



Addressing Racial Inequities in Child Welfare

View from Early Childhood Education



Equity Research Action Coalition

UNC Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute



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Addressing Racial Inequities in Child Welfare

Introducing Our Presenters



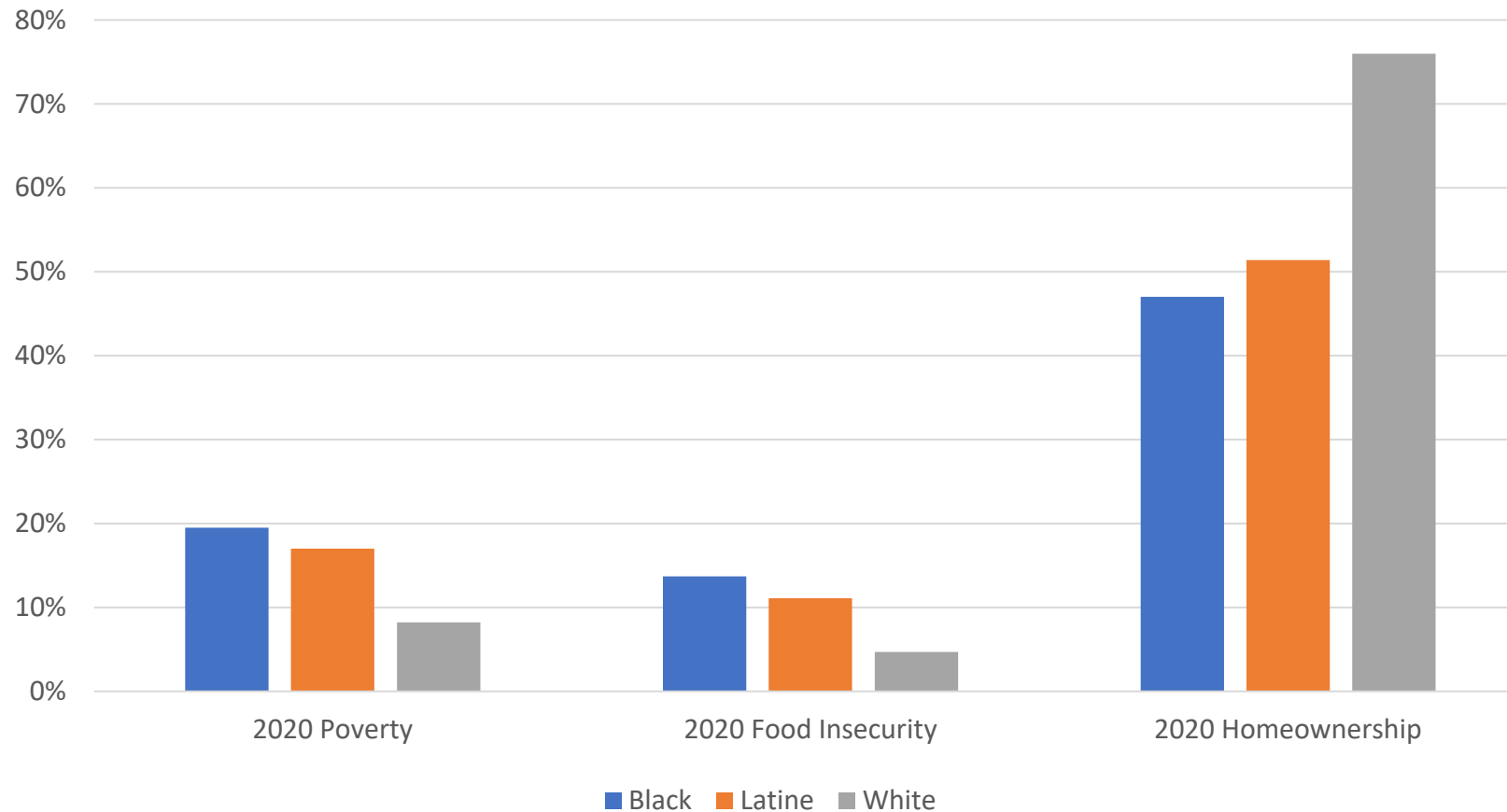
Iheoma U. Iruka, PhD, Presenter
Research Professor, Department of
Public Policy
Fellow, Frank Porter Graham Child
Development Institute (FPG)
Founding Director, Equity Research
Action Coalition at FPG



Nilofer Ahsan, Moderator
Lead, Learning and Partnerships
Children's Bureau Learning and
Coordination Center



Black households likely to be in poverty & experience food insecurity, and less likely to be homeowners.

