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### ***The Small Moments That Shape a More Just Future***

February gives us a chance to not just acknowledge Black History Month as a date on the calendar—but to think about the role that it asks us to take in our daily work in the field of early childhood education.

Black history is not outside of the realm of early childhood education—it is within the experiences of children and families today, in the classroom, in child care, through home visiting, and in all of the early learning environments throughout the state of Ohio. It exists in the stories of children, in the questions they ask, in the formation of their identities, and in the messages they hear (and sometimes do not hear) about who counts, who belongs, and who has value.

Here is the simple truth: Early childhood educators are making a difference in practice. Not in theory; not in slogans; but in the small, powerful moments that shape a child's life: how you respond when a child mentions their family; what books you select and whose voices you amplify; who you challenge or comfort, and whom you believe in; the environment you create—who is included, who is absent, and whose image is reflected or missing; what you say when a child notices differences and asks big questions.

**Equity is not something you add to your daily work.  
*It is foundational to your work.***

Children learn from you constantly regarding fairness, identity, belonging, and love. When you make the right choices, you are not only teaching children, you are helping to shape a more just future.

You won't be perfect. But you can be intentional. You can grow. You can be willing to look honestly at your classroom, your system, and yourself. Then you can continue to do what you do better than anyone else: show up for children with courage and compassion.

If you've followed the themes in this newsletter—challenges in the workforce, family engagement, inclusion, challenging behaviors, mental health, improving quality, advocating for policy and funding, and accessing resources—know you are not alone in addressing these challenges. You should also know that you shouldn't be addressing them alone.

That's why I'd like to personally invite you to attend the Ohio Early Childhood Education Conference, April 23-25. The majority of the topics addressed in this newsletter will be presented in-depth during the conference through practical, hands-on sessions, expert insights, and honest discussions with others who understand the challenges you face because they live the same realities.

The Ohio Early Childhood Education Conference is not simply a professional development event. It's an opportunity for you to reconnect with your purpose, recharge your batteries, and build your toolbox—so you can continue to do the important work that matters.

***When we talk about creating a difference, we're talking about you.***

Thank you for being such a steady and trustworthy adult in the lives of countless children. Thank you for listening to and noticing the needs of children—when they need it most. Thank you for advocating and believing in children.

That is how change is created—every month.

With Love and Empowerment,

 *Qianna*

P.S. I would love to hear from you and learn how I can personally support your journey - reach out at [qtidmore@oaeyc.org](mailto:qtidmore@oaeyc.org).

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