

Advancing a Racial Equity Action Plan for Parent Aware: Minnesota's Quality Rating & Improvement System



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The department is also very grateful to Etonde Awaah and Hayley Tompkins of LaCroix-Dalluhn Consulting for their vision, commitment, and planning and facilitation skills. They worked tirelessly to help the Parent Aware Racial Equity Action Plan workgroup examine our values and keep us focused on bold, targeted and meaningful strategies to produce a plan with clear action priorities.

The department also recognizes, appreciates, and applauds the work of many community partners for their individual contributions to this effort and the countless hours they dedicated to this process. We originally asked for a year's commitment to monthly meetings. Each participant went above and beyond their initial committed time. We are truly grateful to them for partnering to explore these important issues with a deep commitment to all of Minnesota's children, families and child care and early education programs and with integrity, grace and good humor.

We know that while this action plan is completed, real work must and will continue on the part of the department -- and we invite our community partners to continue to work with us. We have learned so much together. This experience has in many ways transformed how we do our work. We welcome continued partnership, informed by frequent and robust engagement with families and child care and early education programs, to hold the department accountable and to ensure that we make decisions with the voice of the community. It is critical that decisions about policy and service delivery make sense for those implementing Parent Aware and most importantly, for those who participate in and can benefit from Parent Aware – child care and early childhood programs and the children in care and their families. As the implementation stage begins, we invite our community partners to continue this journey together, further refining this plan and striving to sustain and implement it over multiple years.

Thank you all again for your commitment and we look forward to the next steps.

Sincerely,

Cindi Yang, Director, Child Care Services Division

Deb Swenson-Klatt, Manager, Child Development Services

Mee Vang, Supervisor, Child Development Services

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

Parent Aware Racial Equity Action Plan Leadership Group (2021)

Allison Corrado, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation, Start Early Funders Coalition
Betty Emarita, Development and Training, Inc.
Cal Merrick, Child Care Aware of Minnesota
Candace Yates, Think Small
Cindi Yang, Minnesota Department of Human Services
Deb Swenson-Klatt, Minnesota Department of Human Services
Dianne Haulcy, Think Small, Voices and Choices for Children
Jennifer Barshack, Minnesota Department of Human Services
Katie Hoffman, Child Care Aware of Minnesota*
Mee Vang, Minnesota Department of Human Services*
Sheila Williams Ridge, University of Minnesota Lab School*

Parent Aware Racial Equity Action Plan Full Workgroup, includes Leadership Group, (2021)

Breanne Peterson, Minnesota Department of Human Services
Cisa Keller, Think Small
Lyn Rhodes, Minnesota Department of Human Services
Haregewoin Tsegaye, Minnesota Department of Human Services
Kami Alvarez, Minnesota Department of Human Services
Krista Solie, Minnesota Department of Education
Laurie Coleman, Tri- Valley Opportunity Council Inc.*
Laurie Davis, Close Gaps by 5
May Losloso, Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota, Voices and Choices for Children
Michelle Lenhart, Minnesota Department of Human Services*
Nancy Jost, West Central Initiative, MN Prenatal to Three Coalition, Transforming the Workforce, Start Early Funders Coalition, MN Assoc. for Children's Mental Health – Infant and Early Childhood
Patti Turney, Minnesota Tribal Resources for Early Childhood Care (MNTRECC)
Rinal Ray, People Serving People, Voices and Choices for Children
Sandy Myers, Minnesota Department of Education*

Additional members of initial Parent Aware Racial Equity Action Plan Workgroup (2019-2020)

Akemi Mechtel, Minnesota Department of Human Services
Amy Runk, Minnesota Department of Human Services
Barb Wagner, Minnesota Department of Human Services*
Bharti Wahi, Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota, Voices and Choices for Children
Daniel Gumnit, People Serving People

Deb Fitzpatrick, Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota
Jon Vaupel, Minnesota Department of Education*
Leslie Limon, Healthy Community Initiative
Nara Topp, Minnesota Department of Human Services*
Nikole Logan, Saint Paul Public Schools*
Verona Mitchell, Minnesota Department of Human Services*

* Member of Minnesota BUILD Think Tank national technical assistance opportunity team

Project Facilitators

Etonde Awaah and Hayley Tompkins, LaCroix-Dalluhn Consulting

Funder

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation in public-private partnership with the Minnesota Department of Human Services

Report Author

Etonde Awaah, LaCroix-Dalluhn Consulting



Introduction

We know that significant racial disparities exist for many Minnesota children and their families who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). The Minnesota Children's Cabinet, a broad interagency partnership, works to take data-driven and results-oriented approaches to coordinating, streamlining programs, aligning strategies, and promoting action and accountability of Minnesota's efforts to ensure that each and every Minnesota child, no matter race or zip code, is prepared to be a leader of tomorrow. The Children's Cabinet, as a leading partner with the Department of Human Services, engaged authentically with community partners through a process to develop the Early Childhood Systems Reform Report published in October 2018. This process, research on early childhood racial disparities and report were foundational to our commitment to examine and improve Parent Aware racial equity. [1]

In 2019, staff from the Minnesota Departments of Human Services (DHS) and Education (MDE), along with a small group of community partners participated in a national technical assistance opportunity with the intention to explore, develop, refine, and prioritize potential future changes to Parent Aware (Appendix A-1), the state's voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Providing a common set of best practices for child care and early education and impacting over 55,000 children in nearly 3,000 programs throughout the state, Parent Aware is a prime system to promote and lead efforts to address equity issues as a means to improve access and opportunities for all Minnesota children to reach their full potential. Over the course of several months, the Minnesota team conducted a self-assessment of Parent Aware and identified a need for more robust actions to increase racial equity. In June 2019, members of the Minnesota team, along with others employed in the Minnesota Child Care Aware system and from

foundations such as the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation of Minnesota, attended the national QRIS conference. Increasing racial equity in a state's QRIS was a major theme of the conference, with some states presenting on their data, challenges, and pathways to make improvements. One of the presented pathways included the development of a Racial Equity Action Plan in partnership with community members. Minnesota attendees were excited to learn models to move equity actions forward that were effective in states with similar demographics and racial inequities, and determined that co-creating a Racial Equity Action Plan to better meet the needs of communities of color could be an effective effort in Minnesota as well.

