word for. It's a study about empathy. It's a study about my ability to imagine your pain. And what they were basically finding in the study that was by the time the children were seven years old, they were becoming judicious with whom they would give their empathy and with whom they would maybe not give quite as much empathy. And when you think about it, I mean, that's just quite a thing to find, isn't it? I mean, that's just such a almost heartbreaking thing to find, this notion that by the time children become seven years old, they've picked up enough stuff in their environment that they have assumptions about who is worthy of empathy, or who is likely to feel pain more than someone else.

Walter Gilliam ([00:35:15](#)):

And there's a lot of things about the teaching world that we know. And there's a lot of things that we need to know. We know a bit about what it's like to be a teacher. I think we need to know more about what happens in teachers' minds or administrators' minds, or lunch staff minds, or bus driver minds, or all the people that are essential people in a early care and education program or a K through 12 school.

Walter Gilliam ([00:35:43](#)):

But there's one thing that I know for a fact, and that's this. I know for a fact that everyone who works in a preschool program or in a K through 12 school, every single one of them are older than the age of seven. And if we can have these kinds of biases in us by the time we're seven years old, imagine how much more we can pick up along the way before we ever get let loose on children.

Walter Gilliam ([00:36:08](#)):

And I think that's something to sort of think about. And it's something to ponder in terms of how does that get into us? And how do we make ourselves more aware of what it is that's in us? Because if we're not aware of what's in us, then it will impact the way in which we view children and families in ways that we may or may not even be aware of.

Walter Gilliam ([00:36:33](#)):

I'll tell you one other area of research before I go further into the presentation. And that's on a topic called shifting standards. And shifting standards is a little bit harder to explain, but I can act it out for you. So in shifting standards, pretend that you are at a co-educational softball game. This is a softball game, and it's boys and girls on the team, and you are in the audience. As you're out there in the audience, and I come up to bat, and I'm a boy. And then the pitch comes in and I get a standard base hit, and I run over here to first base and everybody politely applauds.

Walter Gilliam ([00:37:17](#)):

And so up next comes the girl, and the girl comes up to bat and she's ready. And the pitch comes in and she gets a standard base hit to about the same place and runs safely to the first base. And everybody just jumps out of their seat in this big roaring ovation. And they're so happy that she got a base hit. And it may feel like we're being kind to the girl when that happens. But we're also showing that we might have an underlying stereotype bias that the boy did exactly what the boy was expected to do. But the girl, she did not. She did something different than what maybe a lot of people expected her to do. She violated those expectations, in this case in a good direction.

Walter Gilliam ([00:38:07](#)):

And perhaps many of the people in the audience might not know that this is the first time that this boy has ever been to bat. This is his first game of competitive softball. But the girl, she transferred in from another neighboring school where she was the captain of the state championship softball team. And if you don't know that, what shifting standards teaches us is that if you don't know that, you'll still make assumptions anyway, on the basis of the things that you do know, or the basis of the things that you can see.

Walter Gilliam ([00:38:37](#)):

And so if I don't know his background and her background, it's not going to stop me from making expectations. I'm going to form these expectations on the things that I can see. I can see he's a boy and she's a girl. Or I can see this child is darker skinned, this child is lighter skinned. Or I can see how one child was dressed and how another child was dressed. Or how this wouldn't behave yesterday and how this one other one behaved yesterday. And all on the basis of those kinds of limited observations, we make our decision as to exactly what it is that we expect out of the child.

Walter Gilliam ([00:39:17](#)):

So I'll tell you one other story here, another piece of research, because in a way it kind of relates. And in this study, this was a study of, of white middle school English teachers. And in this study, the researchers wrote an essay that was designed to look like a kind of bad essay, a C minus, D plus kind of, it's not a great essay. And they went to these middle school English teachers, all of them white, and they asked them to participate in a study. And it was a study to see what kind of things do teachers notice when they give a letter grade for an essay? Do they mostly notice what kind of grammar errors that are made? Or do they mostly notice punctuation? Or they mostly notice spelling or handwriting? And so that was what they told the English teachers. And the English teachers had red ink pens, and they had to circle all the errors that they found. And they had to put a letter grade up at the top, what the grade was that they would give this child.

Walter Gilliam ([00:40:27](#)):

Those are the things that the researchers told the teachers. The things that they didn't tell the teachers were this. That in this study, everybody's getting the same essay. And there's only one difference in the essay, and that's, at the top of the page, there's going to be a name. And that name is either going to imply, a white non-Latino child, or a Latino child, or an African American child. And that we're not really interested in what kind of errors you can find, because we know where the errors are. The researchers knew where the errors were. Their research was put the errors there. What they're really interested in is when you see that letter name at the top, or you have to put the letter grade, and everybody's reading the exact same essay except for that name at the top. Does that have an impact? Does that change what kind of grade that you would put up on there?

Walter Gilliam ([00:41:24](#)):

And so think about it here for a moment. Of those three groups, white non-Latino, black non-Latino, or Latina, which group do you think got the highest grades? Just think about it for a second. Maybe right now, just go ahead and type it in if you'd like.