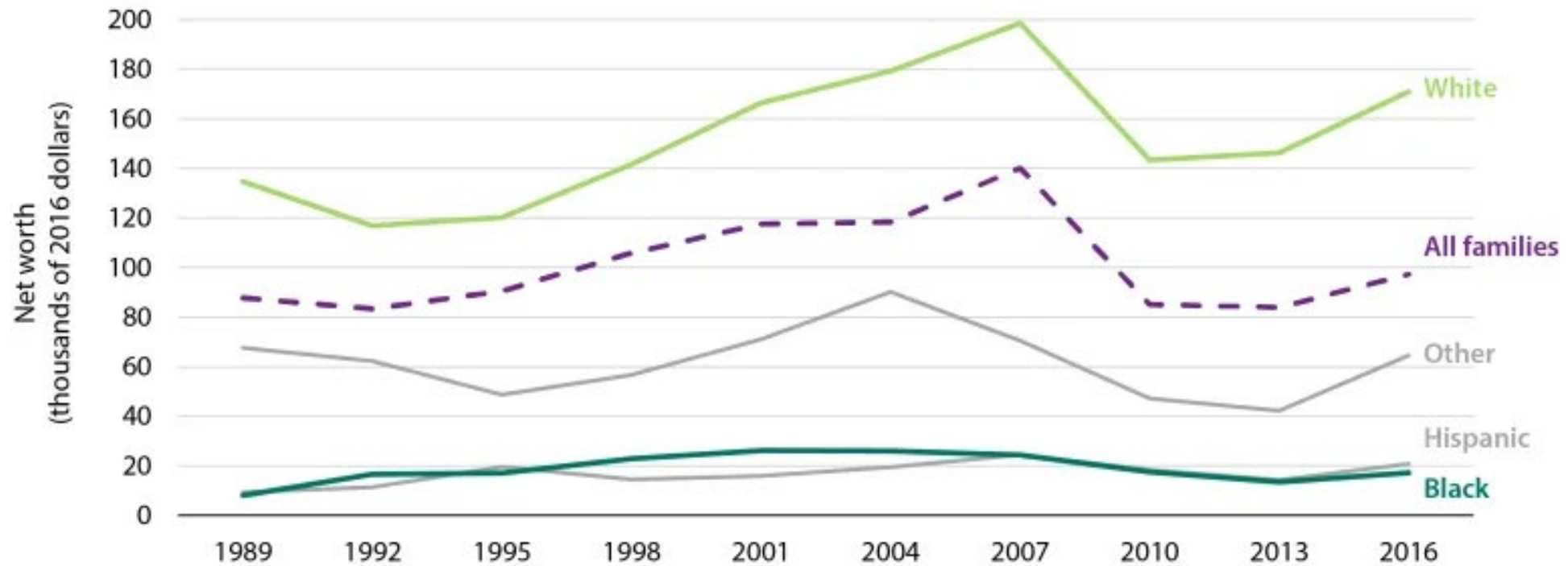


Iruka, I. U., Oliva-Olson, C., & Garcia, E., (2021) Research to Practice Brief: Delivering on the Promise through Equitable Policies. SRI International.



Black and Hispanic median net worth is 8-10X less than White families.

FIGURE 1.
Median Net Worth by Race/Ethnicity, 1989–2016



Source: Survey of Consumer Finances 1989–2016.
Note: Net worth refers to the difference between assets and debt for a household head. Race and ethnicity are those of the survey respondent.