Development of the plan began first with ideas from the technical assistance opportunity and the strategic plan for Child Development Services, a unit within the DHS Child Care Services Division (Appendix A-2). Planning initiated in January 2020, but was derailed for the first half of the year due to COVID-19 and community turmoil following the murder of Mr. George Floyd. In fall of 2020, DHS staff connected with group members via one-on-one conversations, and through those external and additional internal discussions determined that hiring a facilitator to help guide the plan's development was the best way to move forward. With support from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation, a small group of state agency, foundation and community members developed a solicitation process and together selected LaCroix-Dalluhn Consulting for this work. The effort relaunched in January 2021 with a year-long planning process culminating in the development of the Parent Aware Racial Equity Action Plan. The completion of this plan signals the beginning, rather than the end, of this effort to improve the Parent Aware system. With continued partnership between government agencies and their community partners and members as well as a

[1] See Early Childhood Systems Reform Year One Final Report: <https://mn.gov/mmb-stat/2-gen/early-childhood-systems-reform-year-one-final-report.pdf>

commitment to upholding racially equitable values and perspectives through the implementation phases of this project, the child care and early education experience for all children, families, and providers in Minnesota stands to improve significantly moving forward.

January 2021 Plan Development Relaunch: A Community Driven Process

The project facilitators' primary objective was to develop and implement a process focused on intentional and effective methods for planning related to racial equity improvement and community-government partnership. In recognition of the challenging nature of the work, facilitators developed a logical project roadmap designed to reach an action plan through manageable steps entirely driven by community and DHS and MDE content expert participants. Facilitators made an explicit commitment to demonstrating equity through the plan development process by centering the voices of the group from the relaunch and asking group members to fully engage and contribute to the process in return.

This effort to develop a community-driven process was in part a response to a call from key community members, e.g., Voices and Choices for Children Coalition, to create a more inclusive process less influenced by the existing power dynamics between government agencies and community. Due to the nature of their role, external facilitators could push for a more equitable balance of power and contribution throughout the process. In practice this meant, for example, that there were times state staff participated in conversations separate from community members as a means to preserve community voice. Other times, state staff participated in the same way as community members, as equal contributors within the group. State staff were also asked to provide information and direction that would better ensure community

perspective would be implemented within state processes. Facilitators also implemented an evaluation form so participants could provide feedback following each meeting, which facilitators used to continuously inform future meetings' structure, agenda, and facilitation in a responsive manner.

Key Process Elements

Participants were initially split into two working groups – one that served as a leadership team that had more significant influence on the process structure and made key decisions to help drive the work forward, and another that contributed to content development throughout the process. As the work progressed and the focus turned more to content development, these groups merged into one. All work throughout the year occurred remotely using online meeting platforms and project management tools, and facilitators were tasked with developing creative ways to keep participants engaged due to the remote nature of the work. Facilitators split the process into stages designed to build the information and infrastructure needed for community and state partners to construct the racial equity action plan. The stages are listed and defined as follows:

- 1. Group norms.** Setting the foundation for working together by establishing the principles and expectations for how participants come to and engage with the work of developing the plan. These norms were revisited throughout the process to re-ground the group as needed, particularly while in the action planning stage.
- 2. Problem identification.** Establishing the problems that the Parent Aware Racial Equity Action Plan aims to resolve. Shared agreement on the issues being addressed through the plan ensured that participants developed appropriately responsive strategies.

3. **Framework development.** Creating the frameworks that the group used to prioritize strategies and complete the plan. The categories within each framework were chosen entirely by group members.
4. **Data gathering/sourcing.** Compiling data related to problems identified to drive strategy development. This stage also resulted in highlighting gaps in data related to the problems identified.
5. **Strategy development & prioritization.** Creating strategies designed to address problems identified and prioritizing strategies for inclusion in the action plan.
6. **Action planning.** Developing a racial equity action plan for each of the four strategies prioritized.

All materials and content developed was driven by group participants. Facilitators used a mixed methodology of individual, small, and large group work not only to maximize the quality and diversity of thought and product, but also to ensure consistent engagement and participation from all group members.

Parent Aware's Racial Equity Problems and Challenges

The group originally identified a total of six primary racial equity-related problems Parent Aware QRIS faced (Appendix B-1). After careful review and consideration of the data the group chose to develop racial equity strategies to address the following five problems:

PROBLEMS

1. Children of color attending Parent Aware rated programs are not receiving the same preparation and education that white children attending Parent Aware programs receive.
2. Parent Aware's structure does not equitably support educators in terms of creating and giving access to resources that will help them meet the Parent Aware requirements.
3. There is a disconnect between the Parent Aware standards and indicators and the communities they serve.
4. Elements of Parent Aware have not been aligned/adjusted to reflect the expansion of the Knowledge and Competency Framework for Early Childhood Educators to include cultural relevance.
5. Bureaucracy means change is slow; rarely able to be responsive in real time.*

* Problem not included in the final plan.

With problems established and their corresponding data sources gathered and summarized, group members developed a comprehensive list of racial equity strategies intended to address the issues identified. After creating a preliminary list of strategies and going through them to combine similar ideas, the group established a final list of 17 racial equity strategies (Appendix B-2). Due to time and capacity constraints as well as a commitment to creating an as implementable product as possible, facilitators led participants through a prioritization process to identify the select strategies the group would create a full plan on. Components of both the strategy prioritization matrix (Appendix B-3) and plan framework (Appendix B-4) were chosen by the group with support from existing racial equity planning resources and tools gathered by facilitators.

Priority Strategies to Address Racial Equity Problems in Parent Aware

Ultimately, the group prioritized the following four racial equity strategies for inclusion in the final plan. An additional two prioritized strategies (listed in gray below) did not make it into the final plan due to time and capacity constraints. Group members requested these strategies be recognized in the report.

STRATEGIES

1. DHS Child Care Services Division works with an advisory group to develop a policy/standard that specifically addresses discipline and expulsion in Parent Aware rated programs (e.g., a Parent Aware rated program should not be allowed to expel children from their program.)
2. Address inequities in distribution and access to resources supporting programs and educators working in early childhood programs participating in Parent Aware:
 - Identify what resources should be available and accessible to all educators, e.g., culturally responsive curriculum and pedagogy.
 - Collect quantitative and qualitative data from providers to ensure historically underserved communities receive equitable resources.
3. Utilize and leverage the Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council (CECLC) [2] to support program efforts to make racial equity in Parent Aware a priority. Establish a Parent Aware Racial Equity Council made up of state agency staff and BIPOC-identified community stakeholders to bridge the disconnect between Parent Aware and the communities it is intended to serve (providers, caregivers and parents, and young children).
4. Embed racial equity in workforce preparation and professional development for Parent Aware educators in the field and DHS grantees implementing Parent Aware supports.