Walter Gilliam ([00:41:50](#)):

A lot of different guesses. And in a way, it's a bit of a trick question. For a lot of folks, it would make sense. And I understand that it makes sense to, to think that it would be the white child. But actually in this study, who got the highest grades were the Latino children and the black children, much higher than the white child. And the reason why was because you have to remember, this is the poorly written essay study. And you have to also remember shifting standards and the expectations that are made. And then in a way, what was happening here is when they saw the name, people formed an expectation.

Walter Gilliam ([00:42:47](#)):

And so when they read the not so great essay, what seemed to be happening was for many people, many teachers, they looked at that and they said, well, this doesn't seem all that bad for a Latina. Well, this doesn't look all that bad for a black kid. Or maybe they looked at the essay and they said, no, I would have thought that Emily would have written a better essay, because that's how biases can work too. Biases can work in this direction where it basically shifts the way in which we form expectations. And then that in turn shifts the way in which we judge the child's behavior.

Walter Gilliam ([00:43:24](#)):

My wife and I both used to be public school teachers before I had a career shift about 25, 30 years ago. I started out my post college years as a public school teacher. And she was teaching in the same school. And after a year or two teaching, we became convinced that the most dangerous place in a school building for children, where more children get harmed than any other place in a school building, is the one room in the school building where no child is allowed to step foot. And it's called the teacher's lounge. More children are harmed in the teacher's lounge on the basis of the expectations that we share from one teacher to the next about the children that they're going to be getting in the classroom. And then once these expectations are heard by us, then it becomes really hard for this child to change those expectations. But it doesn't really take hearing it in the teacher lounge. You can also just make assumptions on the basis of what it is that you assume that a child who looks like that would behave like.

Walter Gilliam ([00:44:33](#)):

So if you could go on to the next slide, please. I'm going to progress mine here. I did a study a while back, trying to understand more about implicit bias and how implicit bias these work in preschool classrooms and childcare programs. And instead of me telling you about it, what I thought I would do is I would give you a video to watch. This as Van Jones at CNN. And he's talking about this research that we did as part of a show that he was doing a lot of implicit bias. But he was also comparing it to other research that has happened in medicine. And so he talked about biases in education and biases in the medicine, and all of this within the context of police bias. And this all happened before George Floyd. I think this came out, this was maybe 2016 or maybe 2017 was when this was made. So if you can play that, please. Thanks.

Van Jones ([00:45:33](#)):

This week more than 8,000 Starbucks stores actually closed up shop so that employees could take racial bias training after two black men were arrested at the Philadelphia store for, well, for actually no good reason at all. And that was one of several incidents of bias that had been caught on tape just recently. At Yale, my alma mater, a white graduate student called the cops to report a black woman napping in a dorm common area. It turns out the black woman was also a student who had fallen asleep after a long...

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:46:04]

Van Jones ([00:46:03](#)):

... out the Black woman was also a student who had fallen asleep after a long night of studying. In Rialto, California, a woman called the police on a group of three Black friends who were checking out of their Airbnb. The woman told the cops she thought the group was suspicious because they didn't wave at her. So then in Oakland, a woman called police on a Black family because they were barbecuing in the park and were using the wrong grill.

Van Jones ([00:46:29](#)):

So look, there is no question this is a troubling trend, but sadly, these types of interactions are not new. We just live in a day and age where everybody's got a camera phone and they can record this type of stuff. So, does that mean though that all these white people calling the cops on minorities are a bunch of intentionally hateful bigots? Well, maybe some of them are, but most likely not all of them. I think something else is at play here, implicit bias. What is implicit bias? I studied it. Take a look.

Van Jones ([00:47:02](#)):

If I say you have implicit bias, please don't take offense because everybody has implicit bias. We're talking subconscious perceptions of the world around you. If I say peanut butter, you don't think ketchup. Nope, you automatically think jelly. And the same with salt and pepper, green eggs and ham.

Sam-I-Am ([00:47:27](#)):

Do you like green eggs and ham?

Van Jones ([00:47:29](#)):

All of these associations are shaped by everything from your upbringing and experiences to images in the media. Watching TV and film characters based on racial and ethnic stereotypes helped shape our instant associations about people. And those unconscious judgements that start off early and build up

over time can have real consequences on everything from your success in getting a job, your interactions with the police, your ability to find housing.

Van Jones ([00:47:55](#)):

Now, let's talk about two professions that everybody agrees are full of well-intentioned people, doctors and teachers. Studies find that doctors are about half as likely to prescribe pain medication to Black patients versus white patients with the same reported level of pain. Studies show unconscious stereotypes may be causing doctors to just underestimate the level of pain felt by their Black patients.

Van Jones ([00:48:21](#)):

Now, Black students are three times more likely to be suspended or expelled than their white peers. Consider this. Yale researchers asked teachers to watch videos of kids in a classroom and identify any problematic behavior. Each video featured a Black girl and boy and a white girl and boy. The catch, there was no bad behavior in any video. And yet, 42% of teachers identified the Black boy as the child who was the most challenging. Researchers found that teachers' eye movements actually followed the Black boys in the video the most closely. Another study finds that having a stereotypically Black sounding name makes people imagine someone bigger and more violent.

Van Jones ([00:49:13](#)):

So, that's the bad news. And look, to be sure, there are some people who are still just flat out old fashioned racist. They don't like people of color, and they want to exclude us or cause us harm. But even if you don't fall into that category, please don't be so quick to exonerate yourself. Because it turns out the racial bias functions kind of like malware, like a computer virus in our brain that causes a subtle glitch, whenever the input is a dark skinned face. So, you may not be racist, but your brain probably is. And the first step is admitting that all of us may have picked up a bad virus or two along the way, and we can do something about that. Look, I'm Van Jones. This is the Van Jones Show. Thank you for watching. Peace and love for one another.

