Data as a Tool for Equity

Common Good Iowa Policy Conference
November 29, 2022
“Fight for the things that you care about. But do it in a way that will lead others to join you.” – Ruth Bader Ginsburg, 1933-2020
Agenda and goals for session

- Icebreaker question for reflection
- Definitions of equity
- 4 Levels of Change
- Why use data in advocacy for equity
- Examples of strategies
- Small group time
- Large group debrief
- Wrap up
Making Connections...who is in the room?

• **Malai Amfahr**, Senior Program Officer, Constituency Outreach and Engagement at the Campaign for Grade Level Reading

• **Michelle Stover Wright**, Research and Evaluation Director at the BUILD Initiative

• **All of you**. (Raise hand if you...)  
  • Lead or engage in direct service  
  • State or County Government  
  • Advocate  
  • Researcher  
  • Others?
Icebreaker Question

Please turn to your neighbors, introduce yourself, and reflect on one of these questions:

Why do we need data for equitable and effective childhood and family systems?

Share an example of when you used disaggregated data in advocacy.
What is Equity?
Equity provides all the resources children, families and communities need to succeed; it intentionally targets and dismantles systems that support inequality.
"Equity, after all, does not mean simply equal funding. Equal funding for unequal needs is not equality."

Jonathan Kozol, *Savage Inequalities: Children in America’s Schools*
Four Levels of Change

**PERSONAL**

The individual consistently works alone and with others, to understand their own values, beliefs, implicit biases, unconscious racism, actions and relative privileges that contribute to racial inequities and equity; the individual acts to advance racial equity.

**INTERPERSONAL**

Individuals and groups are effective in relating to others not like themselves, actively include those typically excluded, share power, surface issues of racial inequality in interpersonal relationships, act to support positive change, and work to reduce interpersonal conflict.

**INSTITUTIONAL**

Apply a racial equity/economic justice lens to their policies, practices, regulations and work culture to dismantle policies that perpetuate inequality and design/develop policies and practices that advance opportunities, fairness, access to resources, and other factors for those most affected by racial inequality.

**STRUCTURAL**

Individuals and groups recognize that structural arrangements are interconnected and resist change; they develop approaches to advance equity that offer new or reconstituted structural arrangements; they build shared leadership and collective power that leads to change.

Model adapted from Kirwan Institute. Illustration design by Chrisee Bonner and Montreall Morant, c. 2017.
Guiding Process for Leading for Equity

- **Focus on leaders**: and leadership and focus on targeted strategies to achieve universal goals. Use your roles, responsibilities and influence.
- **Data**: Use data in planning, decision making and monitoring progress and effectiveness in advancing equity and child and family well-being.
- **Understand Root Causes**: Focus on root causes of inequity in early childhood systems and build systems that are culturally and linguistically responsive and anti-racist.
- **Take Action**: Target 4 levels of change: personal, interpersonal, institutional and structural.
- **Working with People, Programs and Structures**: Know, work with, and listen to those individuals that programs and services are designed to serve.

Source: Equity Leaders Action Network, BUILD Initiative
The Complex Landscape that Affects Children
What are we using data to answer?

• Who is benefiting and not benefiting from our policies, practices and systems

• Who is furthest from opportunity? What are the disparities in outcomes?

• The identification of systemic root causes or explanations about disparate outcomes related to systems, policies, practice. Institutional? Structural?

• What changes will be made regarding policy, programs or practice to dismantle those root causes?

• Data is used to continually monitor the impact of those strategies across time (intended and unintended impacts).
Data for equitable and effective systems

- Data can be **quantitative and qualitative** (statistics and measures of well-being, family focus group data, interviews)
- Data should be used to recognize **community strengths and assets**.
- Data is used to **make the experiences of families and children and the systemic inequities and disparities visible**, used in an intentional process.

- Data can be used to support strategies for targeted universalism or setting universal goals pursued by targeted processes to achieve those goals. Targeted universalism is goal oriented, and the processes are directed in service of the explicit, universal goal.

