The Case for Justice from the Start:
How to Use a Racial Justice Lens to Increase Supports for Children 0-3yrs

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The Sargent Shriver Center National Center on Poverty Law provides national leadership in advancing laws and policies that secure justice to improve the lives and opportunities of people living in poverty.
Objectives & Overview

❖ Understand why racial equity in infant and toddler years matters

❖ Locate data sources and tools to track equity in access to programs

❖ Through group discussion, develop cross-sector advocacy strategies to achieve better outcomes for children
Be comfortable with being uncomfortable
Stay engaged
Commit to Active Listening
Be respectful
Be able to step up but step back
What is racial equity?

A complex process of harmonizing systems to perform equally well for different racial & ethnic groups.
Racial Equity in Early Childhood is ...

Addressing the causes of unequal opportunity and negative life outcomes by

❖ Thinking through systems
❖ Supporting the needs of young children
❖ Strengthening their families

Works to **eliminate disparities** through targeted strategies, programs, and policies.

Source: http://www.buildinitiative.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/ProfessionalDevelopmentPowerpoint.pdf
What does racial equity look like in early childhood?

• Every infant and toddler of color, in poverty, regardless of legal status, has everything they need so that they develop optimally.

• Resources, opportunities, rewards and burdens are fairly distributed across groups so that those with the greatest challenges are adequately supported and not further disadvantaged.

• Policies designed to support young children and their families are fair and just.

• Structural racialization in early childhood—the interlocking structures, policies, practices, and customs that reinforce inequality— is identified, dismantled and rewritten so that race, ethnicity, language, place, gender and national origin do not negatively influence child outcomes.
Today, children who are:
--of color
--living in poverty
--dual-language learners
-- with diverse abilities
--in mixed status families or refugees

are less likely than their white peers to
--be ready for kindergarten
--succeed in school
--be in good health
--have safe places to play and grow

Kids Count, 2017; Child Trends Dual Language Learners 2015; Child Trends Supporting Refugee and Immigrant Children 2016
Why does racial equity in infant and toddler years matter?

- Early childhood sets the foundation for all later learning
- Differences in language and processing speed are seen between children from different groups as young as four months, and gaps by age 5 in kindergarten readiness are even greater
- Children of color are twice as likely to live in poverty compared to their white counterparts
During the early years, more than one million neural connections are formed every second. The connections that form early provide either a strong or weak foundation for the connections that form later.

--Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University

Socioeconomic disparities in these early years are associated with differences in cognitive and social and emotional development, and can be visualized in differences in the growth of brain matter.
Figure 2: Infants and toddlers living in low-income and poor families, 2009–2015

Children under age 3 are the poorest segment of the entire population

Black & Hispanic children are 2 to 3 times more likely to live in poverty


Note:
- Above low income is defined as at or above 200% of the federal poverty threshold (FPT)
- Poor is defined as below 100% of FPT
- Near poor is between 100% and 199% of the FPT.
- The low-income category includes both the poor and the near poor.
### Child Poverty by Race/Ethnicity

#### 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Well-Being</th>
<th>National Average</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>American Indian</th>
<th>Asian and Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic White</th>
<th>Two or More Races</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children in poverty</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1

Of all U.S. Children (ages birth to 17), Percentage Living in a Non-English-LANGUAGE Household*: 2004-2013

- All Languages other than English
- Spanish
- Other Indo-European
- Asian and Pacific Island
- Other

*Households where one or more people speaks a language other than English.
Source: Child Trends analysis of the American Community Survey.
Immigrant Children

Children in U.S. Immigrant Families:
Number and Share of the Total U.S. Child Population, by Age Group and State

1990

- Share of children from immigrant families
  - Children with at least one immigrant parent: 2,870,000
  - Share of children above who were born in the United States: 88.8%

2015

- Share of children from native families
  - Children with at least one immigrant parent: 5,760,000
  - Share of children above who were born in the United States: 94.3%

How Does Poverty Affect Children's Lives?

• **Effects by way of Parents/Caregiver**
  - Toxic stress: Instability in children’s lives that affect early brain development
  - Mental & physical health

• **Direct Effects**
  - Food and Housing insecurity
  - Lack of access to quality healthcare

• **Neighborhood Effects**
  - Exposure to violence

• **Multiple stressors are worse than additive**
  - Structural Racialization
  - Implicit Bias
  - **Example:** Immigrant families are at risk for deportation/detention
The Consequences of Early Poverty Can Last a Lifetime

❖ A child born poor is more likely to be poor as an adult.

❖ Poverty in the first 2 years of life is associated with worse outcomes than later in life.

❖ Higher risks of developmental delays, learning disabilities, poor health, low educational attainment, and lower wages.

❖ There is a critical period for brain growth and connections in the first years of life. Making up for the missed opportunity later is possible, but difficult.
Half of young children (0-5yrs) nationwide are children of color.

By the early 2020’s, for all children under age 18, children of color will outnumber white children.
Getting starting: Systems and Systems Thinking

**System**
Interconnected set of elements that is coherently organized to achieve a purpose

**Systems Thinking**
The ability to understand these interconnections to achieve a desired purpose

Systems thinking is a tool that allows us to better understand how to define issues, design solutions, and craft effective interventions to challenge racial inequity.
We are all situated within systems but **not evenly**. These structures interact in ways that produce differential in outcomes.
“Racialization” is

- “A process rather than a static event. It underscores the fluid and dynamic nature of race.”

- “May or may not be animated by conscious force.”

- “Is a set of processes that may generate disparities or depress life outcomes without any racist actors.”

