Data and Racial Equity in Early Childhood Policy Advocacy

Alliance for Early Success Webinar Series
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Overview

What is racial equity and why do our definitions matter?

Using data to understand and combat racial disparities

Communicate equitably about data to inform policy solutions

State Spotlight on Minnesota

The Early Childhood DATA Collaborative
Defining Racial Equity
How are you defining racial equity?

**Outcome:**
Our race no longer predicts how we fare

**Process:**
The work it takes to get there

- American Indian
- Asian and Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Non-Hispanic White

![Graph showing infant mortality and life expectancy by race category.](image)
Definitions matter

What is race?

- Sorting system that people made up
- Based on physical characteristics
- Differs by place and time
- Social, not biological, ancestral, or genetic
- Has real consequences because of discriminatory practices and policies

Why does the social construction of race matter?

- Race does not correspond to innate differences
- Differences in outcomes are not natural
- Racism is the cause of disparities – not race
How can you use data to understand and combat racial inequities?

Identify Underlying Causes

Break data apart by race and ethnicity

Propose informed solutions
Break data apart by race and ethnicity

Types of hardships:
1. unemployment
2. difficulty paying expenses
3. behind on rent or mortgage
4. food insecurity
5. physical health problems
6. symptoms of anxiety or depression
7. lack of health insurance

Identify Underlying Causes

“Are these policies and practices leading to equity or inequity?” – Ibram X. Kendi, Alliance for Early Success Webinar, November 18, 2020

Examples of inequity in early childhood:

- Black children and boys are **suspended** at higher rates in preschool.
- Black early childhood educators **earn less** across center and home-based child care settings.

Example of an underlying cause:

- Bias toward framing Black behavior as deviant

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Propose Informed Solutions

Over half of states, are making changes to improve their use of early childhood data

To support the use of early childhood data to advance equity stakeholders can:

• identify questions to document and track causes of inequity
• capture data on race and ethnicity
• engage communities at every stage
• communicate limitations and potential bias
• include the voices of children, families, and educators

How do you communicate equitably about data?

1. Say what you mean, using person-centered language
2. Do not center one type of person as the norm
3. Put data in context

Say what you mean, using person-centered* language

Avoid euphemism
- E.g., diverse, vulnerable, underserved, marginalized

Be specific
- Be clear on who is included and who is not

Don’t label people with stigmatizing circumstances
- If it is not an identity, do not use it as a label. If it is an identity, how would the population refer to themselves?

Engage communities
- Engage and elevate the voices of community stakeholders

Explain
- Explain why you chose your language

Do not center one type of person as the norm

• Be aware of assigning value and stigma

• Identify all groups, not just the “different,” non-normative groups
  • E.g., Disabled and nondisabled; White children and children of color

• Think carefully about comparisons
3 Put data in context

- Presenting disparities data without context can be harmful
- Investigate structural explanations for differences
  - Discriminatory practices and policies
  - Access to resources
- People skim, so include context early and often

Source: Freepik.com
In 2018, the United States infant mortality rate was 5.7 deaths per 1000 live births.

Figure 3. Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births by race and ethnicity. Adapted from KIDS COUNT Data Center. (n.d.). Infant mortality by race in the United States, 2009-2018 [Dataset].
The idea of “closing gaps” is unfair to all of us.

It centers whiteness as the norm and implies Black, Indigenous, and other people of color should aspire to be like White people.
“Closing gaps” often renders Asian Americans invisible and does not consider within-group differences.

In 2017, the United States infant mortality rate for Asian/Pacific Islander infants was 3.8 deaths per 1000 live births.
“Closing gaps” rarely addresses the diversity with Latinx and Hispanic communities

In 2017, the United States infant mortality rate for Hispanic American infants was 5.1 deaths per 1000 live births.

“Closing gaps” ignores the fact that White infants are not doing well either compared to infants in other countries.

In 2018, the United States infant mortality rate for White infants was 4.6 deaths per 1000 live births.

Figure 6. Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births for White infants. Adapted from “America’s Health Rankings Annual Report” by United Health Foundation, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr69/NVSR-69-7-508.pdf.
The goal is to get the rate as close to zero as possible for all infants.

Communicating data equitably is part of how we get to this goal.

State Perspective
Minnesota’s Story
State Perspective
Welcome to Minnesota’s Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System!

We are proud to offer this new and evolving tool to help our state answer questions about young children and their development and learning. Keep in mind, this is Minnesota's foundation for filling gaps in knowledge on children. We are excited to continue to grow our system and provide more robust information for all interested users around the state.

Thanks for visiting! Please come back often, we are constantly growing and adding new features. If you have any questions please contact eclds.support@state.mn.us.

What’s New

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