Walter Gilliam ([00:49:56](#)):

Thank you very much. So, that's how Van Jones covered the study and how he juxtapose the study on preschool and preschool teacher biases against the well known bias in the medical literature that physicians are less likely to prescribe pain relief to patients of color than they are to white patients. So, what it was that we had found in our study was this. We were really interested in whether it's possible that teachers find more challenging behaviors out of Black children, especially Black boys, because we as teachers tend to expect it to be there.

Walter Gilliam ([00:50:36](#)):

That's where we look, perhaps. That we maybe look a little bit more for that with our children of color, that we scrutinize it maybe a little bit more with our children of color, that we scrutinize it and look for it a little bit more with our boys and especially our boys of color. And if we do that just a little bit more with these children, we're going to find more of it there. And then that's where our attention is going to be focused, to find the next challenging behavior. And what that will do is, it will bias us over time to expect challenging behavior here because that's where we're looking, that's where we expect it. And it will also bias us to not find it as much there because we're not looking there. We're looking here.

Walter Gilliam ([00:51:19](#)):

And that's ultimately what it was that we had found in this study. It was an eye tracking study. Teachers were watching these children on a video, and there was an eye tracker that was attached to the screen. Shot a little beam off of the eye, and it could tell us down to a pixel and down to 1000th of a second exactly where the teacher was looking. And we told the teachers to watch these videos and find evidence of challenging behaviors. The secret to managing challenging behaviors is to find behavior problems before they become too problematic, and that's what we told the teachers. But what we didn't tell the teachers is, as Van Jones had said, that there's going to be no challenging behaviors in any of the videos. And I know this because they are all for child actors that we get hired to sit at a table and play quietly with Play-Doh while we videoed them.

Walter Gilliam ([00:52:10](#)):

And so, we really weren't looking for how quickly the teachers could find behavior problems. Where we were looking for was, when we let a teacher to believe that a child might misbehave, who is it that the teacher decides to look at? Who does the teacher look at longer? Who does the teacher go back to because they must have missed something. In other words, if these weren't preschool teachers or childcare providers, and instead they were mall cops, who would they be following at the Gap right now? That's what we were basically looking for.

Walter Gilliam ([00:52:41](#)):

And what we ultimately found was that teachers, both Black and white alike, when led to believe that a child might misbehave tended to focus more on children of color, especially Black boys. And when we asked them who they were watching the most, they thought, well, they were watching more boys, especially Black boys. Either way, the Black boy ends up with the short end of the stick. But based on what we observed with the eyes and where the teachers' attentions were going, the underlying bias was primarily oriented around race. But the teachers thought that they had a bias primarily oriented around gender, around the fact that boys or the notion that boys would be more likely to misbehave than girls.

Walter Gilliam ([00:53:28](#)):

I don't know exactly what's at play there, but it's quite possible that what might be at play is that indeed there's an underlying racial bias that draws her attention towards Black children, especially the Black boy, but it's uncomfortable to think that you have a race-oriented bias. So, we turn it into the more socially acceptable bias when it comes to challenging behaviors, which is that boys will be boys. And once that turns into that, then it might become a little bit more palatable for the teacher to be able to manage and understand that she might have a bias. So, that's ultimately what it was that we had found in the study.

Walter Gilliam ([00:54:07](#)):

We, at the end of the study, asked some teachers to participate in another part of a study where we would videotape them. and we would and ask them questions about what it was that they saw in the videos. Now, again, bear in mind, these are children just sitting at a table playing with Play-Doh. And we asked the teachers, tell me, what did you see there and who do you think was more misbehaving?

Walter Gilliam ([00:54:36](#)):

And then after they told us that, we then asked them, well, as you think about it, what if I told you that none of these children were misbehaving because these were all child actors, and that the whole thing was a setup, and that what we're really doing is studying to see how biases might impact your ratings of

who it is that might be more likely to misbehave or who it is that you would look at more. Now why do you think you look more at the child that you did look more at? And when we did that, it was interesting what many of the teachers said?

Walter Gilliam ([00:55:13](#)):

So, I'm going to ask us to progress to the next slide. and then in a second we're going to play this video. Now, bear in mind what these teachers were seeing and what they're talking about here are four children who were child actors, four-years-old, quietly playing with Play-Doh. All of them were child actors sitting at a table that was designed to look like a typical preschool classroom. And there were typical preschool noises, too, but all of those noises were piped in. We literally, and I kid you not on this, we went to Amazon and purchased something called Typical Preschool Noises. And once we got Typical Preschool Noises, we piped it in to make it look and feel like a real classroom. So of course, if you need some more typical preschool noises in your day, I suggest you go to Amazon and you can buy some.

Walter Gilliam ([00:56:05](#)):

So, I going to ask if we can play this video and listen to what these teachers are saying about children who were child actors as they themselves try to understand why it was that they thought that one child over a different child was the one more likely to misbehave.

Speaker 1 ([00:56:26](#)):

There was one particular child that stood out who was playing Play-Doh and each time he was just grabbing instead of using his words or asking for turns. Really, I could foresee that being a problem with the other children eventually.