THE HAMILTON PROJECT
BROOKINGS

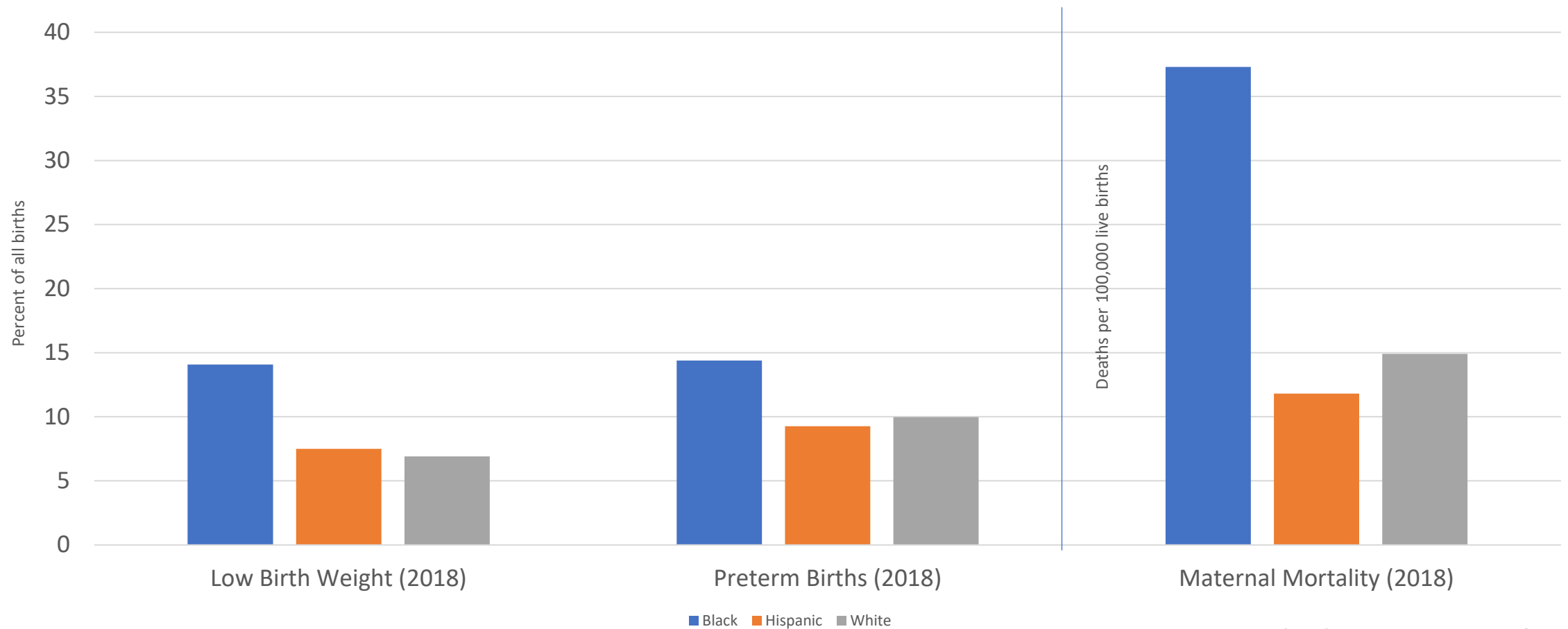


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Black Infants are likely to be born low birth weight and preterm compared to White and Hispanic babies; and Black mothers likely to die during pregnancy, delivery, or post-partum.



Iruka, I. U., Oliva-Olson, C., & Garcia, E., (2021) Research to Practice Brief: Delivering on the Promise through Equitable Polices. SRI International.

