

Reflecting and action planning

Change starts with reflection. Want to take action, but don't know where to start? Use the tool below to reflect on how you can take steps toward meaningful change. This tool combines all the reflection provocations alongside the guidance

and considerations for action from the playbook chapters. We hope that you find this tool helpful as you take steps to advance equity in the early childhood system.

Setting Young Children on a Path to Success

Overcoming the historical, sociocultural, and political barriers that exclude Black, Indigenous, Latine, and other children of color

Together, we must . . .

- Work within the confines of our current system by reallocating existing funding to address access gaps
- Address the ways in which current policies and practices have created barriers to equitably building the supply of ECE settings in keeping with the growing demand
- Promote community-based collective impact initiatives that place ECE within a web of child and family supports

You might consider . . .

- What specific/local legacies of racism have contributed to access gaps in your state, city, or community? In what ways do you see history repeating itself or manifesting in current system realities?
- In what ways do the choices made about policies and structures—even “well-intentioned” ones—reinforce the status quo and prevent progress toward more equitable access to high-quality ECE?
- What alternative choices or commitments on the part of leaders in your state, city, or community would make a difference? What are the key policy levers for raising the standard of access?
- What perspectives and voices need a more prominent place in the access conversation? What additional insights, stories, influence, and expertise could effect more progress—both nationally and in your state, city, or community?
- Reflect on your own leadership role within the ECE system. What influence do you have (interpersonal, organizational, institutional) in the effort to support equity in access to ECE programming?

Where Early Childhood Education Meets Race and Culture

Forging pathways for culturally responsive education in ECE settings

Together, we must . . .

- Recruit, hire, and retain ECE teachers and leaders who reflect the diversity of children and families served
- Apply strategies to reduce bias and honor diversity as a central part of culturally responsive education practices and policies in ECE settings
- Learn about and expand the use of promising curricula and effective practices that are defined by and for racially, culturally, and linguistically minoritized communities
- Increase resources to foster learning environments that embrace linguistic diversity, expand professional development focused on DLL children, and improve family engagement practices and policies to be supportive of multilingualism
- Forge systemic pathways to ECE teacher preparation, practices, and evaluative measures that affirm children of color and DLL children

You might consider . . .

- In the program/system you are working within, what are the prevailing racial, cultural, and linguistic characteristics of children and families? Of those providing direct services to children and families? Of those who set policies and make decisions that impact children, families, and providers? What barriers and/or opportunities do these realities present?
- How do you and/or your organization define terms such as “cultural competency,” “cultural responsiveness,” “anti-racism,” “anti-bias,” and “anti-oppression”? What efforts have been made/could be made to unify definitions and commitments surrounding these terms?
- What biased and deficit-based perspectives or lack of information surrounding Black, Indigenous, Latine, and other children of color and DLL children have been perpetuated in your professional preparation and/or ongoing communications with colleagues? What power do you have to bring more affirming perspectives to light in your program/professional circles?
- In what ways have you witnessed, enacted, or affirmed biased practices and/or policymaking? What have been the potential impacts on the children and families in your “care,” and what alternative choices might you make in your role going forward?
- What alternative choices or commitments on the part of leaders in your state, city, or community would make a difference? What are the key policy levers for systematizing culturally responsive education as a standard for high-quality ECE?
- What perspectives and voices need a more prominent place in the conversation about culturally responsive education? What additional insights, stories, influence, and expertise could effect more progress—both nationally and in your state/city/community?

Authentic Partnership for Meaningful Change

**Centering families and communities
in program and systems design**

Together, we must . . .

- Embed equity-informed family engagement professional learning, along with guidance and resources to support current and emerging best practices, within program monitoring and improvement systems
- Include equity-informed family engagement considerations as a foundation of current and future systems-building efforts—and leverage these initiatives to expand pathways to more meaningful partnership between families and systems leaders
- Seek opportunities to meaningfully include families in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of initiatives, and value their input enough to make substantive change

You might consider . . .

- Think about the characteristics of the families in the community or communities you serve. What makes it difficult for them to fully engage as partners in early learning? What have you learned by listening to families?
- Where could strategies for listening and learning from families be strengthened?
- What opportunities are there for families to participate in leadership of the ECE program(s) or system in which you or your organization has influence?
- What strategies might make the most sense to engage families as partners in program and/or systems design in your communities? What unique perspectives and expertise could families bring to the table?
- How could storytelling offer a meaningful channel for partnership with families, as well as valuable guidance for ECE leaders in your community?

Honoring the “Workforce Behind the Workforce”

Pursuing recognition and equity for those who teach and care for young children

Together, we must . . .

- Recognize and message the impacts of ECE teacher characteristics and practices that create caring and supportive early learning contexts for children prior to kindergarten
- Ensure that all members of the ECE workforce are compensated and supported so that the ECE field is experienced as a viable, long-term profession
- Create clear pathways to leadership, policy, and advocacy spaces that are accessible to women of color, particularly those women who are currently practitioners in the field, working directly with children and families

You might consider . . .

- How does your organization or policy environment define ECE providers? Who is included and who is not included in workforce development efforts in your professional context?
- What are the prevailing messages about the contribution and value of the ECE workforce?
- What needs of the workforce are best addressed by workforce development efforts in your community, state, or area(s) of focus? What needs are most overlooked?
- How do you see the historical and current context surrounding the false distinction between “educating” and “caring” show up in your community, state, or area(s) of focus? In what ways have you seen this impact ECE policies, especially surrounding the workforce?
- In what ways, and at what scale, can you or your organization promote the recognition and support of the full range of ECE arrangements that families prefer and choose?
- What do you notice about the racial, cultural, and linguistic identities of the leaders around you? What ideas do you have about how to create pathways for more ECE leaders of color to advance to influential roles?

Telling a More Hopeful Story

Deconstructing early childhood research and data practices to tell the truth about the system and the potential of young children

Together, we must . . .

- Advance community-based participatory research involving partnership between research institutions and communities to address community priorities for ECE through collaborative research
- Reduce bias and injustice in the ECE data collection and analysis processes
- Create a relationship with research and data that is grounded in truth and centers the interests of young children and families

You might consider . . .

- What are the salient bodies of research that guide/inform your work as an ECE leader? As you consider these, where do you see the impacts of White supremacy and structural racism on the design, process, messaging, and/or application of this research?
- How might a more truthful account of the ECE system and its impact on Black, Indigenous, Latine, and other communities of color change the conversation or lead to alternative actions for you and/or your organization?
- What are the questions relative to ECE in the community you serve that have not been fully explored by research? Why do you think this may be?
- Reflect on your own leadership role within the ECE system. What influence do you have (interpersonal, organizational, institutional) in the relationship between ECE research and communities of color?