Speaker 2 ([00:56:46](#)):

In my head while I was watching, I was like, "Oh, maybe the teacher had said, 'He can just stay over here. Because if I say, 'You need to go to a different area,' than he might like throw a chair or flip out.' So they said, 'You can just stay at this table.'"

Speaker 3 ([00:57:03](#)):

Boys are more active. Girls are acclimated. Like girls like to sit in the kitchenette or dramatic play and rock the babies and be helpful. Whereas boys at three, four, and five, like that rough and tough and tumble. And, well, in a classroom, you can't do rough and tumble, so the boys tend to get called out more than the girls.

Speaker 2 ([00:57:26](#)):

I would say that situation with those kids taking away the toys, who's to say later on down the road a couple of months from now he's going to start getting aggressive if the kids don't give him his toys back or something like that, do you know what I mean? Like if you were to take the Play-Doh and the kid doesn't want to give it back. So, what happens if he becomes aggressive because he's not getting his way anymore?

Speaker 2 ([00:57:49](#)):

If you knew a family that had similar struggles as you, then you might be able to relate to them more. But if you don't, then you might just blame it on their race or something different and just say, "Oh."

Speaker 3 ([00:58:02](#)):

One thing about our society, they fear Black men. So, boys get labeled, especially young Black boys. And they learn that at a young age, and they grow up with that, and it follows through all their schooling.

Walter Gilliam ([00:58:23](#)):

It's interesting to listen to these teachers. And again, I'll say, one, these, these teachers all were very brave to do this. They agreed to, to let me feel on them, and they agreed to let me show this video to you. And in a way what was happening here was these teachers were all very bravely thinking about bias, their own biases when they're watching this video, in a way that maybe they hadn't ever really thought of before. And then I told them that it was all something that we set up and it was staged, and then they had to continue thinking about it.

Walter Gilliam ([00:59:02](#)):

And it's interesting how much of what they said was basically rooted in this notion of making an expectation about a child all on the basis of what you think that child might behave like, and then creating stories in your mind. You remember when the one teacher said, "Well, maybe the child's set there because the teacher put him there because maybe he might get frustrated and he might throw something and they'll get in trouble." And she had a very elaborate story in her head about this child, and none of that was true. The reality was is that he's an actor. And if his chair was sitting in any particular place, it was because that's where the camera person put the chair in order to get a better angle on all the other children. None of these stories were true.

Walter Gilliam ([00:59:50](#)):

But in a way we still want our teachers and our aides and our bus drivers and our lunch staff and our administrators, we want everyone who's working with children to be able to create images and stories in their mind, and to imagine, and to wonder what it might be like to be that child, because that's the stuff empathy is made of. Empathy is made of a desire to want to know what it might feel like to be somebody else. That's a natural thing. We want to encourage that. But the reality, too, is that these stories are like bonsai trees. And if a little bit of bias shaped the direction of that bonsai tree early on, then eventually that story can grow into some really funky directions all on the basis of a little tiny bit of bias that in a way of understanding shifting standards is probably only based on the expectations that we formed regarding the child that I'm looking at.

Walter Gilliam ([01:00:53](#)):

So, I'm going to tell you about another study. This was a study that we didn't do. This is a different group of researchers. And this group was at the University of Washington, and they did this study where they brought in preschool aged children, and they have them watch videos. And in the videos, they had an adult woman talking to another adult woman. And the adult woman was talking to an adult woman. And sometimes the person would lean in and smile at this person while they're talking to them. And in another videos, the person would not lean in and smile. The person would just would just say what it was that was happening in the other video, but without any smiling, without any leaning in, without any of those cues that might make you think this is somebody that the person talking to has a warm relationship with.

Walter Gilliam ([01:01:53](#)):

So, the children saw these videos, and they were randomized to either see one video or another. And the teachers sometimes would have on a blue shirt or maybe had on a green shirt. And so, some children saw a woman in a blue shirt being leaned into by somebody else and smiling as they're talking to them, or they might've seen somebody with a blue shirt with a more neutral expression on the other person who's talking to the person, and the same thing with the green shirt. And so after the children watched a few minutes of a video like this, they then showed them the picture of the woman in the green shirt and a woman in the blue shirt, and they said, "Which one is the nice person? Which one is nicer? Which one is friendlier? Which one would you rather be in her class? Which one would be a better teacher?" And invariably, what happened was when children's saw somebody having a warm reaction directed towards them, they assumed that that person must be nice and that that person must be a friendly person, a good person, somebody that they would like to have as as a teacher themselves.

Walter Gilliam ([01:03:04](#)):

And so, if they saw that friendly relationship happening to a woman with a blue shirt, when they saw that woman with the blue shirt again, they said, "Oh, that's the nice friendly person." Well, that person didn't do anything in the video. She just was sitting there while somebody else was talking to her. But if the other person talking to her was talking to her in a friendly way, the preschool aged child assumed that that must be a friendly person or the other person wouldn't be interacting that way with them.

