

## Organizing a Virtual Book Clubs: Tip Sheet NAEYC 2020

### **What is this?**

NAEYC and its affiliates are supporting virtual book clubs as a professional development opportunity for early childhood educators. We will be recruiting facilitators/organizers who will then form study groups of their own.

### **What's the basic schedule?**

- National Kick-off webinars with book authors (May 2020)
- 3-4 meetings spread over five weeks
- We recommend that each meeting should last 1 ½ hour if possible.
- After each session, report on your discussion and key questions to the thread for your book in HELLO
- Final Closing webinar with each book's authors responding to key questions as posted in Hello (sometime July 2020)

### **How does this work?**

We're proposing a hybrid model that includes meetings in real time (either using video meeting software or for those without broadband, a conference call) and then some followup conversations on <https://hello.NAEYC.org>.

- Include non-members in your events if you like (showing people what the NAEYC community is about is a great way to get people involved in NAEYC)
- Virtual sign-up sheet with preferred time options (using a tool such as Doodle or Google Forms)
- Virtual meeting using GoToMeeting/Google Hangouts/Zoom/Uber Conference, etc.
- After each virtual meeting, designate someone to post to one of the HELLO threads (one for each book) we will have in place
- The designee should post a quick summary of the conversation and a couple of questions for folks to think about (either drawn from discussion or from the discussion questions in the book)
- This hybrid model allows for connection in the moment but also allows folks who can't attend sessions to know what's going on. It also helps build a national conversation among individual groups.

### **Practical Matters**

- Max size of 8-12 for the video sessions/conference calls
- Don't publish the meeting link to publically-viewable websites such as HELLO or Facebook. This invites spammers to crash your meeting. Instead, gather RSVPS via a free tool like Google forms or Doodle and send the link via email.
- Make sure to designate someone ahead of time to lead your meeting
  - You may choose to have one person always serve as leader or rotate the role among participants
- Also designate someone to do the summaries and questions to post to HELLO
  - We suggest recording your meeting for the convenience of this person (all of the main video meeting software can do this)

## More Detailed Advice on Running Each Virtual Session

### What does a moderator do?

A moderator shapes and guides the discussion. A moderator makes sure that everyone gets to contribute to the discussion and that everyone's insights and ideas are considered. It is not necessary for a moderator to be an "expert" on the material selected for a group's session, but they will need to have read the assigned chapters ahead of time.

### How does a moderator prepare for a session?

The moderator for that week reads the material to be discussed, thinks about what are the most important points, prepares some questions ahead of time to invite participants to contribute their insights from their reading, ties the information to personal and professional experience and thinks about the application of the information to their daily lives and/or work.

### How does a moderator keep the discussion flowing?

- **Some people have a tendency to do more talking than others do.** There is no harm in this as long as other people are not denied the chance to talk because of them. However make sure the person or people doing the most talking are not going off point.
- **When leading a group pay attention to body language as much as you can via a video window..** Some people will peak out. Others may raise their hands to the camera or use a hand-raise feature on the video meeting software in an attempt to speak.
- **Those who just speak out tend to do more talking. Do not be afraid to ask them to give way to the person raising his/her hand (or giving off any other signal).**
- **Where someone has not spoken at all during the course of the discussion you can ask him or her (politely) directly if they want to share anything.**
- **One useful strategy is to ask each participant to share something from the book that was very meaningful to them.** This is a great way to involve everyone in the discussion and to learn how others have approached the reading.

### How do we get everything done in our planned time?

- Keeping the discussion on topic and keeping track of the time is one of the hardest jobs of a moderator.
- Watch the time and keep the discussion moving; At the same time, try to be sensitive to when the discussion is deepening in useful ways.
- It's important to also make sure everyone has time to do a closing activity involving a reflection on their learning and a commitment to try something from this learning before the next session.