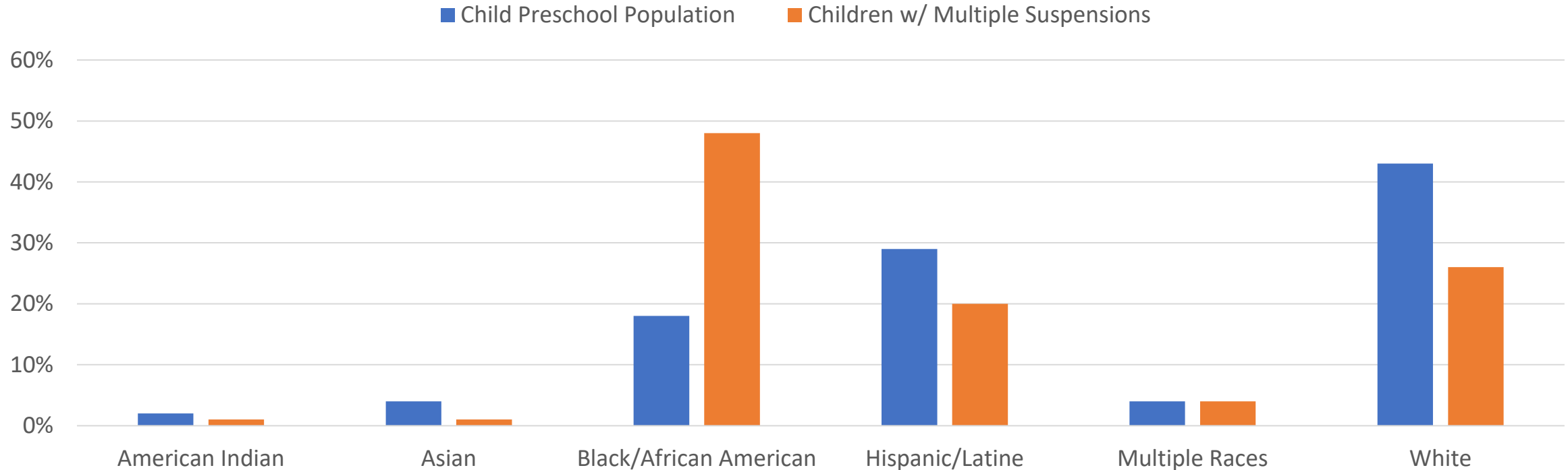


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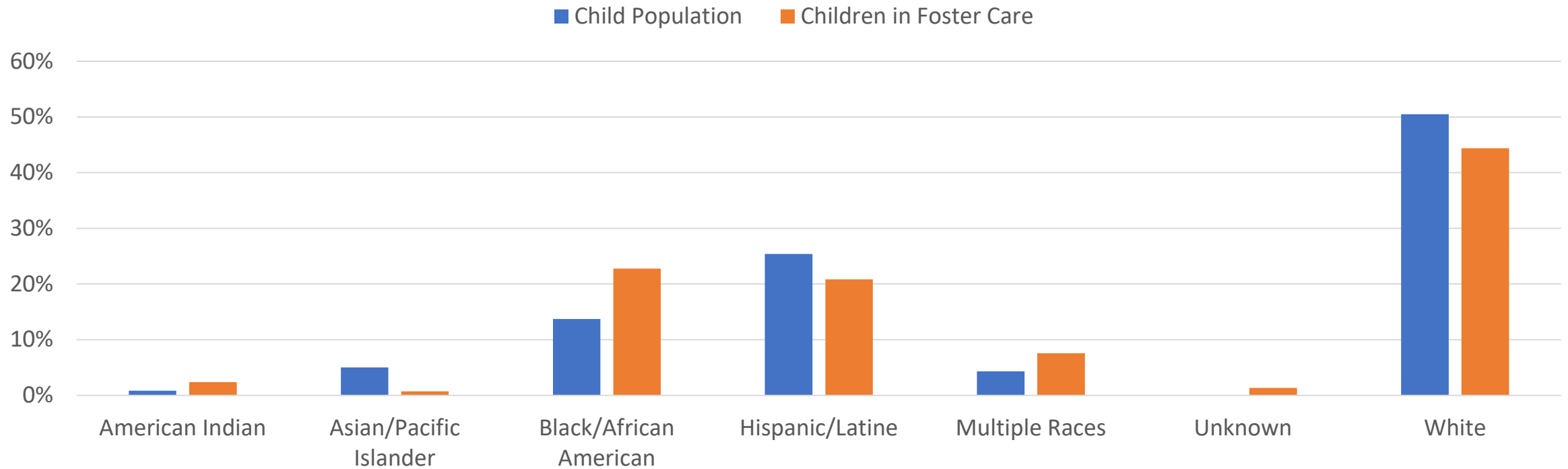
Black children make up 18% of public preschool but make up almost 50% of suspension/expulsion rates. White children make up 46% of the public preschool population but only 26% of suspensions.



Office for Civil Rights. (2014). Data Snapshot: School Discipline, Issue Brief No. 1 (Civil Rights Data Collection, Issue. <http://ocrdata.ed.gov>)



Black children were 13.71% of the population, yet 22.75% of children in foster care were Black. American Indian/Alaska Native children are less than 1% of the population but made up 2.4% of children in foster care.



National Conference of State Legislatures (2021). Disproportionality and race equity in child welfare



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Science of Early Development

- Early experiences are essential for **building brain** connections that underlie healthy development.
- Early adversity can change the **timing of critical periods** of brain development.
- Healthy development of the child begins in the **preconception period**.
- **Supportive relationships** between the child and the adults in life are **essential** and buffer against stress.



Source. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2019). *Vibrant and Healthy Kids: Aligning Science, Practice, and Policy to Advance Health Equity*. The National Academies Press.
<https://doi.org/10.17226/25466>



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Lessons from the Science of Early Development

The influence of **access to basic resources** prenatally and in the early years is powerful, limiting chronic stress and helping to close racial and economic disparities.

Both **institutional racism** and **interpersonal experiences of discrimination** can influence the health and well-being of both children and adults in many ways.