Walter Gilliam ([01:03:33](#)):

And where it gets really fascinating, if not perhaps scary, is here. They then showed the children, preschool age children, a bunch of pictures of other women that these children had never seen before because they weren't in any videos, but they happened to be wearing a blue shirt or a green shirt. And what they found was this. If the child had seen just a few minutes of somebody interacting in a friendly way with a person wearing a blue shirt, the next time they saw strangers that they've never seen before, but happened to be wearing a blue shirt, they assumed that person must be nice, too. And if they saw somebody wearing a green shirt where the neutral expressions were happening towards, they assume that person probably isn't quite so nice, even though they had never seen a picture of this person before.

Walter Gilliam ([01:04:24](#)):

And so, when you think about it, what the experimenters did here was they created, in just a few minutes, a strong shirt bias. They basically taught preschool aged children to have a bias that one type of person is nice and another type of person is not so nice. And they did it just within a few minutes using a video. And if we can do that as researchers with preschool aged children using a video for a few minutes, imagine how much more effective it is on the basis of observations in real life of the way in which we treat other people around us or other students in the classroom, and the child is watching that. That really basically what they were finding in this study is that our biases can be caught, they are contagious like a virus. And that in many cases, the lessons that are most learned by children are the lessons that perhaps we never intended to teach, and they're all just based on incidental observations that a child can have.

Walter Gilliam ([01:05:39](#)):

And so, when a teacher hears something goes bang and calls out a child's name before they even get their heads turned, there's other children watching that behavior and learning what that means. Biases are not just about the harm that they cause to the child that is directed towards. Biases are also about

the harm that are for the bystander children who will then catch that bias, even if we don't intend to teach it. Can you go on to the next slide, please?

Walter Gilliam ([01:06:11](#)):

I'm going to show you a brief video here. This is a video that was created by some colleagues and friends of mine at the Atlanta Speech School. It's in Atlanta, Georgia. And it was a school that was originally created for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. And they have created these videos around how they interact with children and their philosophy on how schools should be thinking about the interactions that they have with young children. And so, I want you to watch this video. This video is mostly about how all the little, teeny, tiny moments in a day add up to something that matters an awful lot. And I want you to also when you're watching this, bear in mind, this is a video that was made by an elementary school, and all of the actors are students or teachers at that elementary school. And this was an elementary school that decided that they felt so strongly about the importance of little, teeny, tiny interactions that they needed to be able to put that message out and to make it available for other people to see. So, if you could please play this video, thank you.

Speaker 4 ([01:07:20](#)):

We're in trouble.

Speaker 5 ([01:07:25](#)):

It's getting worse.

Speaker 6 ([01:07:28](#)):

Our futures are at stake.

Speaker 7 ([01:07:33](#)):

The problem is, teachers tell us to be quiet.

Speaker 6 ([01:07:37](#)):

And when they do want us to use our words, a lot of us don't have any.

Speaker 5 ([01:07:42](#)):

They want us to stop talking and pay attention.

Speaker 4 ([01:07:45](#)):

But I can't if I'm afraid I'll make them mad.

Speaker 6 ([01:07:51](#)):

We know that there are times when you need our attention.

Speaker 7 ([01:07:54](#)):

But as keep on being quiet, we never learn how to use our words.

Speaker 5 ([01:07:59](#)):

And they will fall farther and farther behind.

Speaker 7 ([01:08:04](#)):

Let me show you where it starts. That's my friend on the changing table. There's our teacher, Ms. Ellis. She always took good care of me, but I wish she would've talked with me. She just didn't know it was important. No one told her.

Speaker 6 ([01:08:20](#)):

This is the time that you need to start talking with children. We are beginning to put words together even though you may not understand us yet.

Speaker 5 ([01:08:31](#)):

So, we want to learn from you.

Speaker 6 ([01:08:34](#)):

But the talking shouldn't stop there. That's Ms. Fredericks. She never told me to be quiet, but she did tell me to catch a bubble or to zip it.

Ms. Fredericks ([01:08:44](#)):

I need you to catch a bubble. You need to stop talking. It is way too loud in the room.

Speaker 5 ([01:08:48](#)):

Catch a bubble. Are you kidding me?

Speaker 7 ([01:08:51](#)):

Why couldn't she just ask me to list?

Speaker 5 ([01:08:54](#)):

Now, where do you we'll be when we get to the third grade?

Speaker 6 ([01:08:59](#)):

We're going to be behind, that's what's going to happen. School's going to be hard for...

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Speaker 8 ([01:09:03](#)):

Mind, that's what's going to happen. School's going to be hard for us. We'll have trouble with reading, trouble with writing, trouble with everything.

Speaker 9 ([01:09:09](#)):

Yeah, for a lifetime.

Speaker 8 ([01:09:12](#)):

And that's why we need you. We need you to give our voices power and here's how you can help us.

Speaker 10 ([01:09:18](#)):

When you're changing diapers, tell us about your day. Tell us about what you're doing.

Speaker 11 ([01:09:23](#)):

So, what did you enjoy doing today when we went outside?

Speaker 10 ([01:09:26](#)):

We love to hear your voice and new words.

Speaker 8 ([01:09:29](#)):

And when you want our attention, try singing to us.

Speaker 10 ([01:09:33](#)):

Or try this. Listen up.

Speaker 12 ([01:09:36](#)):

What's up?

Speaker 10 ([01:09:39](#)):

See what I mean?

Speaker 13 ([01:09:40](#)):

Don't be afraid to use big words with us.

Speaker 8 ([01:09:43](#)):

We have big ideas and we need big words to share these ideas with you.