  - Within a targeted universalism framework, universal goals are established for all groups concerned. The strategies developed to achieve those goals are based upon how different groups are situated within structures, culture, and across geographies to obtain the universal goal.

Strategies for Using Data in Support of Equity
Approach to Using Data

**Step 1**
Starting with quantitative data what do we know about who is benefitting and not benefitting; who has access? furthest from opportunity?

**Step 2**
With a cross-sector team identify specific geographic areas with less-than-optimal outcomes or access to opportunity of a full range of services, supports, and initiatives

**Step 3**
Visit or engage identified communities/families/providers. Site visits/focus groups/interviews. Collect qualitative data. Community strengths and assets.

**Step 4**
With networks, use quantitative and qualitative data to identify a disparity, determine root causes and possible shifts in policy, practice and resources to dismantle the inequity.

**Step 5**
Mobilize and support cross-sector leaders to advance policies, practices, programs, and initiatives that intentionally address the identified disparities.

**Step 6**
Use data and ongoing feedback loops to monitor impact
Using Data: Step by Step

Step 1

Start with quantitative data: What do we know about who is benefitting and not benefitting;? Who has access to services? Who is furthest from opportunity?

Step 2

Identify specific geographic areas with less-than-optimal outcomes or access to opportunity of a full range of services, supports, and initiatives with a cross-sector team

Step 3

Visit and/or engage the identified communities/families/providers and gather the following through site visits, focus groups, interviews:

** Qualitative data
** Community strengths and assets
Using Data: Step by Step

Step 4

With networks use quantitative and qualitative data to identify a disparity, determine root causes and possible shifts in policy, practice and resources needed to dismantle the inequity.

Step 5

Mobilize and support cross-sector leaders to advance policies, practices, programs, and initiatives that intentionally address the identified disparities.

Step 6

Use data and ongoing feedback loops to monitor impact.
Step 1: Quantitative Data

Gather from multiple sources
- State
- Local
- Population level
- Program/Services Delivery (health, early learning, economic)

Multiple angles (economic, health, housing)
- Young child healthy development
- School readiness and success
- Children have access to healthy food
- Young children are safe
- Healthy and economically secure families
- Community conditions

Multiple views
- Disaggregate race, geography
- Sort by states, counties, cities, neighborhoods or towns
Disaggregated Data Matters

• “Hidden data” regarding ethnic groups within mega racial categories also allows us to see disproportionality more clearly.

• Data that intersects poverty, race, gender, ethnicity...is key.

• Data is not value free.

Share of Population Receiving SNAP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>SNAP Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burmese</td>
<td>44.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutanese</td>
<td>67.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmong</td>
<td>32.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysian</td>
<td>3.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>15.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodian</td>
<td>23.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>10.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laotian</td>
<td>20.76%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>2.38%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>6.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>3.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>5.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>5.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>2.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Indian</td>
<td>4.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>6.36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Community Survey, 2015 data.
Note: SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.
Disaggregating Data by Race and Ethnicity: Iowa

Source: Common Good Iowa
Disaggregating Data by Race and Ethnicity: Iowa

Every Iowa group ranks worse when you disaggregate the data

15th (among 50 states) for white children
18th (among 49 states) for Latino children
19th (among 44 states) for African-American children
37th (among 43 states) for Asian and PI children

Source: Common Good Iowa
Example: 2017 RACE FOR RESULTS INDEX

The Annie E. Casey Foundation has developed the Race for Results Index (value is between 0 and 1,000), which compares how children are progressing on key milestones across racial and ethnic groups at the national and state levels. The index is based on 12 indicators that measure a child’s success in each stage of life, from birth to adulthood.