Source. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2019). *Vibrant and Healthy Kids: Aligning Science, Practice, and Policy to Advance Health Equity*. The National Academies Press. [mhttps://doi.org/10.17226/25466](https://doi.org/10.17226/25466)

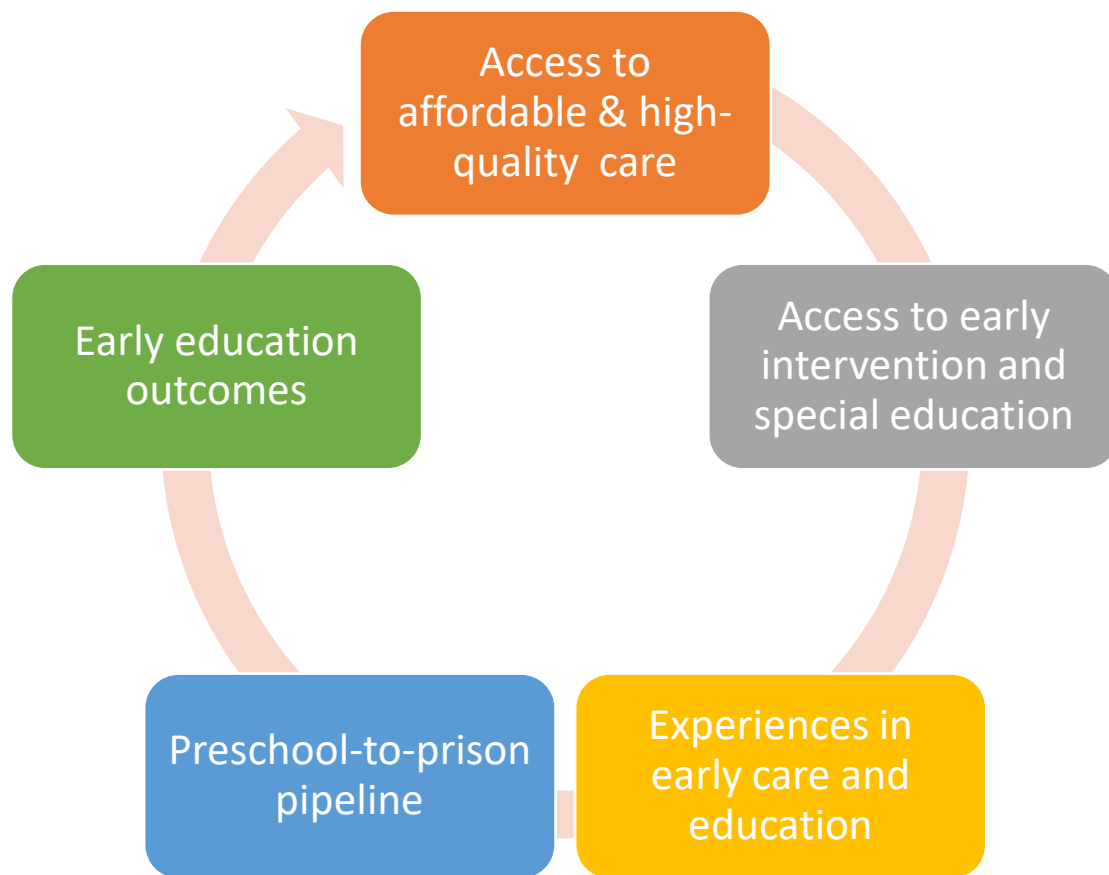


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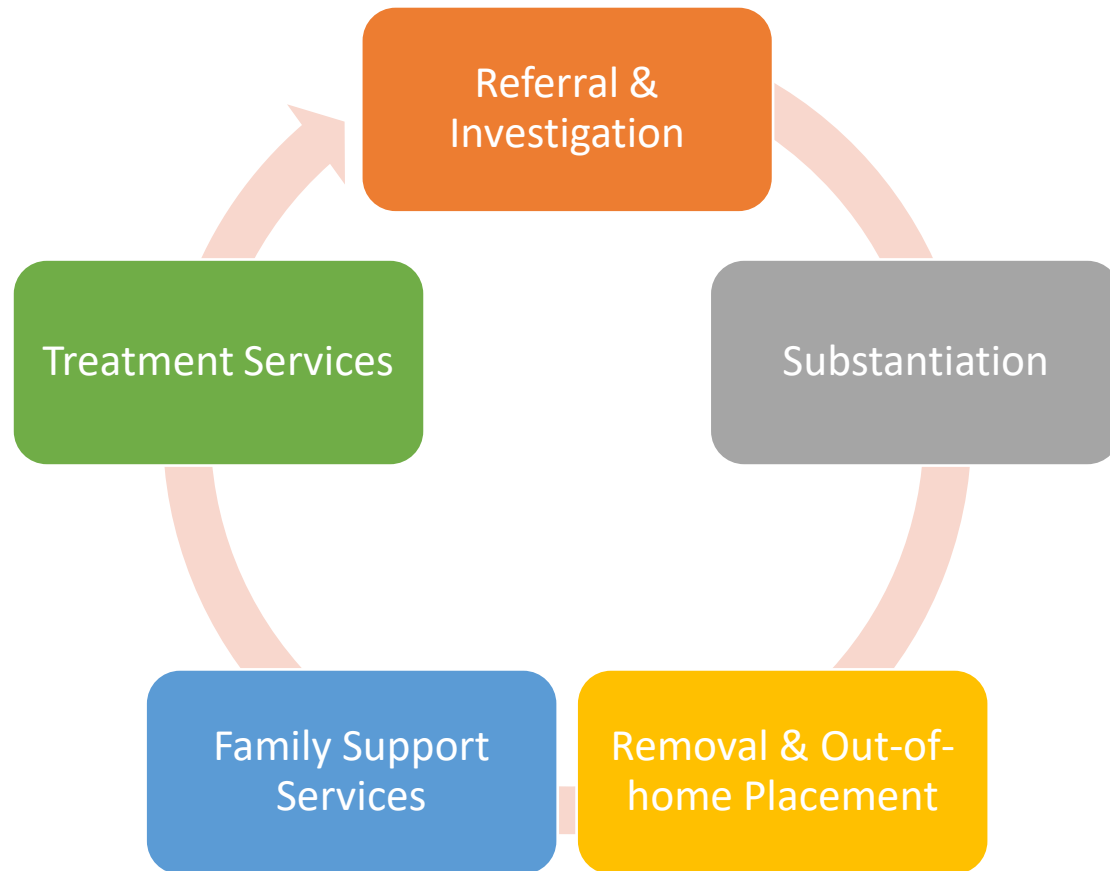


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Racial bias at each juncture of early care & education



Racial bias at each juncture of child welfare



Source: Lee, J., Bell, Z., & Ackerman-Brimberg, M. (2015). Implicit bias in the child welfare, education and mental health systems. National Center for Youth Law. https://ncwwi.org/files/Cultural_Responsiveness_Disproportionality/Implicit-Bias-in-Child-Welfare-Education-and-Mental-Health-Systems-Literature-Review_061915.pdf

Vast commonalities between ECE & child welfare

- Save children from “culturally deprived” families (i.e., race/SES intersectionality)
- Ensure children are prepared for school and life (i.e., assimilation)
- Female dominated workforce
- Inequitable funding / unfunded mandates
- Racial / implicit bias in entry, experiences, and outcomes
- ECE workforce are mandated reporters
- Children in child welfare system have priority in ECE access