Speaker 9 ([01:09:48](#)):

And support our home language. It only takes a little effort on your part. You can learn a few words to greet us.

Speaker 14 ([01:09:57](#)):

[foreign language 01:10:00] How are you?

Speaker 15 ([01:09:57](#)):

Good.

Speaker 14 ([01:10:02](#)):

Good. You ready to put your backpack up?

Speaker 10 ([01:10:03](#)):

Now that's not so hard, is it?

Speaker 8 ([01:10:06](#)):

First of all, get down on our level.

Speaker 16 ([01:10:09](#)):

Talk with us.

Speaker 13 ([01:10:11](#)):

Use your words.

Speaker 8 ([01:10:13](#)):

Ask us what we think not what color a banana is.

Speaker 10 ([01:10:18](#)):

Give us the words that we need to solve problems on our own.

Speaker 9 ([01:10:23](#)):

We need you to make us a promise.

Speaker 8 ([01:10:26](#)):

We need you to promise us that you will never tell us to be quiet again.

Speaker 17 ([01:10:30](#)):

I need you to catch a bubble. You need to stop talking.

Speaker 13 ([01:10:33](#)):

Why would you want to silence on us?

Speaker 8 ([01:10:37](#)):

Can you promise us? Can you pinky promise us?

Walter Gilliam ([01:10:44](#)):

Did you like that video? So I saw that there were several people who were interested in the video. If you Google up Atlanta speech, school, video, Cox campus, Georgia promise 2020, any of those kinds of words, you should be able to find that video pretty easily. Again, this is a video that was made by a school with their own production team there. And teachers that were working there and with children, and I spoke to many of the teachers who were participating, and they said that the hardest thing about making the videos was doing the part of the video where you have to do the opposite which is good because they didn't really want to interact that way with children, but they knew that they needed to in order to be able to make the video. And I think I see someone there put a link there. So that's great.

Walter Gilliam ([01:11:40](#)):

So if you go to the next slide, please, I'm going to tell you another quick story. And this is a story that may or may not be true. I don't really know if this is a true story or not, but it's a good story. So as the story that may or may not be an urban myth goes, during the early of NASA, it wasn't sure that the

American public was going to want to continue to fund NASA. And so they decided to at NASA, have the camera crews come in and film what happens at NASA and they were going to have a Senator or a Congressman come, and they're going to interview the Congressman. And the camera people were there and they were filming and they were filming what typically happened in the NASA space station back in the sixties, when we were trying to put a person on the moon. They were just shooting what they call B roll. They were shooting video of what typically happens. When they piece the story together later, they could talk through and interview people and then show you images of what happens.

Walter Gilliam ([01:12:43](#)):

And so while they were doing this, they saw a man come by wearing a jumpsuit. And the man was wearing this jumpsuit and he was picking up trash cans and putting them in a bin. He was the custodian. And so that was what he was doing. And he was walking around and he was emptying the trash cans into the bin and putting them down. And as the story goes, the camera person said to the man in the jump students, "Can you tell us a little bit about your job here at NASA? What's your job at NASA?" And the man sat down his trash can and looked into the camera and said, "My job is to put a man on the moon." And I don't know if that's a true story or not, but I love that story. I love the notion that that person's job was part of the bigger mission, no matter what it was that that person was doing there. And he's right.

Walter Gilliam ([01:13:37](#)):

I went to a school that the Atlanta speech school was working with. It was a childcare program in a different agency. And when I went there, I stopped at the door and there was a security guard there. And the security guard was there and he greeted me, and he said, "Well hello there." And I said, "Well, hi." And he said, "How are you doing today? What a lovely day it is here today." And I said, "Well, I'm doing just fine." And I found myself talking in the way that he was talking. He was just so incredibly happy in the way that he was talking to me. And he said, "Well, who are you here to see? And what can I do to help you?" And I said, "Well, I'm here to see some of my friends from the Atlanta speech school." And he said, "Well, let's go inside and see if we can find your friends."

Walter Gilliam ([01:14:24](#)):

And so we went inside and he sure enough found my friends for me. And I said to him, I said, "Well, you just seem to really love your job. You just seem to really just enjoy what it is that you do here." And he said, "Oh, it's more than just enjoying my job. I have the most important job in this entire school." And I said, "Really? Can you tell me about that? Why is your job the most important job in the entire school?" And he said, "My job is the most important job in the entire school because the way I look at these children and what I say to these little children, as they walk into the door, will set the stage for how they will hear anything else all day long." That's what he said. I didn't have the heart to tell him, "Well, actually many of them got here on a school bus. So maybe it's the school bus driver." I didn't say that, but to have a staff that feels like they are part of this mission, every single one of them.

Walter Gilliam ([01:15:31](#)):

I can't tell you how many times I've been asked to give presentations for teachers or administrators. And I can also tell you how rare it is that I give presentations and the custodial staff were there, or the folks who work in the lunchroom are there, or the receptionists are there or all of the other important people that make a school work.

Walter Gilliam ([01:15:59](#)):

If there's any message that I leave with you, it's this. We can't really be ambassadors of equity in schools unless we have equity within our own house. We need to find a way to treat each other within our programs equitably in a way that empowers them as part of the mission. Because if we don't, the children will see through our hypocrisy really fast, and so will their parents. We cannot be ambassadors of equity until we have it within our own house. And so the first place to always start, if we want to be able to embrace our children and families in a spirit of equity is to make sure that we have that going on within those that serve children and families. We can go to the next slide, please.