[2] <https://mn.gov/dhs/general-public/about-dhs/advisory-councils-task-forces/cultural-ethnic-communities-council.jsp>

STRATEGIES (continued)

5. Conduct a new Parent Aware Validation Study [3], with the study design and tools developed by an advisory group made of people of color, a sample design large enough to allow disaggregation by race/ethnicity, and using tools measuring components of school readiness as identified by the aforementioned advisory group to:
 - Identify what areas children of color may not have received the same quality education as their white peers (kindergarten preparedness & non-discriminatory/inclusive experience), and
 - Dive deeper into the specific challenges providers of color face in order to maintain their four-star standard (staff levels, staffing skills, resources/cost, etc.)
6. Identify and implement processes that support Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC)-identified providers engaging in the Parent Aware structure, especially with pay, grants, and contracts.

Defining Success & Developing the Racial Equity Action Plans

Participants worked in groups to define success for their assigned strategy by developing a specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART) goal that would be the focus of its subsequent racial equity action plan. The four SMART goals are listed below:

Goals: Defining Success

1. By December 31, 2022, DHS in collaboration with MDE and MDH, will have developed policies, standards and strategies for Parent Aware rated programs on discipline and expulsion and made recommendations. Once established, DHS, MDE and MDH will work with the State Advisory Council on Suspensions and Expulsions. By December 31, 2025, DHS and MDE have implemented discipline and expulsion policies, standards and strategies within the Parent Aware system.
2. Within a year, using information gathered from the community engagement sessions, implement two to three changes (at least one for programs not participating in Parent Aware currently and one for licensed family child care programs) to address increasing variety and flexibility of supports and track Parent Aware participation demographic data* and satisfaction surveys following engagement sessions. (*Note: This data is fairly limited and should be addressed.)

[3] Since this strategy was established, a validation study was mandated by the Minnesota State Legislature and will begin in 2022.

Goals: Defining Success (Continued)

3. Concrete racial equity recommendations, rooted in community engagement, are made to DHS by March 2023. Those recommendations will result in implementation of racial equity-focused improvements to Parent Aware standards, indicators, and policies by the end of calendar year 2025.
4. Parent Aware professional development requirements for educators updated to include training that aligns with the new Minnesota Knowledge and Competency Frameworks for Early Childhood Professionals (KCF) [4] competencies, with topics including but not limited to Culture, Race & Racism, and Bias in Early Childhood by June of 2026. Contracted Grantees implement plans and provide annual reports directly related to Goal 3 of the DHS Work Plan, including ongoing professional development specific to racial equity beginning in SFY 2023.



[4] <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/early/highquality/know/>

The Racial Equity Action Plans – listed in full after this report – were completely developed by group members and have intentionally been left unedited except for the addition of clarifying language for readers. Oftentimes community members participate in government-defined processes whose community engagement is limited to providing preliminary feedback or input. When this occurs, the final product is often a summary of those voices or has been filtered through government lens. A critical component of community-driven processes is ensuring that the final product and outcomes are reflective of the vision and work of the community whose perspective has been sought after. As such, for this project especially, it was important to maintain the content integrity of what community members ask and expect of its government. Maintaining the plans’ original language reflects the diversity of thought and approach to addressing challenges with Parent Aware. The overlap that may exist across plans or even with other existing initiatives is not mere duplication, but rather is reflective of the need and interconnectedness of actions that will impact the Parent Aware system.

Plan Implementation – Next Steps and Recommendations

At the end of the year-long process and following the completion of the plan, group members discussed next steps related to plan implementation. These discussions led to the identification of both needs/concerns from group members and the first next steps that DHS can take on its own and with community members to implement the plan.

Needs identified by the group related to plan implementation:

- Need to align strategies’ similar goals/actions and overlapping timelines to develop a comprehensive single plan and timeline for the racial equity work.

- Need intentional conversations and integration of Parent Aware’s key stakeholders and clarity on the roles and responsibilities of each so that the effort is coordinated and the “reinvention of the wheel” is avoided.
- Need a richer set of data points related to racial equity and child development/school readiness/early childhood experience outcomes that can be assessed and utilized on a regular basis. A significant portion of this data will ideally come from and be collected by those closest to the experience, e.g., culturally-specific providers, family child care providers, parents, on their own terms.

Concerns identified by the group related to future government-community partnership:

- Concern about falling prey to common pitfalls that slow down the actual work, e.g., waiting for the ‘right’ data, getting caught in system/bureaucratic processes, and lack of funding

First next steps that DHS should take on its own include:

- Strategy and timeline alignment and integration to create a comprehensive single plan and timeline for implementation.
- Complete cost analysis of and secure funding for plan implementation, including stipends for community participants. Community participants contributed significant time, thought, and expertise into the development of the Parent Aware Racial Equity Action Plan. Future partnership needs to include compensation for their contribution.
- Determine how the project will be managed moving forward and secure resources to implement the plan. Too often implementation is delayed due to staffing and/or funding. It is critical for DHS to commit to moving this plan forward.
- Finalize childhood care and education professional development trainer level revisions. This work has been ongoing for

some time and needs to be addressed in order to fully implement the racial equity strategy related to workforce preparation and professional development.

First next steps that DHS should take with community partnership:

- Continue to convene and utilize the expertise of community partners to guide the implementation of each strategy. Mirror processes utilized in the action planning work and determine whether there is a role that the leadership group specifically can fulfill.
- Identify effective mechanisms that community partners can use to hold DHS accountable to implementing the plan.
- Co-identify and establish effective project management plans and processes regarding implementation timeline, communication, etc.

Project facilitators had the unique experience of witnessing the full process of the plan development and supporting participants in working through the challenges and triumphs of completing a complex and demanding project such as **project facilitators share the following recommendations for DHS and its community partners to consider as they embark on next phase:**

- It is absolutely essential to maintain the government-community partnership into the next phase as convening and collaborating are essential elements of developing, implementing, and maintaining equity-based change.
- Utilize the prioritization matrix to ensure actions taken moving forward are in the best and immediate interest of BIPOC-identified children in Minnesota.
- Do not get caught up in trying to perfectly align the plan to the point that it actually prevents implementation; the details of how to do the work are already in the plan!

- Leverage support from external partners – e.g., community partners, advocacy groups, funders, consultants, etc. – especially when the work seems stuck.
- DHS must establish effective accountability measures and communication/transparency strategies to ensure changes are implemented.

The completion of this report marks the beginning, not the end, of the work to make Parent Aware a more racially equitable system for Minnesota's children, families, and child care providers. Through this effort, DHS and its community partners and experts have the opportunity to make significant progress on its racial equity goals and provide better and more comprehensive support for children, families, and communities that need it the most. The Parent Aware Racial Equity Action Plan represents a foundation and starting roadmap for carrying out this effort.