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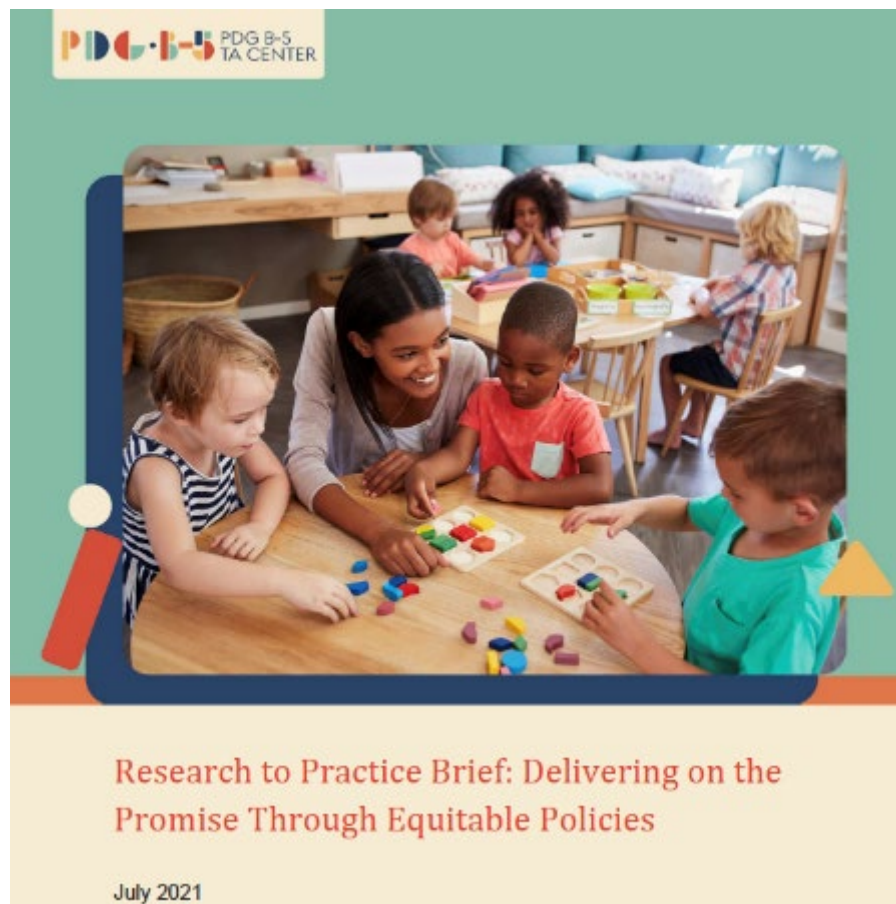
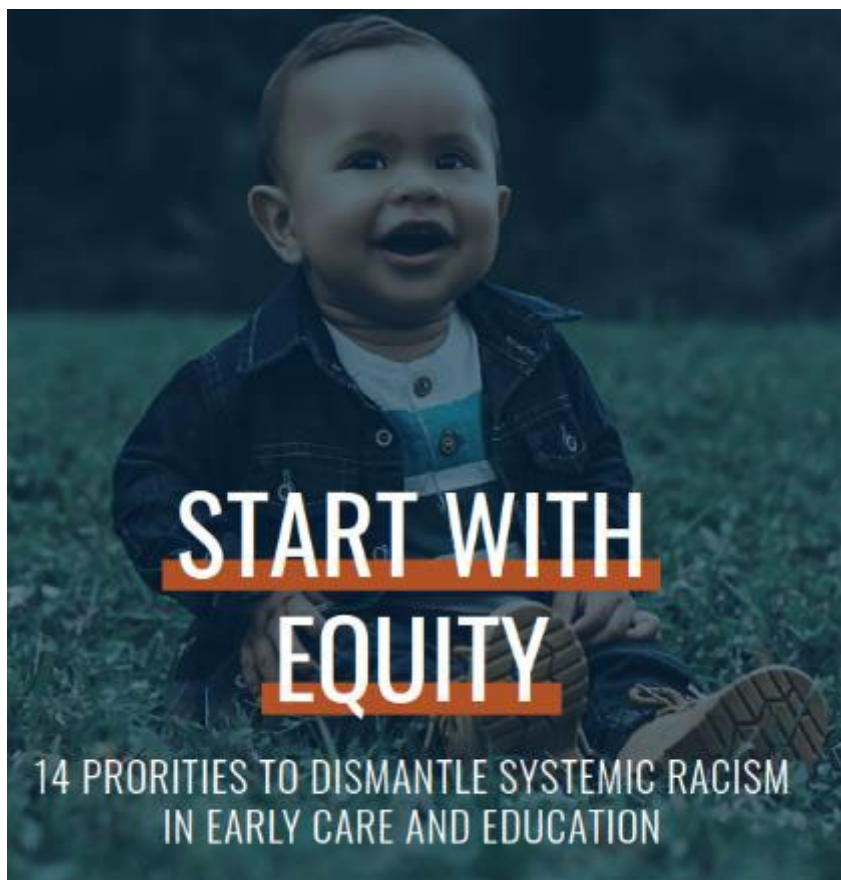
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Workforce in early care & education and child welfare is central for transformative change in human and social services.



