

## Erikson's values

Closely tied to Erikson's mission is a stable and cohesive set of values that are shared by the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, and students. These values are infused throughout Erikson's academic programs, research, and community engagement. They are as follows:

**Freedom of inquiry and freedom of expression:** Freedom of inquiry and freedom of expression are at the heart of the Institute's academic mission. Erikson encourages open and vigorous discussion and strives to maintain an environment in which the free exchange of ideas and opinions can flourish.

**Relationship-based education and practice:** The Erikson approach to education recognizes the centrality of relationships in all learning. Erikson is committed to creating a community of teachers and learners who together can generate and share knowledge and explore assumptions guiding practice. Students acquire skills of reflection in order to develop self-knowledge and explore their own practice. It is in the context of gradually nurtured, trusting relationships with faculty and fellow learners that students can take the risk of reflecting on and sometimes striving to alter their approach and identity as professionals. Erikson assumes that if students are themselves embedded in rewarding and growth-promoting relationships, they will use relationships to inspire children and collaborate with families and colleagues.

**Commitment to social justice:** In all its activities, Erikson seeks to contribute to a significant improvement in the quality, effectiveness, and equity of education and services for all children and families and to help children develop to their fullest potential. Since its inception, Erikson has focused on equity and justice in the care and education of disadvantaged and minority children. Grounded in practical arenas and problems, Erikson is committed to providing a sound and useful base of information to guide the understanding of such complex social issues as changing family and societal needs and families in stress, as well as the nature and efficacy of services for children and families.

**Diversity:** Dedicated to addressing the interests and needs of an increasingly diverse society, Erikson prepares professionals to work with populations that vary in age, race, ethnicity, and physical and mental abilities. Erikson recruits a diverse student body in all of its academic programs and provides them the support they may need to meet Erikson's high academic standards and maintain good academic standing. Erikson is also committed to hiring and retaining faculty and staff who reflect the diversity of students and people in the communities served by the Institute.

**Complexity of approach to subjects, issues, and conceptual frameworks:** In recognition of the complexity of human experience, Erikson Institute was named in honor

of the renowned psychoanalyst Erik Erikson, who was one of the first to study the importance of biological, psychological, and social influences and of history and culture in the life of each child. An appreciation of this complexity informs all activities at Erikson.

**High standards and excellence:** Graduates consistently report Erikson's academic programs to be exacting but more than worth the effort. Students acquire an in-depth knowledge of child development theory and research as well as strong conceptual and analytical capacities. Faculty have expertise in their various sub-fields within psychology and education and maintain an active program of research and/or scholarly writing to stay abreast of the field. Faculty and staff bring these same standards to all of Erikson's activities.