Walter Gilliam ([01:16:50](#)):

And so I'm going to end you with one more video, again from the Atlanta speech school. This video is different than the first one. The first one was about how every little moment every person matters in the school. Go ahead and play please.

Jordan ([01:17:16](#)):

Hey Mr. [Keel 01:17:14]. Did you see that? Why was somebody do that?

Speaker 18 ([01:17:20](#)):

Please go into the classroom. No talking. Quietly.

Jordan ([01:17:23](#)):

Hey Ms. [Myrna 01:17:24]. How you doing?

Speaker 18 ([01:17:25](#)):

We need you inside.

Jordan ([01:17:26](#)):

How do you think that makes us feel? I forgot my number.

Speaker 19 ([01:17:32](#)):

What's your name?

Jordan ([01:17:34](#)):

Jordan.

Speaker 19 ([01:17:34](#)):

What's your last name?

Jordan ([01:17:36](#)):

Carter.

Speaker 19 ([01:17:42](#)):

Go ahead.

Jordan ([01:17:44](#)):

School is hard enough.

Speaker 20 ([01:17:46](#)):

Come on in, sit down quietly at your desk and begin writing.

Jordan ([01:17:49](#)):

This kind of stuff just makes it harder.

Speaker 20 ([01:17:51](#)):

I said quietly, please. Who's talking. Is it you Sophie? Don't let it be you.

Jordan ([01:17:59](#)):

Don't believe me? Please just watch.

Speaker 20 ([01:18:02](#)):

I'm not up here for me. I'm up here for you. Pay attention. Okay? Now somebody answer me. Somebody needs to answer me really fast.

Jordan ([01:18:11](#)):

Every time we're ignored or yelled at or silenced, the teacher takes away what's possible.

Speaker 21 ([01:18:17](#)):

No horseplay, no running, and especially no talking.

Jordan ([01:18:21](#)):

Moment by moment.

Speaker 22 ([01:18:22](#)):

Ms. McGarrity. Your students behavior yesterday in the lunchroom, it was terrible. Next time, silent lunch.

Speaker 20 ([01:18:33](#)):

Did you hear that? Stay in line and catch a bubble. I'm not playing.

Jordan ([01:18:43](#)):

If this is education, we're in trouble. Bye Miss McGarrity. Frederick Douglass said, "Once you learn to read, you'll be forever free." The way is now two of the three of us will never be able to really read. It doesn't have to be this way.

Speaker 23 ([01:19:08](#)):

Hey Jordan. How you doing?

Jordan ([01:19:10](#)):

Good.

Speaker 23 ([01:19:10](#)):

Good.

Jordan ([01:19:12](#)):

Everyone we meet throughout our day can make a difference.

Speaker 18 ([01:19:15](#)):

I've been waiting for you to arrive.

Jordan ([01:19:17](#)):

All the difference.

Speaker 18 ([01:19:17](#)):

Good. How are you? Hi Jordan. Bye Jason.

Speaker 19 ([01:19:23](#)):

Good morning Jordan.

Jordan ([01:19:25](#)):

How are you?

Speaker 19 ([01:19:25](#)):

I'm doing well. Thanks for asking. How are you?

Jordan ([01:19:28](#)):

Good.

Speaker 19 ([01:19:28](#)):

Go ahead and put your number in.

Jordan ([01:19:30](#)):

Talk with us not at us.

Speaker 19 ([01:19:32](#)):

That's okay. I'll look it up for you. Go ahead, sweetheart.

Jordan ([01:19:35](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 19 ([01:19:35](#)):

All right.

Jordan ([01:19:36](#)):

Teach us what we need to know. That's how we get smarter.

Speaker 20 ([01:19:40](#)):

Well, good morning Sophie, [Denicia 01:19:42] and Jordan.

Jordan ([01:19:42](#)):

And when you talk with this and teach us, give us bigger and bigger words.

Speaker 20 ([01:19:47](#)):

Now what I'd like you to do, children is turn around the converse with your neighbor and discuss where the mother might've gone.

Jordan ([01:19:54](#)):

Words that we can use to read and understand.

Speaker 24 ([01:19:57](#)):

She's prey for eagles, so she hunts at night.

Jordan ([01:20:00](#)):

And that will take us places we can never reach without you.

Speaker 20 ([01:20:03](#)):

Remember we're entering the learning zone. Now, how can we show our respect to the children and teachers who are working?

Speaker 25 ([01:20:08](#)):

We can walk quietly.

Speaker 20 ([01:20:10](#)):

Yes. Okay kids. So what I'd like you to do is continue writing your narrative, documenting your emotions. If you were the baby owl and your mother abandoned you in the nest-

Jordan ([01:20:22](#)):

What can you do? Learn all that you can so that you can challenge us to be our best.

Speaker 20 ([01:20:28](#)):

Would have stayed in and assisted them in whatever they needed. Share yourself with us and show us how to share ourselves with others. Give us courage, give us compassion, help us find our own voices so we can become who we are meant to be. Why would you want to silence us?

