



Equity Considerations for Policymakers and Practitioners

Policymakers

- When writing policies, do we analyze **disaggregated data** by race, ethnicity, income, language status, and ability? Do we consider how policies may **impact** Black, Latinx, Native American, and Asian children? Are we creating policies that are aware of disparities and allocate adequate **resources** to effectively address these disparities?
- Are our policies and funding allocations creating new systems centered on equity that address historic and current imbalances of power?
- Were the parents of children we serve **deeply and authentically involved** in the creation of our policies? Were educators, **including early educators** involved in the creation of our policies?

Practitioners

- Do I read books to my class that **feature Black, Latinx, Native American, and Asian stories, authors, illustrators, and characters**?
- When creating programs, do I look at **disaggregated data** by race, ethnicity, income, language status and disability? Do I consider how our programs and policies impact Black, Latinx, Native American, and Asian children? Am I creating learning experiences that are aware of disparities and dedicate **intentional efforts** to effectively address these disparities?
- Do I have **negative feelings or perceptions** about the students and families I serve? How much do I know about their **lived experiences**? Does our program welcome authentic collaboration with families? Do we provide **resources to support their active engagement** in literacy efforts?
- Am I uncomfortable when I think about or discuss issues related to race and racism? Have I sought out resources to transform my feelings of discomfort into a commitment to be **anti-racist**?

Why These Questions Matter

- The Rhode Island public education system has been plagued by racism since its founding and the inequities that developed as a result continue to be one of Rhode Island's greatest challenges. **Policies and practices that are not racially-aware and equity-centered can exacerbate these inequities.**
- The number of children affected by these inequities is significant.
 - ⇒ Young children in Rhode Island **are more likely to be identified as people of color than any other age group.** In 2018, 45% of Rhode Island children under age five identify as People of Color.
 - ⇒ Between 2014 and 2018, 23% of children between the ages of five and 17 living in Rhode Island **spoke a language other than English** at home.
 - ⇒ During the 2018-2019 school year, 15% of Rhode Island public school students were **receiving special education services.**
- Schools, early learning programs, child care providers, and community organizations must adapt their practices to be more **culturally competent** to better serve Rhode Island's increasingly diverse child population.
- Many learning systems expect parents to engage in ways that are more consistent with White, middle-class parenting and behavioral norms while often overlooking the **value, contributions, and assets of families of Color.**

Take Action

- **Right from the Start** is a legislative and budget campaign to advance state policies for young children and their families in Rhode Island. Visit the [Right from the Start Digital Action Center](#) to contact your legislators and urge them to support programs and policies that will help Rhode Island's young children and families get through the COVID-19 crisis and emerge even stronger.
- **Rhode Island KIDS COUNT** engages in information-based advocacy to affect public policies and programs for the improvement of Rhode Island's children. Visit the Rhode Island KIDS COUNT [Advocate Page](#) to stay updated on policy, research, and news related to child well-being.
- **United Way of Rhode Island** offers a variety of ways to make a difference, advocate, and help your community. Visit [United Way of Rhode Island to give, act, volunteer, and get involved.](#)
- **Women United** focuses energy and resources on achieving one very important goal: improving childhood literacy in Rhode Island. Visit [Women United: Improving Childhood Literacy](#) to learn more.