Minnesota's Parent Aware Racial Equity Action Plan

Minnesota's Parent Aware Racial Equity Action Plan consists of four strategies covering the following topic areas:

1. Discipline & Expulsion
2. Resource Distribution & Access
3. Standards, Indicators, & Policies
4. Workforce Preparation & Professional Development



Racial Equity Action Plan Key:

The Racial Equity Action Plan contains the following elements:

PROBLEM: racial equity issue related to Parent Aware QRIS in need of resolution

STRATEGY: racial equity-oriented tactic or solution proposed to effectively address problem identified

DEFINITION OF SUCCESS: specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART) goal intended to achieve racial equity strategy

INTENDED IMPACT: description of how the SMART goal will reflect and advance racial equity values and outcomes

ACTIONS: specific steps to achieve the SMART goal

ACTION STEPS: specific steps to accomplish to actions

INDICATORS: deliverables for the action step

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: to-do list outlining who needs to meet, what needs to be created, etc. to achieve action step

MINIMUM STANDARD: minimum measurable standard of success attached to action step and/or deliverable

RESOURCES NEEDED: what is needed to perform actions; financial, human, and/or material

LEAD: staff, unit or department responsible for the action and accountable to its completion

TIMELINE: date by when action should be completed

Discipline & Expulsion

PROBLEM:

Children of color attending Parent Aware rated programs are not receiving the same preparation & education that white children attending Parent Aware rated programs receive.

STRATEGY:

DHS Child Care Services Division works with an advisory group to develop a policy/standard that specifically addresses discipline and expulsion in Parent Aware rated programs (e.g., a Parent Aware rated program should not be allowed to expel children from their program.)

DEFINITION OF SUCCESS:

By December 31, 2022, Department of Human Services (DHS) in collaboration with Department of Education (MDE) and Department of Health (MDH), will have developed policies, standards, and strategies for Parent Aware rated programs on discipline and expulsion and made recommendations. Once established, DHS, MDE and MDH will work with the State Advisory Council on Suspensions and Expulsions. By December 31, 2025, DHS and MDE have implemented discipline and expulsion policies, standards, and strategies within the Parent Aware system.

INTENDED IMPACT:

Parent Aware participating programs will receive support to prevent expulsion; manage challenging behaviors and the program's expectations about developmentally appropriate and culturally specific behaviors; and use guidance, not discipline, to help and support children. Over time, the incidence of expulsion and harsh disciplinary practices among all children, and especially children of color, in Parent Aware Rated programs will be significantly reduced.



ACTION

Ensure strategy outlined above is included in the work of the Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Leadership Committee[5]

ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	MINIMUM STANDARD	RESOURCES NEEDED	LEAD	TIMELINE
1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
Discuss with The BUILD Initiative (BUILD) [6] how to add a discipline and expulsion policy for Parent Aware rated programs into the Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Leadership Committee.	Identify the number of members	Request BUILD to provide an overview of the Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Leadership Committee work to the Parent Aware Racial Equity Action Plan Implementation Workgroup	One to two members from Parent Aware Racial Equity Action Plan Implementation Workgroup are regularly attending the Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Leadership Committee.	Collaboration between BUILD and DHS	Cindi Yang	Now-January 2022
	Number of meetings taking place with the state workgroup			DHS staff time	1.2	1.2
	Number of meetings taking place with Parent Aware Racial Equity Action Plan Implementation Workgroup.	Work with Parent Aware Racial Equity Action Plan Implementation Workgroup to determine if member(s) should be included in Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Leadership Committee, attend the October 12 meeting	Parent Aware Racial Equity Action Plan Discipline & Expulsion strategy is infused into the Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Leadership Committee	In kind time from external partners	Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Leadership Committee	2022 – ongoing
1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2		
Establish baseline data on incidences of suspension and expulsion	A tool to capture suspension and expulsion data is created, including demographic information such as child's race, ethnicity, and gender			Funds DHS staff time Evaluator		
	An ongoing data collection process on suspension and expulsion is established	1.2 Expand and frame BUILD's data collection on suspension and expulsion to include Parent Aware rated providers	Beginning in 2025, data on suspension and expulsion in Parent Aware rated programs will be available			
	Data on suspension and expulsion is available to stakeholders	Work with BUILD to determine how data will be collected and where it will be stored, consider existing data systems across state agencies				

Footnotes

[5] The Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Leadership Committee is convened by The Minnesota Department of Human Services' Child Care Services Division in coordination with other state agency partners. The focus of the group is to develop a state-wide, comprehensive policy approach with strategies that support providers and families in reducing suspension and expulsion in early childhood settings. The BUILD Initiative is facilitating this work. The work centers on a framework called: Building a Comprehensive State Policy Strategy to Prevent Expulsion from Early Learning Setting (Expulsion Policy Strategy Tool). The purpose of the tool is to support states in designing a multi-faceted policy approach to developing a continuum of supports for programs, families, and children. It provides policy options to promote young children's social-emotional development and reduce the likelihood of expulsion and suspension in early learning.

[6] BUILD helps state leaders create policies, infrastructure, and connections across agencies and organizations to advance comprehensive, high-quality, and equitable programs, services, and supports for young children, their families, and communities, as well as helps leaders think and act systemically to address disparities and expand their networks to enhance their capacity to take action.

ACTION (Continued)

Ensure strategy outlined above is included in the work of the Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Leadership Committee

ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	MINIMUM STANDARD	RESOURCES NEEDED	LEAD	TIMELINE
		<p>Use this data to create statewide goals on reducing suspension and expulsion within Parent Aware rated providers</p> <p>The Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Leadership Committee and the advisory group as outlined in action 2 should discuss implementation considerations such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will suspension and data collection be mandatory for PA programs?• How can we ensure the data provided by providers is valid?				

