

General FAQs

Q: What is AmazeWorks?

- AmazeWorks is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, incorporated in 2000, and its mission is to champion equity and belonging for all. For 25 years, AmazeWorks has provided research-based anti-bias curriculum, resources, training, and support to educators across the country to create respectful learning communities of belonging for children. Through AmazeWorks, teachers and students build skills that foster healthy identity development and respect across differences of race, class, culture, gender, ability, beliefs, sexual orientation, and other social identities. They participate in regular, intentional conversations on identity, difference, and bias, which prevent the internalization of stereotypes, reduce bias levels in children, and increase learning and engagement. Teachers also engage in ongoing self-reflection about how their own identities and biases impact relationships and their work with students and families.
- The organization began in 1996 when a second-grade girl named Ellie received a birthday card from a classmate with the words, “I hate you girl lover!”, because she had two moms. Ellie’s moms were frequent volunteers at school and open about their family structure. They knew at some point they’d experience prejudice, but they never expected it would be aimed at their 7-year old daughter by another young child. Thankfully, Ellie’s moms and school saw this as a teachable moment. They created a literature-based curriculum to talk about diverse identities, lived experiences, and family structures and help children learn about themselves and the people around them. This small task force of parents, teachers, school administrators, and child psychologists created AmazeWorks and its flagship Elementary Curriculum.

Q: What is Anti-Bias Education?

- The AmazeWorks Anti-Bias Education model was developed from the work of Louise Derman-Sparks and Julie Olsen Edwards in early childhood education. “Anti-bias education is a critical approach to teaching and learning that recognizes that change is needed. Anti-bias educators actively challenge prejudices and injustices. They engage in critical thinking and problem solving, supporting all children in developing a fuller understanding of themselves and their place in the world. Anti-bias teaching helps children strengthen their identities as capable and empowered human beings. Through anti-bias education, children identify issues and inequities in their lives, ask questions, consider multiple perspectives and thinking about their lives critically, growing to actively resist prejudice and discrimination. Anti-bias education acknowledges that while education is a human right, in today’s classrooms, schools, and society, biases are shaping the experiences and very futures of children.” (Derman-Sparks et al. *Leading Anti-Bias Early Childhood Programs: A Guide for Change*. Teachers College Press, 2015.)
- The AmazeWorks Anti-Bias Education (ABE) model promotes:
 - Empathy and understanding for self and others
 - Healthy and complex identity development

- Respect across and appreciation of differences
- The ability to notice, name, and reject bias
- Responsiveness and action

Q: What is the purpose of the AmazeWorks curriculum?

- With AmazeWorks curriculum, programs, and Anti-Bias Education training, teachers create connected classrooms where all students are seen, heard, and valued. Educators learn to examine how identity, difference, and bias impact healthy relationships and engagement in learning, work, and community. They lead students through important conversations that help break down barriers to equity and belonging, address bias, and replace stereotypes with curiosity, understanding, and respect. Students develop the capacity to thrive in today's world because they learn how to appropriately deal with bias-based teasing, exclusion, and harassment through a preventive approach.
- The AmazeWorks literature-based Elementary Curriculum serves as a supplemental curriculum to augment a school's established curriculum, including language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, etc. The goal of this supplemental curriculum is to help create a sense of belonging for all students through age-appropriate activities around 16 individual identities and lived experiences. A sense of belonging in a classroom supports student academic success.