Racial Equity in Early Childhood Systems
Oregon’s Early Learning Council Call to Action:

“Income, Race, and Zip Code are powerful predictors of whether children and their families experience the conditions that are optimal for young children’s development, including access to high quality child care and preschool. Breaking the link between these inherited factors and life outcomes can only happen if we change the circumstances of families, which means changing the distribution of opportunities in those years.”

-Raise Up Oregon: A Statewide Early Learning System Plan 2019-2023
Racial Equity in Early Childhood Systems
Using Equity Action Framework – The Build Initiative

Four Levels of Change:

➢ **Personal**: individually, work to understand our own values, beliefs and implicit biases, unconscious racism and relative privileges

➢ **Interpersonal**: with others, we share power, actively include those typically excluded, raise issues of equity, act to support positive change and reduce conflict

➢ **Institutional**: at the program, apply racial equity/ economic justice lens to policies, practices, regulation and work culture to remove barriers to equity and advance opportunities

➢ **Structural**: at the program and regional level, recognize that structural arrangements are interconnected and resistant to change, develop new approaches that foster shared leadership and collective power that leads to positive change
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**Goal**: develop policies, practices, and programs that provide opportunities, promote fairness and access, and remediate racial inequities

**Process**: use Agency Advisory Council as sounding board for regional equity challenges partners are facing

- Cross-sector collaboration
- Raise equity issues
- Work together toward increased, education, awareness, advocacy, solutions
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Using Equity Action Framework – The Build Initiative

Key sections of the Framework:
1. Areas of Authority, Influence, and Goals
2. Understanding the Problem and Causes
3. Stakeholders
4. Impacts
5. Sustainability and Viability
Racial Equity in Early Childhood Systems

Equity Problem
- Purpose
- Causes

Stakeholders
- Identify
- Engage

Impacts
- Equitable
- Adverse

Sustainability & Viability
- Structures
- Resource Distribution
- Ongoing Assessment
Brainstorm problems related to racial disparities and inequities in our region

For children prenatal to age six
• e.g., poverty rate for children of color is higher than for white children

For parents of young children
• e.g., shortage of bilingual home visitors

Which problems do you and/or your organization have some direct authority or influence over?
• Committees; Funding; Service Delivery; Lobbying; Parent Groups, etc.
Encourage families to seek out services regardless of economic status

Racial disparities for parents: Please select all that your organization either has direct AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY for, OR that you have INFLUENCE over.

- Finding Affordable Housing
- Access to Transportation
- Medical or behavioral diagnosis not provided in native language
- Gather the necessary documentation to allow access to services
- Encourage families to seek out services regardless of economic status

Additional disparities for parents identified:
- Do not access services for fear of repression and legal status.
- Providing bi-cultural parenting education.
- Help parents obtain legal services if necessary.
Educational preparedness

Access to health care due to language barrier

Lack of documentation to access prenatal care or health care

Culturally-specific child care

Racial disparities for children: Please select all that your organization either has direct AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY for, OR that you have INFLUENCE over.

Additional disparities for children identified:

- No funding for programs or organizations that provide cultural specific early childhood education.
- Early learning and elementary school programs that do not have strong strategies to support dual language learners.
- Perceived need for documentation to take ESL or other courses at RCC.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Territorialism</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beleaguered workforce</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building local workforce</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Need to move from “checked box” to action and implementation</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spanish language library books of lower quality and cost more than</td>
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<tr>
<td>those in English</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of clear, specific communication</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limited culturally-specific parenting curriculum</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inaccurate translation of documents</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of bilingual/bicultural workforce across every sector</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecting families to the best community resources to meet their</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>needs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>People of color in leadership roles</td>
<td>7</td>
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</table>

**Additional program problems identified:**
- Secure funding to provide cultural specific programing to Latino families.
- Specifically, we need people of color on our board.
Ranking Identified Equity Challenges

• Relevance – how important is it?

• Appropriateness – should we do it?

• Impact – what will we get out of it?

• Feasibility – can we do it?
The Equity Priority Winner is.....
Defining the Focus and Resources

- **Who are the primary decision makers needed** to advance the program, policy, budget, or any systemic change to reduce the EQUITY PRIORITY we identified?

- **Who are the beneficiaries?**
  - What population would we like to receive primary benefits?
    - Children? Families? Workforce? Communities?

- **What geographic area are we working to impact?**
  - County, City, Neighborhood?

- **How have beneficiaries informed the definition of the equity priority?**

- **What are the characteristics of the beneficiaries?**
  - Race/ethnicity, Immigrants, High-poverty, rural, poorly resourced in terms of health care, child care, etc.

- **Next Steps**: understanding the problem and causes
Raise Up Oregon & SOELS Strategic Plan

- **Goal 1:** Children arrive at kindergarten prepared and supported for success
  - **Objective 1:** Families are supported and engaged as their child’s first teachers
    - Strategy 1.1 Expand parenting education and family supports
    - Strategy 1.2 Scale culturally responsive home visiting

What are we doing now? What else can/should we do?
Raise Up Oregon & SOELS Strategic Plan

• Goal 1: Children arrive at kindergarten prepared and supported for success
  • Objective 2: Families have access to high-quality (culturally responsive, inclusive, developmentally appropriate), affordable early care and education that meets their needs
    • Strategy 2.1 Expand access to, and build the supply of, high quality affordable infant-toddler early care and education
    • Strategy 2.2 Expand access to, and build the supply of, high quality affordable preschool that meets the needs of families
    • Strategy 2.3 Strengthen child care assistance programs
    • Strategy 2.4 Build the state’s capacity to ensure children are healthy and safe in child care
    • Strategy 2.5 Improve the essential infrastructure for high-quality early care and education

What are we doing now? What else can/should we do?
• Goal 1: Children arrive at kindergarten prepared and supported for success
  • Objective 3: The early care and education workforce is diverse, culturally responsive, high quality and well compensated
    • Strategy 3.1 Improve professional learning opportunities for the full diversity of the early care and education workforce
    • Strategy 3.2 Build pathways to credentials and degrees that recruit and retain a diverse early care and education workforce
    • Strategy 3.3 Compensate and recognize early childhood educators as professionals
    • Strategy 3.4 Improve state policy to ensure early care and education work environments guarantee professional supports

What are we doing now? What else can/should we do?