ACTION

Establish an advisory group that will draft and prepare to implement policies and standards

ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	MINIMUM STANDARD	RESOURCES NEEDED	LEAD	TIMELINE
2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1
Establish an advisory group composed of state agency, community leaders, parents, and providers to draft policies and standards, over the course of one year.	Decide if the facilitator will be external or DHS, if external select the DHS main contact person(s). Select who will facilitate the work-group.	Facilitator will determine the workgroup structure (frequency, content, goals). DHS main contact will begin cataloging existing early childhood suspension and expulsion law for Head Start, public schools, and licensed child care and early learning programs within Minnesota to share at the first workgroup meeting. DHS main contact will collect resources to share at the workgroup, including Betty Carlson's research report. Facilitator will convene the workgroup and set up meeting invites.	At the end of the workgroup (December 2022), the workgroup will have a draft of policies and standards ready for additional review and vetting	DHS Staff Time Facilitator Funding for facilitator Stipends to advisory group members	DHS-Child Development Services	December 2021-December 2022
Group will advise both the Parent Aware advisory committee and the Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Leadership Committee.	Determine method of assigning/ selecting state agency members and community leaders, and number of work-group members required.		Increase the number of Parent Aware rated providers who have policies on suspension and expulsion	2.2: DHS, MDE, and MDH staff time	2.2: DHS Child Development Services	2.2: December 2022-December 2025
2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2
Implement developed policies and standards by December 31, 2025	Facilitator/DHS/ Contact/Leadership will draft key tasks the workgroup must accomplish, that should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Work with BUILD to participate in a peer to peer session (conversations with other states) and how they build their early childhood suspension and expulsion policies into their QRISWorkgroup will inform the definition of suspension and expulsion in the context of early childhood programs.	Identify who is part of the implementation plan and develop the action steps necessary Identify if legislative changes need to take place Identify what funding and funding sources may be needed	When the Parent Aware indicators are updated in 2025, indicators to reduce suspension and expulsion will be included	Technology system changes needed through Develop Updates to all Parent Aware provider and quality coaches materials Funding		

ACTION (Continued)

Establish an advisory group that will draft and prepare to implement policies and standards

ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	MINIMUM STANDARD	RESOURCES NEEDED	LEAD	TIMELINE
	2.2: The advisory group will develop recommendations on indicators that could be included in the 2025 Parent Aware Standards and Indicators Remodel to reduce suspension and expulsion	Identify if additional state agency FTEs are needed Identify what communication strategies need to take place with child care and early learning providers Identify mechanism for tracking and accountability for suspension and expulsion recording				

ACTION

Outline strategies for supporting providers

ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	MINIMUM STANDARD	RESOURCES NEEDED	LEAD	TIMELINE
<p>3.1</p> <p>Provide training and consultation to Parent Aware rated child care and early learning programs. Goals of the training and consultation are to build awareness on what suspension and expulsion is in early childhood settings, and meet new Parent Aware indicators and standards developed for suspension and expulsion</p> <p>Child care and early learning providers, school readiness, and Head Start programs will be consulted with on what supports they need to reduce suspension and expulsion rates</p>	<p>3.1</p> <p>Number of trainings and consultations offered via Develop.</p> <p>Number of providers taking training and receiving consultation annually</p> <p>Create communications plan to provider about suspension and expulsion</p> <p>Expand and sharpen the child care mental health consultation available to Parent Aware Rated child care and early learning programs to include suspension and expulsion prevention</p>	<p>3.1</p> <p>DHS Children's Mental Health, DHS Child Development Services, and MDE Early Learning Services meet internally to lay out the plan</p> <p>Plan is submitted to the Parent Aware Advisory Committee for review and input</p> <p>In consultation with child care programs, Child Care Aware will develop and implement a plan for how they will support providers before implementing these new standards and indicators</p>	<p>3.1</p> <p>Providers self-report fewer suspensions and expulsions</p>	<p>3.1</p> <p>BUILD workgroup</p> <p>New Develop training</p> <p>New FTE for DHS</p> <p>DHS staff time</p> <p>Child Care Aware resources and staff time, including training coaches</p> <p>Funding</p>	<p>3.1</p> <p>DHS Children's Mental Health, DHS Child Development Services, and MDE Early Learning Services</p>	<p>3.1</p> <p>January 2022-December 2025</p>

Resource Distribution & Access

PROBLEM:

Parent Aware's structure does not equitably support educators in terms of creating and giving access to the resources that will help them meet the Parent Aware requirements.

STRATEGY:

Address inequities in distribution and access to resources supporting programs and educators working in early childhood programs participating in Parent Aware:

- Identify what resources should be available and accessible to all educators, e.g., culturally responsive curriculum and pedagogy.
- Collect quantitative and qualitative data from providers to ensure historically underserved communities receive equitable resources.

DEFINITION OF SUCCESS:

Within a year, using information gathered from the community engagement sessions, implement two to three changes (at least one for programs not participating in Parent Aware currently and one for licensed family child care programs) to address increasing variety and flexibility of supports and track Parent Aware participation demographic data* and satisfaction surveys following engagement sessions. (*Note: this data is limited and should be addressed.)

INTENDED IMPACT:

- Access to resources is NOT the barrier to Parent Aware participation.
- All providers regardless of Parent Aware participation believe they have equitable access to flexible and relevant resources and supports.
- Intentionally prioritize Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) and English Language Learners (ELL) providers and educators to access resources and support that have been identified as a gap.
- All Minnesota children are supported by adults with the skills, knowledge, and competencies that they need.
- We will see increased career opportunities for BIPOC-identified providers within the field of early childhood care and education.
- Create the environment where providers are willing to give us this data (address fear).
- Currently there is a lot of push back on gathering classroom data on race and ethnicity -- we need to have buy-in from everyone in the Parent Aware system to understand why this data is important.



ACTION

Create an action plan based on the feedback gathered to identify changes that provide additional resources as well flexibility and support for BIPOC providers

ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	MINIMUM STANDARD	RESOURCES NEEDED	LEAD	TIMELINE
1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
Analyze and synthesize results from the DHS Equity Report community engagement sessions/ other feedback mechanisms (i.e., surveys), to identify and define the top barriers and flexibility needs identified by BIPOC groups & individuals leading child care efforts in each community (i.e., Black, Latinx, Somali, Hmong, etc.)	The legislative mandated Equity Report summarizing the community engagement feedback that identifies top barriers and flexibility needs for BIPOC providers.	Contractor or DHS staff member conducts qualitative and quantitative analysis on data from community engagement sessions and other data.	Within 3 months of the completion of the community engagement sessions, a final report will be produced that identifies top barriers and defines additional resources and flexibility needs of BIPOC providers.	Staff time and/or contractor	DHS, Child Care Services	By July 2022: Analyze DHS Equity Report that is released in March 2022 to identify top barriers and gaps not addressed in report. As part of the analysis:
	1.2	Contractor or DHS staff member drafts a report summarizing the method, top barriers, top flexibility needs, and limitations of the report.	1.2	1.2	1.2	• Current Parent Aware Advisory Group to determine any other data sources that describe barriers to participation for BIPOC providers.
	Create an action plan with 2-3 recommended changes addressing variety and flexibility of supports for BIPOC providers is created and implemented ensuring action plan prioritizes resources and support for BIPOC providers.	Present draft report to DHS staff, planning committee, Parent Aware Advisory Committee, and participants of community engagement sessions to request feedback.	Within 2 years, implement 2-3 changes identified in the action plan.	Depending on changes proposed, funding may be needed to implement the changes in the action plan.	Parent Aware Advisory Committee racial equity subcommittee/newly configured Parent Aware Advisory Committee (identify priorities). DHS Child Care Services: Create plan (potentially with contractor).	• Based on analysis and gaps identified, determine if DHS vs contractor will be used.
1.2		Contractor or DHS staff member incorporates feedback and finalizes the report				By August 2022: Bring the list of top barriers for BIPOC providers, what is missing, and process for creating an action plan to the Parent Aware Advisory Committee for input.
Create an action plan that identifies 2-3 changes to implement within two years (at least one for programs not participating in Parent Aware currently and one for licensed family child care programs) to address increasing variety and flexibility of supports for BIPOC providers. This may include changes to allocations of resources.		1.2				Ongoing/As Needed: Determine if other stakeholder groups need to be engaged for input, or if enough information is available to create the action plan. If there are gaps in information, conduct additional engagement as needed to define barriers/gather information needed to create an action plan.
		DHS utilizes the Parent Aware Advisory Committee racial equity subcommittee/newly configured Parent Aware Advisory Committee to prioritize and identify two to three changes that will be implemented.				

ACTION (Continued)

Create an action plan based on the feedback gathered to identify changes that provide additional resources as well flexibility and support for BIPOC providers

ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	MINIMUM STANDARD	RESOURCES NEEDED	LEAD	TIMELINE
		DHS implements recommended changes.				<p>1.2</p> <p>By October 2022: DHS or contractor draft Action Plan that identifies 2-3 recommended changes.</p> <p>By October 2022: Bring draft plan back to Parent Aware Advisory Committee for input. Determine which other stakeholder groups need to be engaged for input on the action plan.</p> <p>By December 31, 2023: Finalize the action plan with the recommended changes and timeline in which they need to be implemented.</p> <p>Within 2 years of finalizing the action plan: Implement the changes identified in the action plan.</p> <p>Ongoing: DHS communicate intended changes and impact to providers - here is what we heard and here is what we're doing.</p>

ACTION

Plan and conduct ongoing community engagement sessions across the state to identify barriers for BIPOC participation in Parent Aware

ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	MINIMUM STANDARD	RESOURCES NEEDED	LEAD	TIMELINE
2.1 DHS Manager and Supervisor identify and submit a budget request for community engagement sessions to be held every 3 years. Assemble a planning group to determine the scope, content, schedule, logistics, incentives for participation, and funding sources for partner organizations to implement community engagement sessions and collect provider feedback.	2.1 Planning group membership determined by Parent Aware Advisory Committee racial equity subcommittee/newly configured Parent Aware Advisory Committee. Community engagement plan established.	2.1 Planning group membership makeup determined by the Parent Aware Advisory Committee racial equity subcommittee/newly configured Parent Aware Advisory Committee. Recruitment for planning group completed.	2.1 Planning group begins meeting by March 1, 2024 Community engagement plan established and given to DHS for implementation by July 1, 2024	2.1 Staff time Contractor Budget for engagement	2.1 DHS CDS Manager and Supervisor: define budget Planning Group Contractor (suggestion: Marnita's Table)	2.1 One to two months to get a group together and 3 months to meet and create a plan. Assumed work starts February 2024.
2.2 In partnership with community partners including tribal groups, immigrant rooted organizations, and organizations with deep connections with child care providers, conduct the community engagement sessions and feedback opportunities	2.2 Series of listening sessions are conducted once every 3 years and input is gathered from across the state.	2.2 Planning group meeting schedule determined, with timeline and deliverables clearly established at beginning. Plan created for community engagement and brought back to DHS to implement. 2.2. Using the new resource and distribution plan, DHS will contract with partner organizations to implement the plan. Travel to community partner locations around the state to conduct engagement sessions and implement the community engagement plan.	2.2 Planning committee to be determined by the Parent Aware Advisory Committee racial equity subcommittee/newly configured Parent Aware Advisory Committee and should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Members of the Parent Aware Racial Equity Action Planning GroupMembers of tribal groups, immigrant rooted organizations, and organizations with deep connections with childcare providers (example: representative of child care aware system). The community engagement plan should include elements such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Community partners identified	2.2 Staff time Contractor Compensation (stipends, gift cards) for participation Software needs (Zoom, etc.) In-person meeting space. Cost of travel time/ mileage Substitutes for providers	2.2 Planning Group Contractor (suggestion: Marnita's Table) Community organizations/partners Others TBD based on planning group DHS CDS Project Manager	2.2 Anticipated engagement sessions begin August 2024 to be completed over the course of 2 months. Repeat every 3 years.

ACTION (Continued)

Plan and conduct ongoing community engagement sessions across the state to identify barriers for BIPOC participation in Parent Aware

ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	MINIMUM STANDARD	RESOURCES NEEDED	LEAD	TIMELINE
		Conduct continuous improvement throughout implementation of the plan. This includes providing monthly status updates to the Parent Aware Advisory Committee, reviewing budgets to determine if the plan is on track, and asking if we are reaching the right partners and hearing the right voices around the state.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compensation structure identified• Facilitator identified and for each session• Time period and how many listening sessions (consider geography and racial/ethnic communities)• Consider a variety of types of engagement (i.e., group and individual 1:1 interviews) <hr/> <p>2.2</p> <p>The number of listening sessions conducted are completed within the timeframe identified by the planning committee.</p> <p>There is intentionality about gathering input about barriers for BIPOC providers specifically in Parent Aware (consider language needs, accessibility needs, timing, location).</p> <p>Listening sessions are intentional about reaching the identified communities as outlined by the planning committee.</p>			

Standards, Indicators, & Policies

PROBLEM:

There is a disconnect between the Parent Aware standards and indicators and the communities they serve.

STRATEGY:

1. Utilize and leverage the Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council (CECLC) [7] to support program efforts to make racial equity in Parent Aware a priority.
2. Establish a Parent Aware Racial Equity Council made up of state agency staff and Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC)-identified community stakeholders to bridge the disconnect between Parent Aware and the communities it is intended to serve (providers, caregivers and parents, and young children);
 - Recommend a definition of quality for all pathways and programs participating at all star levels in Parent Aware that explicitly embeds racial equity;
 - Create a process by which to assess proposed changes to Parent Aware (including standards and indicators) so that they explicitly embed racial equity.