- Babies born at normal birthweight
- Children ages 3 to 5 enrolled in nursery school, preschool or kindergarten
- Fourth graders who scored at or above proficient in reading
- Eighth graders who scored at or above proficient in math
- Females ages 15 to 19 who delay childbearing until adulthood
- High school students graduating on time
- Young adults ages 19 to 26 who are in school or working
- Young adults ages 25 to 29 who have completed an associate’s degree or higher
- Children birth to 17 who live with a householder who has at least a high school diploma
- Children birth to 17 who live in two-parent families
- Children birth to 17 who live in families with incomes at or above 200 percent of poverty
- Children birth to 17 who live in low-poverty areas (poverty <20 percent)
Example: Race for Results 2017: Iowa
Example: County health rankings

- Standardizing each measure
- Calculating the ranks based on weights
- The county with the best health factors or outcomes gets a rank of #1 for that state.

Iowa: County Health Rankings

2022 Health Factors - Iowa

2022 Health Outcomes - Iowa

Health Factor Ranks
- 1 to 25
- 26 to 50
- 51 to 74
- 75 to 99

Health Outcome Ranks
- 1 to 25
- 26 to 50
- 51 to 74
- 75 to 99
Example: Child Opportunity Index
Iowa: Child Opportunity Index
Step 2: Identify Specific Geographic Areas

Questions and Factors to Consider

- Where are the young children in your state? Population centers?
- Are you engaging rural and urban communities?
- Where will you be able to assure that Black, American Indian, Latinx, Asian American, Pacific Islander, immigrant, and other voices are heard?
- What are the places or communities you have not engaged with in the past?

Use your cross sector networks and the goals of this work to guide this next step. What are you needing to learn?

This is an art not a science.

Questions such as these can be a starting point.
Step 2: Identify Specific Geographic Areas

Questions and Factors to Consider

• What does census tract data tell you? What neighborhoods or areas emerge?

• Where are the early childhood services, programs, initiatives, infrastructure or investments? Lack of these?

• Where are there visible disparities you want to learn about? (i.e. access; outcomes)

• Where is there a lack of or suppressed quantitative data? Learn from qualitative data and community voice.
Step 3: Visit and engage the identified communities, families, providers and gather information

Why engage those furthest from opportunity from the beginning?

- To base goals, strategies, policies and practices on the experiences of those these systems are intended to benefit
- To listen, understand, and learn about families’ goals for their young children, providers’ goals for their work with young children, services that work or do not work well, services that exist but they cannot access, and where services and opportunities which support young children’s growth and development just do not exist.
- To recognize and understand history of oppression, power dynamics, inequalities and disparities and the impact of those on children, families and communities.
- To support exploration of how historically and today, individuals and communities have fought back, resisted, and organized for self-determination, inclusion, and fairness.
Step 3: Visit and engage the identified communities, families, providers and gather information

Why engage those furthest from opportunity from the beginning?

• To understand and uncover implicit bias and assumptions that impact policy and practice (to increase the focus on institutional and structural barriers to achieving equitable outcomes for children and their families).
• To develop experiences with populations and groups that experience racial inequities and disparities, increasing the focus on institutional and structural barriers.
• To understand, co-interpret and co-create data and data processes.
• To shift or realign aspects of systems, increasing access to opportunities for young children and families in communities with significant racial, ethnic, economic, health and education disparities.
• To apply lessons learned to your practices in order to design, develop, and implement programs, services, and initiatives that are targeted and modified to meet the needs of children and families, workforce, and providers furthest from opportunity.

Developed by Sherri Killins Stewart, BUILD Initiative--Director of Systems Alignment and Integration, Co-Director of State Services
Some Community Involvement
Communication flows from one to the other, to inform
Provides community with information
Entities coexist
**Outcomes:** Optimally establishes communication channels and channels for outreach.

