

StriveTogether Racial Equity Statement

In a better world, the well-being of children would not be shaped by where they live or how they are racialized. Instead, youth and families would thrive while living in healthy, safe communities.

We are a network of community leaders, justice fighters and systems changers striving toward this shared vision. We support youth by using data and working with those most harmed by inequities.

We know racism is the root of many problems across the country. Communities are situated differently in relation to well-being and opportunity. Black, Indigenous, Latinx and Asian communities each have their own experiences of racism. We must address and acknowledge the unique expertise, assets and needs of each community. We also must break down and rebuild the policies and power structures that fail youth of color. Racial and ethnic equity is necessary to help every child succeed in school and in life.

We know intersectionality is crucial to equity work. The different identities we hold overlap and affect how we experience discrimination. Examples are race, ethnicity, class, gender identity and sexual orientation. We must take into account their cumulative effect to understand the complexity of prejudices people face. Otherwise, efforts to remedy inequities in one group could perpetuate injustice toward another.

This work requires a commitment to anti-racist policies, practices and behaviors. Our resolve comes from our belief that every child has value and promise.

StriveTogether and the Cradle to Career Network are working to:

- Center people of color and create solutions together, with particular attention to the Black, Indigenous and Latinx communities that continue to be most harmed
- Operationalize equity to get better results for those most affected by oppressive systems
- Increase participation and leadership of Black, Indigenous, Latinx and people of color in the work

- Understand the history and legacy of systemic racism, colonization and xenophobia, especially how racist institutions, policies, practices, ideas and behaviors give an unjust amount of resources, rights and power to white people while denying them to people of color
- Challenge policies that perpetuate oppressive systems and inequities in communities
- Foster learning and dialogue across the Network about key concepts including racial and ethnic equity; cultural, structural and institutional racism; and white privilege

The results we seek in pursuit of equitable and just communities include:

- Youth are at the center of all the systems that shape opportunity in their community
- Black, Indigenous, Latinx and people of color are heard, valued and elevated for their power and authority
- Youth voice, community wisdom and community assets are centered in decision-making processes
- Our frameworks, approaches and shared outcomes are guided by our understanding of equity
- Leaders have a deeper understanding of equity and their role in creating change
- The racial and ethnic composition of staff — particularly leadership — represents their communities
- Policies are adopted and/or amended to create better opportunities and outcomes for youth and families
- Restorative practices are in place to repair harm and restore relationships

This work calls for healing and reconciliation, and it demands vulnerability and risk. On our journey, we must confront our biases, hold each other accountable and have conversations that cause discomfort. Along the way, we will reflect, heal, grow and change how we act when we make mistakes. Modeling the courage we hope to see in others, we will share our progress on a regular basis. Our equity statement will evolve as we learn new perspectives and information.

We invite you to join our movement as we use our collective power for youth and families.