DEFINITION OF SUCCESS:

Concrete racial equity recommendations, rooted in community engagement, are made to DHS by March 2023. Those recommendations will result in the implementation of racial equity-focused improvements to Parent Aware standards/indicators/policies by the end of calendar year 2025.

INTENDED IMPACT:

Parents, caregivers, and providers are more connected to Parent Aware as a system and see it reflecting more of their values.



[7] <https://mn.gov/dhs/general-public/about-dhs/advisory-councils-task-forces/cultural-ethnic-communities-council.jsp>

ACTION

Create a Parent Aware Racial Equity Council to bridge the disconnect between Parent Aware and the communities it is intended to serve (providers, caregivers and parents, and young children)

ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	MINIMUM STANDARD	RESOURCES NEEDED	LEAD	TIMELINE
1.1 Recruit the Council	1.1. Council member job description	1.1. The work group assigned to this strategy writes the scope for Council facilitator, and description of the Councilmembers' role to use to recruit members. Use the Community Solutions Advisory Council (MDH) as an example to work from.	1.1. Scope of Council and member job descriptions are thoroughly documented	1.1 Time to meet and establish next steps for informing the work of the Council, including writing the scope and role description	1.1 Parent Aware Racial Equity Plan Implementation Workgroup.	1.1. Scope of Council done by 1/31/22
1.2 Develop budget, including facilitation/ admin support and stipends for members and costs for engaging parents, caregivers, providers	1.2. Council budget developed Council budget secured Council scope and schedule finalized	Invite members of PAREP to join Council and help recruit, and ask CECLC members to help recruit too	Strong membership with 11 - 15 members and a facilitator established, making sure it is representative of the racial and ethnic diversity in Minnesota	1.2 DHS staff time to develop the budget	1.2 DHS - Child Development Services (CDS) unit, and/or Child Care Services division (Cindi Yang)	Recruitment of members by 3/31/22 Facilitator secured by 3/31/22 Council meeting schedule established by 3/31/22 Council membership finalized by 4/30/22
1.3 Secure funding to support Council	1.3. DHS makes public commitment to incorporate recommendations of Council to changes to Parent Aware system	1.2. The Parent Aware Racial Equity Plan Implementation Workgroup, in partnership with DHS, develops a budget for Council. Budget must include payment for participants to encourage broad and diverse engagement, incentives, technology needs, marketing, promotion, and funds for recruitment.	1.2. Sufficient funding is dedicated to supporting the council's work	1.3 DHS staff time to secure a source of funding.	1.3 DHS- Child Development Services (CDS) unit, and/or Child Care Services division (Cindi Yang)	1.2. Funding for Council secured by 2/28/22
1.4 Determine the facilitation model and who will facilitate (DHS or external) and where the Council will be housed.	1.4. Facilitator job description					

ACTION (Continued)

ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	MINIMUM STANDARD	RESOURCES NEEDED	LEAD	TIMELINE
		<p>DHS Child Development Services identifies funding to support Council.</p> <hr/> <p>1.3.</p> <p>DHS makes a written commitment to incorporate recommendations of the Council that can be included in recruitment materials</p> <hr/> <p>1.4</p> <p>After the first cycle of improvement recommendations, Council determines which Council/group has ongoing responsibility for continuous quality improvement specific to race equity in Parent Aware.</p>				
				<p>Footnotes</p> <p>[8] Parent Aware provides a common set of program standards for child care and early education programs, and is supported by a mission and principles. The program standards, combined with the Parent Aware Indicators, are also known as the Parent Aware “kindergarten readiness best practices.” Download the full list of Standards and Indicators, at https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-6346B-ENG</p>		

ACTION

The Parent Aware definition of quality, as described in the framework, standards and indicators is updated to ensure it is culturally responsive and racially equitable

ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	MINIMUM STANDARD	RESOURCES NEEDED	LEAD	TIMELINE
2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1
The Parent Aware Racial Equity Plan Implementation Workgroup reviews existing research and resources (equity report, QRIS research and validation studies, PDG engagement results, research on racial equity), identify equity frameworks, and uses them to conduct an initial equity review of the PA framework, standards, and indicators. Initial assessment provided to PA Racial Equity Council.	Racial equity assessment of current Parent Aware framework, standards and indicators complete	Parent Aware Racial Equity Plan Implementation Workgroup reviews existing resources and research, racial equity frameworks and rubrics.	DHS adopts recommendations to changes to the Parent Aware Standards and Indicators from the PA Racial Equity Council. If DHS does not adopt the Council's recommendations, DHS must explain which recommendations will not be adopted and why.	Time from a DHS staff person or contractor to document recommendations, in partnership with the PA Racial Equity Council.	Parent Aware Racial Equity Plan Implementation Workgroup, in partnership with DHS	Initial assessment completed by March 2022
	2.2	Group identifies which framework or combination of them to use.		Time and funding for stipends for Parent Aware Racial Equity Plan Implementation Workgroup, focus group participants, and Council members	2.2	2.2
	Community engagement conducted	Group completes initial racial equity assessment of current Parent Aware framework, standards, and indicators.			Facilitator of Parent Aware Racial Equity Plan Implementation Workgroup	Initial community engagement completed by September 2023. Final round of engagement by December 2024.
	2.3.	Group develops initial recommendations, including ideas for further exploration or refinement where there are opportunities to embed racial equity.			2.3.	2.3
2.2	Recommendations for updates provided to DHS.				PA Racial Equity Council in partnership with DHS	Final set of recommendations for changes by March 2023.
Use community engagement with racially diverse providers and parents to review framework, standards, and indicators, at an initial point, and later in the process before the standards and indicators are finalized.	2.4				2.4	2.4
	DHS adopts recommendations.	2.2.			DHS Child Development Services	Final set of recommendations for changes adopted by end of calendar year 2024 and implemented by end of calendar year 2025.
		Community engagement conducted.				
		2.3				
		PA Racial Equity Council receives initial recommendations from the group for the 3.1				

ACTION (Continued)

The Parent Aware definition of quality, as described in the framework, standards and indicators is updated to ensure it is culturally responsive and racially equitable

ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	MINIMUM STANDARD	RESOURCES NEEDED	LEAD	TIMELINE
2.3 PA Racial Equity Council uses initial assessment and builds on it to draft a final set of recommendations for updates to the Parent Aware framework, standards, and indicators.		strategy. PA Racial Equity Council further refines the recommendations, to create final recommendations for changes to the Parent Aware framework, standards, and indicators.				
2.4 DHS adopts changes to the PA standards and indicators		2.4. DHS receives the recommendations and adopts them. DHS develops a process to gather feedback from the community about the impact of the resulting changes to Parent Aware.				

