



## About BUILD

### Surrounding Children with a Community of Support

BUILD is a national initiative that supports state leaders across the early childhood spectrum—adults dedicated to family support and engagement, early learning, health, mental health, nutrition, and more. And, BUILD brings these leaders together to promote opportunities for all children from birth through age five to start school healthy and prepared for success.

Since 2002, BUILD has partnered with state-based organizations, early childhood innovators, business leaders, government offices and others to build early childhood systems by connecting programs and services for young children that may have functioned in isolation, at cross-purposes, or without the sufficient resources to meet critical needs.

” BUILD promotes early childhood systems work that identifies and addresses the root causes of disparities and supports state remedies to address them.

### Why It Matters

With increasing evidence from brain science, we know that the first five years of life set the foundation for all future growth and development, yet our society currently invests the least in this age group.

Investments in early childhood improve health, school readiness, and ultimately, the ability to be part of an educated workforce, which is critical for our future prosperity. Creating effective early childhood systems in states and communities is the only way to ensure the healthy growth and development of each and every child.

Racial disparities, inequities, and more generalized underinvestment begin in these earliest years of life and have profound impacts. We are committed to helping states and communities develop services, supports, and public policies that can ensure the healthy growth and development of each and every child.

### A State-Based Approach

BUILD’s partner states have built critical infrastructure and made significant advances in early learning, family support and engagement, early intervention for children with special needs and in health, mental health and nutritional services.

#### BUILD currently has 10 partner states:

- ✓ Arizona
- ✓ District of Columbia
- ✓ Georgia
- ✓ Georgia
- ✓ Illinois
- ✓ Michigan
- ✓ New Jersey
- ✓ Ohio
- ✓ Pennsylvania
- ✓ South Carolina
- ✓ Washington

## Racial Equity: Our Point of View

Until now, BUILD’s Theory of Change has been silent on racial disparities that exist in the education, health and well-being of young children and their families. It neglected to state as an imperative that early childhood systems building must focus on addressing those disparities that are at the root of unequal childhood outcomes and under-resourced programs and services. BUILD also did not name the source of the disparities—racial privilege—that benefits some children and not all.

BUILD understands and appreciates that a core prerequisite of effectively meeting the needs of young children and their families is recognition of the relationship between the existing disparities (including opportunity and achievement gaps), racial privilege, and institutional and structural racism. Systems-building work at all levels can be neither “colorblind” nor passive. It must intentionally level the playing field in terms of power so that public action, allocation of resources, and oversight are shared responsibilities of a representative leadership. All actions need to be assessed to ensure their impact is equitable for children and families of diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds and for families of diverse socio-economic statuses.

BUILD promotes early childhood systems work that identifies and addresses the root causes of disparities and supports state remedies to address them.

BUILD’s vision for a racially equitable early childhood system would ensure that all children have an opportunity to develop and reach their full potential, without experiencing discrimination or bias within the early childhood system. It would assure that early childhood systems provide equitable opportunities and resources for excellent educational and developmental outcomes for children from groups historically discriminated against due to race. In addition, an equitable early childhood system would take concerted actions to correct or respond to discrimination in other arenas that negatively impact young children and their families. It would intentionally build leadership at all levels of systems that reflect the racial diversity of the

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BUILD partners with public and private sector systems leaders as they work to establish state policy, provide services, and build their advocacy efforts for children from birth to age five. BUILD helps leaders break down the barriers to coordination and collaborative action, which has assisted states to:

- Reform existing statewide systems
- Strengthen local collaboratives
- Test new models
- Maximize federal initiatives
- Strengthen commitment to racial equity, cultural understanding, and linguistic inclusion

BUILD provides tailored and timely technical assistance to leaders in partner states.

BUILD facilitates learning communities that share the latest research and promising practices. Peer sharing and access to expert resources improves efficiency, fosters innovation, and nurtures leadership.

BUILD serves as a knowledge broker by shining a light on promising early childhood practices and highlighting new ideas and successful innovations.

BUILD supports new and emerging leaders and works to ensure diversity and equity in all aspects of early childhood systems building.

BUILD informs and influences state and national conversations and policy decisions by highlighting emerging issues, innovative approaches, best practices, and results from the field.



*BUILD is a virtual organization created in 2002 by the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative and staffed by a small team of early childhood policy experts and facilitative, experienced leaders. The initiative draws upon many consultants, researchers, experts, state policy leaders, and policy advocates in bringing state-of-the-knowledge to states working to develop and advance early childhood systems. We match a state's need to the expertise and support most needed.*

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children and families. It would ensure that systems recognize and provide culturally and linguistically responsive services contoured to the needs of the child in the context of the child's family and community. Race and place would no longer be predictive of children's healthy development and readiness for success in school and life.

BUILD has a long history of partnering with state leaders to support efforts to identify disparities and their root causes, develop racial equity principles, promote cultural competence, and to create more diverse and inclusive leadership of systems-building efforts than has existed to date. But we know our attention has not been sufficient. The BUILD national team members has redoubled our efforts to create a cadre of early childhood leaders for equity. We are working with our state partners to identify and support ways to help them take on systemic racial equity early childhood work that will have a direct, positive impact on outcomes for children in their state. Together we can help all children thrive.

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