Addressing Racial Inequities in Child Welfare

View from Early Childhood Education
Introducing Our Presenters

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Black households likely to be in poverty & experience food insecurity, and less likely to be homeowners.

Black and Hispanic median net worth is 8-10X less than White families.
Black Infants are likely to be born low birth weight and preterm compared to White and Hispanic babies; and Black mothers likely to die during pregnancy, delivery, or post-partum.

Black children make up 18% of public preschool but make up almost 50% of suspension/expulsion rates. White children make up 46% of the public preschool population but only 26% of suspensions.

Black children were 13.71% of the population, yet 22.75% of children in foster care were Black. American Indian/Alaska Native children are less than 1% of the population but made up 2.4% of children in foster care.
Science of Early Development

- Early experiences are essential for building brain connections that underlie healthy development.

- Early adversity can change the timing of critical periods of brain development.

- Healthy development of the child begins in the preconception period.

- Supportive relationships between the child and the adults in life are essential and buffer against stress.

Lessons from the Science of Early Development

The influence of **access to basic resources** prenatally and in the early years is powerful, limiting chronic stress and helping to close racial and economic disparities.

Both **institutional racism** and **interpersonal experiences of discrimination** can influence the health and well-being of both children and adults in many ways.

Racial bias at each juncture of early care & education

- Access to affordable & high-quality care
- Access to early intervention and special education
- Early education outcomes
- Experiences in early care and education
- Preschool-to-prison pipeline
Racial bias at each juncture of child welfare

Referral & Investigation

Treatment Services

Substantiation

Family Support Services

Removal & Out-of-home Placement

Vast commonalities between ECE & child welfare

- Save children from “culturally deprived” families (i.e., race/SES intersectionality)
- Ensure children are prepared for school and life (i.e., assimilation)
- Female dominated workforce
- Inequitable funding / unfunded mandates
- Racial / implicit bias in entry, experiences, and outcomes
- ECE workforce are mandated reporters
- Children in child welfare system have priority in ECE access
Workforce in early care & education and child welfare is central for transformative change in human and social services.

- Domestic work = women of color
- Gender stereotypes depress pay
- Policy reflects and contributes to devaluation of child and family serving workforce
Vast commonalities between ECE & child welfare

START WITH EQUITY
14 PRIORITIES TO DISMANTLE SYSTEMIC RACISM IN EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Research to Practice Brief: Delivering on the Promise Through Equitable Policies
July 2021
Dismantling racism and addressing systemic inequities

HEALTHY CHILD & FAMILY SUPPORTS

• Health Insurance
• SNAP, Housing
• Preconception & Prenatal Care
• Home Visiting Supports

ECONOMIC STABILITY & UPWARD MOBILITY

• Paid Family Leave
• Income Supports
• Tax Credits
• Minimum Wage
Dismantling racism and addressing systemic inequities

**ECE ACCESS**
- Equitable Funding
- Authentic Integration
- Center FCCH & FFN
- Equity in EI/SPED ID

**ECE EXPERIENCES**
- Workforce Equity
- Equity in Workforce Prep & Dev
- Equity in QRIS/QI
- Equity in Global Quality Assessments
- Eliminate Harsh Discipline
- Equitable Access/Expansion to DLL
- Family Leadership
- Culturally Responsive Curriculum and Pedagogy

**ECE OUTCOMES**
- Equity in Monitoring & Accountability
- Equity in CQI
Dismantling compounding inequities within our systems

Childcare
- Access
- Experience
- Outcomes

Child Welfare
- Entry
- Experience
- Outcomes
Equity in our practice
BE RICHER!

- Re-educate about history
- Integrate rather than just desegregate
- Critique everything
- Humility of privilege
- Erase racism
- Re-vision different ways, approaches, theories, data, teams, measures...

Our country will be enriched by limiting the dehumanization of people and eradication of racism and bias in all aspects of our world, including programming, policy, & research.
Attending to the 3Ps: Protection, Promotion, and Preservation

**PROTECTION**
- from racism, discrimination, and material hardship

**PROMOTION**
- of economic security, health, and access safe and enriching settings

**PRESERVATION**
- of cultural identity, language, and family system
Discussion

Please type your questions into the Q&A box.
Take home message

- Racism and inequities are “rooted” in our system. **Racism is the air we breathe.**
- Advancing equity must address **equitable healthy supports, economic mobility, access and experiences.**
- Equitable outcomes must attend to the **3Ps: protect, promote, and preserve.**
- We must engage in **R.I.C.H.E.R. actions** through our self-inquiry and collective networks to combat racism.
- We are on a **journey** so continue to read, engage, lean in, and be accountable...doing nothing is condoning racism.
Comments??
Questions??

https://equity-coalition.fpg.unc.edu
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Resources

- Start With Equity: 14 Priorities to Dismantle Systemic Racism in Early Care and Education
- Black Parent Voices: Resilience in the Face of the Two Pandemics—COVID-19 and Racism
- Start With Equity: Early Childhood Equity Strategic Plan Template
- Black Parents and Their Babies: Attending to the First 1,000 Days
- Black Child National Agenda: America Must Deliver on its Promise
- Research to Practice Brief: Delivering on the Promise Through Equitable Policies
Thank You for Joining Today’s Digital Dialogue!

Did You Miss It?

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