Walter Gilliam ([01:20:57](#)):

Thank you very much for listening to me. I see that I've already gone a couple of minutes over in my time. I don't know if you want to have any unplanned time to answer a question or two, but I do thank you so much for inviting me here. And I will promise that next time I'll get my Zoom pacing down better. Thank you.

Mariela Puentes ([01:21:20](#)):

Thank you, Dr. Gilliam. So I was hoping you could at least answer one question that came up a lot on the chat box. A lot of people were wondering how they can be better and how they can examine their implicit biases specifically about breaking the cycle of their biases regarding black boys.

Walter Gilliam ([01:21:39](#)):

Oh, what a great question. So the first one is find a way to be able to have serious uncomfortable conversations. If you have a friend of color to which you can confide, that is terrific. If not, please try to make some friends, a little more diverse group that you can actually talk with and be able to have conversations about things having to do with race. If you want to, you can Google Harvard Implicit Association Test, and there's an actual online test that you can use that measures your implicit biases and implicit associations along a bunch of different types of categories along race, along disability, along ethnicity, ageism, all sorts of different things. And it's not as easy to fake as you might think. It's quite an interesting task. And so I would highly recommend that to go Google up Harvard Implicit Association Test, and then take some of the tests there and see what it actually tells you about who it is that you might view in different ways than you might expect that you actually do.

Walter Gilliam ([01:22:49](#)):

And one last thing that I would do is I'll give a plug to a dear friend of mine. His name is Howard Stevenson. He's a professor at the University of Pennsylvania. And his work is on racial literacy, specifically how do we help schools be environments where conversations about race can happen and that people are more comfortable talking about race? If I had a friend who I was sitting next to, and I was getting ready to go onto a stage to give a presentation, and I had a piece of paper attached to my shoe, or I had something stuck in my teeth, my friend would look at me and say, "Oh, wait a minute, you got something in your teeth." Or they say, "Oh, wait a minute. Your hair is out of place. Let me fix it" because they're, my friend. They would tell me this. They wouldn't want me to go up on that stage and not know this.

Walter Gilliam ([01:23:35](#)):

How do we get racism? How do we get bias, sexism, all the other isms that divide us into that space where someone would tell us "I'm afraid. I think you've got a little bias stuck between your teeth" before we went on stage. And that not only would they feel comfortable telling us that, but then we would also be grateful that they did. That's the place that we need to get. And the only way that we can get there is by having real conversations. I think you're still muted Ms. [Puentes 01:24:23].

Mariela Puentes ([01:24:24](#)):

Oh, thank you so much. I was just saying that we really appreciated having you today and sharing all of your insight and sharing how we can be better and learn how to question our own implicit biases, but also help others be better as well.

Walter Gilliam ([01:24:37](#)):

Terrific. We all struggle with this. The idea is not to become perfect. The idea is to struggle.

Mariela Puentes ([01:24:47](#)):

Thank you. So now we'd like to turn it over to Cindy [Lessner 01:24:50] to wrap us up.

Cyndi Lessner ([01:24:58](#)):

Hi, I just want to thank Dr. Gilliam and everybody for the presentation today, but also for the conversation. It was hard actually trying to keep up with all the comments in the chat box, but I definitely appreciate this conversation around this important topic. And one of the things that we wanted to offer is regarding continuing this conversation. We all obviously have a lot of information that we want to share. We want to continue this discussion to learn from one another. So our co-chair of our Family Engagement Coalition, and also the executive director at Ready at Five wants to offer a webinar or a platform that we can continue this conversation, but we want to make sure it meets the needs of everybody here and that we want to understand what everybody wants to get from that.

Cyndi Lessner ([01:25:50](#)):

So when we send out the recording, we will also be sending out a brief survey around this possibility of continuing the conversation. So we will look at those results and figure out how to arrange this type of webinar, this kind of platform, and then send out the date for that if this is something that everybody would like. Based on the conversation in the chat room throughout the webinar, I definitely think that might be something people are interested. So please make sure you fill out that survey. If you could go to the next slide, please.

Cyndi Lessner ([01:26:25](#)):

So I just want to quickly touch again. Dr. Williamson went over the different webinars that we'll be offering throughout the series. The next one in September will be around mental health and trauma. We will then be looking at structural inequalities in America and in November, we'll have a viewing of No Small Matters, a watch party for No Small Matters, followed by a presentation on teacher well-being, a research study on teacher well-being. And we will wrap up this series with what we're calling Equity on the Ground. How can we take this information and make it actionable? How can we set goals for ourselves to make sure we see change in our communities, in our classrooms, in our programs in schools? They will be the second Thursday of every month from three to 4:30. And we will send out registration information a couple of weeks before each webinar for everyone to register. So please look out for those opportunities coming up. And I think I'll turn it back over to Mariela for a couple more announcements about how to connect with us.

Mariela Puentes ([01:27:30](#)):

Yes. Thank you, Cindy. So please connect with us for more information about the summit. Please connect with us at marylandfamiliesengaged.org or follow the Maryland Family Engagement Community on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram at MD Engage Early and then for resources on COVID-19 and equity, please follow the MAC website for COVID-19 and equity specific resources. And then lastly, we would really appreciate if you could take the survey for today's event. It'll only help us get better as we go along. And we want to hear from you about how we improve as we go along. Thank you so much. Okay. Yeah. Hold on one sec. Yeah. There's a webinar. Presentation ended.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:29:01]