More Community Involvement
Communication flows to the community and then back, answer seeking
Gets information or feedback from the community
Entities share information
**Outcomes:** Develops connections

Better Community Involvement
Communication flows both ways, participatory form of communication
Involved more participation with community issues
Entities cooperate with each other
**Outcomes:** Visibility of partnership established with increased cooperation

Community Involvement
Communication flow is bidirectional
Forms partnerships with community on each aspect of project from development to solution
Entities form bidirectional communication channels
**Outcome:** Partnership building, trust building

Community Involvement
Strong Bidirectional Relationship
Final decision making is at the community level
Entities have formed strong partnership structures
**Outcomes:** Broader outcomes affecting broader community. Strong bidirectional trust built.

Community Engagement: 5 Factors

1. What kinds of relationships do you have with community members?
2. Why are you engaging people?
3. How are you getting people involved?
4. How do ideas get generated?
5. How do your organizational policies and structures support engagement?
Step 3: Process Before the Visit

• Build a **cross-sector team** with diverse interests: e.g. public and private, health, early learning, economics, local, state, county.

• Determine and discuss your **why, individually and as a team.**

• **Discuss your understanding using “qualitative data”** to determine one or more locations with low opportunity or marginalized communities.

• **Select targeted places** to start.

• **Identify a local partner** in selected places with access to the selected families, children and providers

• **Co-design the site visit with local partner(s)** for families, providers and local leaders.

• Plan visit for a cross sector group.

• Co-create **6 to 8 core questions** with cross sector team to share with local partner in advance, especially for families. *(What strategies would they prioritize in early childhood programs?)*

Developed by Sherri Killins Stewart, BUILD Initiative--Director of Systems Alignment and Integration, Co-Director of State Services
Step 3: Additional Considerations with Visits

• Plan and pay for meals and stipends to programs and individuals, whether it be a virtual meeting or face to face.

• Identify someone to capture the site visit conversations, focus on collecting actual quotes not notes from the participants.

• Embed opportunities for co-interpretation of data and information.

• Ensure the development of ongoing feedback loops and shared decision-making.

Developed by Sherri Killins Stewart, BUILD Initiative--Director of Systems Alignment and Integration, Co-Director of State Services
Step 4: Use quantitative and qualitative data to identify a disparity, determine root causes and possible shifts in policies, practices, and resources needed to dismantle inequity.

Previous examples of Quantitative Data:
- “Kids Count” Report
- “Race for Results”
- “Iowa County Health Rankings”
- Program/Services Delivery (health, early learning, economic)
- Child and family well-being data

Qualitative Data:
- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Surveys
- Site visit quotes
Step 5: Mobilize and support cross-sector leaders to advance policies, practices, programs, and initiatives that intentionally address the identified disparities

Importance of cross-sector networks and leaders to address disparities. Consider yours and their authority and influence.
Step 6: Use data and ongoing feedback loops to monitor impact, *(both intended and unintended).*

- **Intentionally seek input directly from beneficiaries** – the families of young children who are intended to benefit from the programs and services offered.

- **Engage in a cycle of improvement over time.** A key strategy is listening and getting a more accurate, deeper understanding each time you present back to the community what the team heard and saw at the last visit.

- **Share the challenges that your leadership team could not respond to and why,** such as funding, eligibility, timeframes for change, area of responsibility, e.g., local vs. state, etc.

- **Be honest about timelines** and the pace at which large systems and the public sector moves.

- **Focus on ongoing and transformative engagement.**

Developed by Sherri Killins Stewart, BUILD Initiative--Director of Systems Alignment and Integration, Co-Director of State Services
Small Team Time

**Goal:** Collective learning from each other and processing of the information together

**Reflect on these questions:**
- Within your own work, how are you answering the question of who is benefiting and not benefiting?
- What quantitative and/or qualitative data are you aware of or have used?
- What is your own role and sphere of influence?
- What is an example of how you have done a similar process in your work and what have you learned?
Session Closing

What are one or two take-aways from this session that resonate with you and can be applied in your work?
Our Contact Information

Malai Amfahr,
Senior Program Officer
Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
mamfahr@glrcenter.org

Michelle Stover Wright,
Research and Evaluation Director
BUILD Initiative
mstoverwright@buildinitiative.org