

Student Well-being: A Collective Responsibility

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Learning Spaces for Well-being

STEPHANIE FEARON: So, when I think of equitable spaces, it looks different for different children -- for different educators. And I think it's really about listening to the child, listening to the families and communities. I really believe that an equitable space results in a child living to their fullest potential, and that fullest potential isn't defined by me as the educator. That's the child. In order for me to really nurture these spaces where a child could be who the child wants to be -- dreams of being -- I have to create certain opportunities. I really love to bring in arts. I love to bring in music and drama. I love to bring in community because these are all different parts of the child that can help nurture their dreams, help nurture seeing the possibilities, and how they themselves can live to their fullest potential. I also believe in having literature and books that represent the children in our classrooms. A child isn't solely defined upon their ability to read and write, but also a race is an important part of who they are. Gender's an important part of who we all are. How we self-identify, you know, our socioeconomic status, who we are. We need to make sure that we have resources in the classroom that reflect that, and just having a book or a poster is not enough. We have to talk about the systemic issues that are going on within and outside of the school buildings. This is part of the day-to-day life of our children as well as us. So, in the classrooms that I work with, we talk about sexism. We talk about racism. We talk about trauma. We talk about self-care and love. These are conversations that are happening within our walls and outside, and as such we need to support students and talking about these topics critically because all of these things impact our well-being, and impacts how we see the world and how we're treated, and I really feel we do a disservice by pretending that all of these things -- that poverty, racism, sexism, don't exist, because they do, and it impacts all of us.