- Domestic work = women of color
- Gender stereotypes depress pay
- Policy reflects and contributes to devaluation of child and family serving workforce

Vast commonalities between ECE & child welfare



Dismantling racism and addressing systemic inequities

HEALTHY CHILD & FAMILY SUPPORTS

- Health Insurance
- SNAP, Housing
- Preconception & Prenatal Care
- Home Visiting Supports

ECONOMIC STABILITY & UPWARD MOBILITY

- Paid Family Leave
- Income Supports
- Tax Credits
- Minimum Wage



Dismantling racism and addressing systemic inequities

ECE ACCESS

- Equitable Funding
- Authentic Integration
- Center FCCH & FFN
- Equity in EI/SPED ID

ECE EXPERIENCES

- Workforce Equity
- Equity in Workforce Prep & Dev
- Equity in QRIS/QI
- Equity in Global Quality Assessments
- Eliminate Harsh Discipline
- Equitable Access/Expansion to DLL
- Family Leadership
- Culturally Responsive Curriculum and Pedagogy

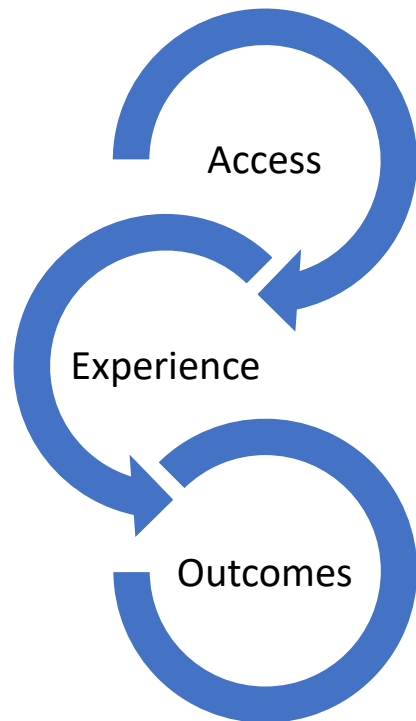
ECE OUTCOMES

- Equity in Monitoring & Accountability
- Equity in CQI

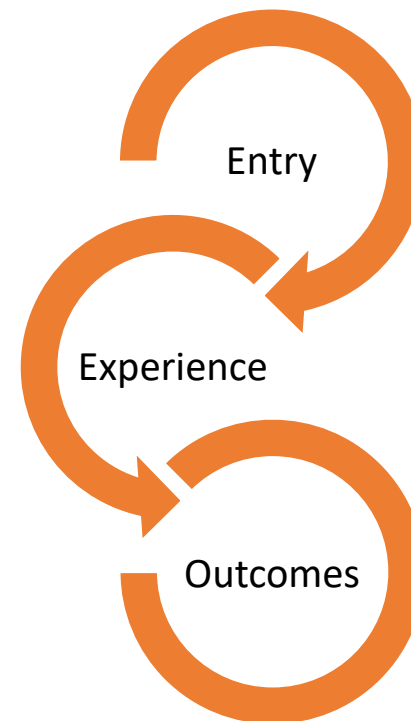


Dismantling compounding inequities within our systems

Childcare



Child Welfare





Equity in our practice



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BE RICHER!

- R**e-educate about history
- I**ntegrate rather than just desegregate
- C**ritique everything
- H**umility of privilege
- E**rase racism
- R**e-vision different ways, approaches, theories, data, teams, measures...

Our country will be **enriched** by limiting the dehumanization of people and eradication of racism and bias in all aspects of our world, including programming, policy, & research.



Attending to the 3Ps: Protection, Promotion, and Preservation

PROTECTION

- from racism, discrimination, and material hardship

PROMOTION

- of economic security, health, and access safe and enriching settings

PRESERVATION

- of cultural identity, language, and family system





Discussion

Please type your questions into the Q&A box.



Take home message



- Racism and inequities are “rooted” in our system. **Racism is the air we breathe.**
- Advancing equity must address **equitable healthy supports, economic mobility, access and experiences.**
- Equitable outcomes must attend to the **3Ps: protect, promote, and preserve.**
- We must engage in **R.I.C.H.E.R. actions** through our self-inquiry and collective networks to combat racism.
- We are on a **journey** so continue to read, engage, lean in, and be accountable...doing nothing is condoning racism.



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Comments?? Questions??



<https://equity-coalition.fpg.unc.edu>

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Resources

- [Start With Equity: 14 Priorities to Dismantle Systemic Racism in Early Care and Education](#)
- [Black Parent Voices: Resilience in the Face of the Two Pandemics—COVID-19 and Racism](#)
- [Start With Equity: Early Childhood Equity Strategic Plan Template](#)
- [Black Parents and Their Babies: Attending to the First 1,000 Days](#)
- [Black Child National Agenda: America Must Deliver on its Promise](#)
- [Research to Practice Brief: Delivering on the Promise Through Equitable Policies](#)



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Thank You for Joining Today's Digital Dialogue!

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