Asset-Based Community Development
Equitably Addressing Racial and Ethnic Disparities

Racial and ethnic disparities within early care and education can be reduced through responsible legislation in South Carolina. Tools such as opportunity impact statements, proposed in the **2015 Early Childhood Common Agenda**, identify unintended consequences of legislation on communities of color and illuminate opportunities to address those issues within a framework of Asset-Based Community Development. Subsequent policy incorporates the perspectives of minority communities, promotes strengths, and ensures equity for all children across the state.

Equitable race and ethnicity data can become an analytic tool to manage and effectively allocate resources. Determining areas in which minority communities succeed, as well as those that need strengthening, would aid in the development and implementation of promising or evidence-based programs and practices focused on improving outcomes of children of color.[1]

An Asset-Based Community Development[2] approach is needed to ensure a more equitable process for understanding and working with the families and communities of color in South Carolina. Relying on the social and cultural expertise within minority communities provides better understanding of strengths while revealing the needs and the tools necessary to bring about positive change. Asset-Based Community Development should be essential as a framework for incorporating the voices of minority community members, creating ownership of issues and responses, and recognizing the potential for empowerment.

"In many ways, being a minority in the U.S. has become synonymous with being poor, struggling in school, having an absent or uninvolved dad, and headed toward a life of disadvantage and less promise...the fact that many minority children are succeeding in schools and that their families are able to provide for and support them is not well documented.[3] We know more about why minority children fail than we know about why they succeed. **The result is an unbalanced picture that overemphasizes the deficits and pays little attention to the assets or strengths that minority parents and children bring to the table.**"[4]

61%
Of African American children in South Carolina (ages 3-5) are enrolled in preschool.

S.C. average is 59%

97%
Of Asian or Pacific Islander high school students in South Carolina graduate on time.

S.C. average is 68%

94%
Of Hispanic or Latino children in South Carolina are born at a normal birth weight.

S.C. average is 90%

84%
Of American Indian children in South Carolina (ages 3-5) are enrolled in preschool.

S.C. average is 59%

Source: *Race for Results: Building Opportunity for South Carolina's Children*

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When equity is not consciously addressed, discrimination based on race and ethnicity is often unconsciously maintained. Policymakers are encouraged to use the following guidelines to increase awareness of the impact of potential legislation on communities of color and to inform policy ensuring equal opportunity for all of South Carolina's children.

1. Identify Stakeholders

Which racial/ethnic groups may be most affected by and concerned with the issues related to this proposal?

2. Engage Stakeholders

Have stakeholders from different racial/ethnic groups—especially those most adversely affected—been informed, meaningfully involved and authentically represented in the development of this proposal? Who's missing and how can they be engaged?

3. Identify and Document Racial Inequities

Which racial/ethnic groups are currently most advantaged and most disadvantaged by the issues this proposal seeks to address? How are they affected differently? What quantitative and qualitative evidence of inequality exists?

4. Examine the Causes

What factors may be producing and perpetuating racial inequities associated with this issue? Does the proposal address root causes? If not, how could it?

5. Clarify the Purpose

What does the proposal seek to accomplish? Will it reduce disparities or discrimination?

6. Consider Adverse Impacts

What adverse impacts or unintended consequences could result from this policy? Which racial/ethnic groups could be negatively affected? How could adverse impacts be prevented or minimized?

7. Advance Equitable Impacts

What positive impacts on equality and inclusion, if any, could result from this proposal? Which racial/ethnic groups could benefit? Are there further ways to maximize equitable opportunities and impacts?

8. Examine Alternatives or Improvements

Are there better ways to reduce racial disparities and advance racial equity? What provisions could be changed or added to ensure positive impacts on racial equity and inclusion?

9. Ensure Viabilty and Sustainability

Is the proposal realistic, adequately funded, with mechanisms to ensure successful implementation and enforcement? Are there provisions to ensure ongoing data collection, public reporting, stakeholder participation and public accountability?

10. Identify Success Indicators

What are the success indicators and progress benchmarks? How will impacts be documented and evaluated? How will the level, diversity and quality of ongoing stakeholder engagement be assessed?

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