-- John Powell

Source: Professor John Powell, Director, Haas Institute for a Fair & Inclusive Society
Spheres of Racialization

**STRUCTURAL**
Dynamic, cumulative, among institutions, durable

**INSTITUTIONAL**
Bias in policies & practices in a school, agency, etc.

**INTERPERSONAL**
Bigotry and implicit bias between individuals

**PERSONAL**
Beliefs within individuals, including stereotype threat

Affects us at the unconscious level
We can define opportunity through **access**

Opportunity includes access to

-- Education
-- Healthcare
-- Employment
-- Services
-- Healthy Food
-- Housing

*Source: Professor John Powell, Director, Haas Institute for a Fair & Inclusive Society*
Opportunity is Racialized

School segregation and concentrated poverty

Lower educational outcomes

Racial and economic neighborhood segregation

Increased flight of affluent families

Not neutral

Uneven distribution

Source: Professor John Powell, Director, Haas Institute for a Fair & Inclusive Society
Understanding Systems-Example

- Safe/Affordable Housing
- Transportation
- Workforce
- Early Childhood
- Healthcare
- Employment
- Education
- Environment
Why use systems thinking in Early Childhood?

❖ To put things into context and address problems holistically (e.g. situational, relational, historical)

❖ To reveal power arrangements, rules and norms

❖ To identify interconnections

❖ To surface root causes and contributing factors

❖ To identify leverage points

❖ To generate strategic options for intervention
In order for all children to have a *just* start...

- We need to use a racial justice lens to address early childhood outcomes
What are the demographics and needs of the community? Where are the resources, and who has access?

- Are resources, opportunities, rewards and burdens fairly distributed across groups so that those with the greatest challenges are adequately supported and not further disadvantaged?

Collect data on community needs and on program participation by:
- race and ethnicity
- language spoken
- income level
- other characteristics

Track program access over time for each group
Without this data, racial and other disparities remain invisible and hard to address, and agencies will lack information they need to ensure that services are reaching those who most need them.
# Illinois Early Childhood (0-3yrs) Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programs</th>
<th>% of Eligible Children Served by program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home Visiting</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Intervention</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Assistance Program</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AllKids Health Care</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shriver Example:
Illinois Early Childhood (0-3yrs) Programs

Estimated Percentage of Children 0-3yrs in Illinois Early Intervention by Race & Ethnicity

- Illinois 0-3yrs EI
  - Non-Hispanic Whites: 52%
  - Non-Hispanic Black or African American: 13%
  - Hispanic: 28%

- Illinois 0-3yrs Total Population
  - Non-Hispanic Whites: 45%
  - Non-Hispanic Black or African American: 18%
  - Hispanic: 28%

- Illinois 0-3yrs Poverty (<100 FPL) Population
  - Non-Hispanic Whites: 29%
  - Non-Hispanic Black or African American: 34%
  - Hispanic: 32%

- Illinois 0-3yrs Low-Income (<200 FPL) Population
  - Non-Hispanic Whites: 34%
  - Non-Hispanic Black or African American: 23%
  - Hispanic: 35%

- National 0-3yrs
  - Non-Hispanic Whites: 36%
  - Non-Hispanic Black or African American: 20%
  - Hispanic: 35%

For more advocacy examples:
http://www.povertylaw.org/advocacy/justice-from-the-start

Key National Early Childhood Data Sources

- **BUILD**: http://www.buildinitiative.org/
- **KIDS COUNT Data Center**: http://datacenter.kidscount.org/
- **Child Trends Data Indicator Center**: https://www.childtrends.org/
- **CLASP Center on Law & Social Policy**: http://www.clasphome.org/
- **National Center for Children in Poverty**: http://www.nccp.org/
- **Diversity Data Kids**: diversitydatakids.org
- **Administration for Children & Families**: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/
- **United States Census Bureau**: https://www.census.gov/
- **State Agencies**
How do we advance racial equity?
Department of Early Learning (DEL) has committed to a goal of ensuring that 90% of children in Washington are ready for kindergarten by 2020.

Created a state-wide strategy that aims to advance racial equity and eliminate disparities in child outcomes.

- 44% of children of color under 5 years are ready for kindergarten.
- 38.6% of children under 5 years are ready for kindergarten.
### Goal

- **School Readiness**: Long term goal with yearly focus.
  - The focus for 2016-2017 is to lay a strong foundation for ongoing efforts.

### Strategy

- ✓ Develop and implement a comprehensive racial equity strategy.
- ✓ Develop and continually refine tools and processes necessary to implement the racial equity strategy.
- ✓ Train and support DEL staff to increase their knowledge, awareness and capacity to lead for equity.
Meet Jamal: Let’s Discuss
Activity!
Call to Action!
Local and state agencies adopt an “Equity Lens” when considering resource allocation and investments.

Local and state agencies adopt an equity statement and guiding principles.
Example: Guiding Principles

1. Reckon with our history

2. Acknowledge: race-neutral rules are rarely race-neutral

3. Trickle-down policies hurt people of color disproportionally

4. Move away from universal policies toward targeted universal policies

5. Explicitly inclusive rules work

6. It matters who writes the rules
Implementation Supports

❖ Other states (including OR, WA)- https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/564886 https://del.wa.gov/racial-equity-initiative

❖ Professional development

❖ Organizational self-assessments - Coalition of Communities of Color, Portland OR http://www.coalitioncommunitiescolor.org/researchdata-tools/cccorgassessment -


Questions/Comments

Every Infant deserves a just start!