Workforce Preparation & Professional Development

PROBLEM:

Elements of Parent Aware have not been aligned/adjusted to reflect the expansion of the Knowledge and Competency Framework (KCF) for Early Childhood Educators to include cultural relevance.

STRATEGY:

Embed racial equity in workforce preparation and professional development for Parent Aware educators in the field and DHS grantees implementing Parent Aware supports.

DEFINITION OF SUCCESS:

Parent Aware professional development requirements for educators updated to include training that align with the new Knowledge and Competency Framework (KCF) components, with topics including but not limited to Culture, Race & Racism, and Bias in Early Childhood by June of 2026. Contracted Grantees implement plans and provide annual reports directly related to Goal 3 of the DHS Work Plan, including ongoing professional development specific to racial equity beginning in SFY 2023.

INTENDED IMPACT:

Continuous quality improvement in early childhood programs directly impacting the implementation and outcomes of the Parent Aware standards. Grantees supporting Parent Aware participants have an increased understanding of the communities they serve and continuous quality improvement directly impacting the implementation of all areas of DHS contract work plan.



ACTION

Embed strong professional development requirements for Parent Aware Rated Programs related to Race, Racial Equity and Bias

ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	MINIMUM STANDARD	RESOURCES NEEDED	LEAD	TIMELINE
1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
Review other State Quality Rating Improvement Systems (QRIS) models outlining training requirements or other Professional Development (PD) supports related to Racial Equity or Bias.	Compare other state requirements in a chart including links to any research related to the choice points made	DHS to manage contract, quarterly meet with identified champions (outside of DHS), final document shared with child care community for reactions	Community members must include BIPOC Trainers, Parent Aware Rated Programs, and workforce members. Programs and workforce should be members of all Race/Ethnicity.	Funding for Literature Review Community engagement coordination & summary	DHS Child Development Services	18 months maximum
Based on specific criteria, have DHS contract for an agency to complete a literature review of other states implementation of PD requirements for Bias/Race.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2
	New KCFs will be attached to training. Explanations of the new KCF areas should be added to info links in Develop	DHS to work with MDE to expand Cultural Responsibility and Practice as a standalone KCF.	Incorporate the knowledge, experiences, and best practices of BIPOC parents, providers/ EC professionals and BIPOC researchers into professional development training	Staff time to complete work and/or contracted person(s)	DHS Child Development Services	Ongoing, to begin no later than end of 2022
	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3
	Recommendations for training or PD requirements for Star Levels	Review of current trainings specifically relating to culture, race, race equity, and bias completed, and trainings given specific identification to match keyword of KCF search in Develop	Three and Four Star programs would have specific items to do before earning the star level.	Time to organize, or to manage a facilitator, funding and staff time for survey implementation and review	DHS Child Development Services	After items 1-3 are completed, but before the end of the evaluation in 2022-2024
1.2	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4
Require that new training (and those as they are renewed) are aligned with all the new KCF areas, including Cultural Responsibility & Practice and are immediately identifiable using the training search tools on Develop.	Trainings exist and are easily identifiable - attached to appropriate KCF and/or keyword search in Develop	Outreach/engagement to create team.	Examples: 50% of lead teachers would have xx hours of training in Racial Equity, Lesson planning for diverse classrooms, etc. or for a Four-Star Rated: 75% of lead teachers must... and all administrators must...	Funds for course writers	Child Development Services Professional Development	June 2024
Expand Cultural Responsibility & Practice KCF to include its own set of specific training.		Survey questions				1.5
Link appropriate trainings to KCF in Develop		Recommend options to consider based on findings when revising standards and indicators.	Alternatively- this could be a badge, that could	Funding for contracted evaluator and evaluation team, Project Manager, Time	Child Development Services PD or Parent Aware	First cycle completed by June 2024 to coincide with PA Standards and Indicator review timeline

ACTION (Continued)

Embed strong professional development requirements for Parent Aware Rated Programs related to Race, Racial Equity and Bias

ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	MINIMUM STANDARD	RESOURCES NEEDED	LEAD	TIMELINE
<p>Add Cultural Responsibility & Practice to search function on Develop</p> <hr/> <p>1.3</p> <p>Determine options to embed Racial Equity PD requirements in either training requirements, or indicators.</p> <p>Link specific requirements to Star Levels. For Higher level star requirements, make options, that will allow for personal preference- with the same outcome of learning.</p> <p>Form Review/ Recommendation Committee (including BIPOC trainers, Parent Aware Rated Programs) to review options, and make recommendations.</p> <hr/> <p>1.4</p> <p>Create tiered training specifically relating to race, culture, race equity, and bias. Consider if this should be a MN State credential after completing the tiered</p>	<p>1.5</p> <p>Documentation of stakeholder feedback specific to topics relating to race, culture, bias.</p> <p>Continuous Quality Improvement schedule for training evaluation</p>	<p>1.4</p> <p>Working with PD team or training advisory council (if one exists), use information from previous action steps, determine high level topics, and minimal knowledge transfer requirements for each course.</p> <hr/> <p>1.5</p> <p>Contracted agency performs provider engagement</p>	<p>be displayed on ParentAware.org (or both)</p> <hr/> <p>1.4</p> <p>Training knowledge expected at each tier by topic</p> <hr/> <p>1.5</p> <p>Minimally prepare a public brief to release findings</p>			

ACTION (CONTINUED)

Embed strong professional development requirements for Parent Aware Rated Programs related to Race, Racial Equity and Bias

ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	MINIMUM STANDARD	RESOURCES NEEDED	LEAD	TIMELINE
<p>work, e.g., trainings, or a combination of trainings with coaching, or some other best practice model.</p> <p>Determine the topics of training (i.e., Race & Culture, Bias in ECE, etc.) DHS hires person to create training at different levels.</p> <p>Determines if making either a badge or credential would be appropriate.</p> <hr/>						
<p>1.5</p> <p>Engage in Continuous Quality Improvement cycles for Parent Aware training. Ensure those conducting the CQI cycles include BI-POC-identified individuals from the training community with specific knowledge and understanding of BiPOC-identified communities.</p> <p>At least every 5 years (to align with PA evaluation) solicit feedback from child care providers on the trainings taken for Parent Aware around topics (one specific on culturally relevant practices, Race, and Bias)</p>						

ACTION

Embed racial equity in workforce preparation and development for Parent Aware educators in the field and organizations supporting the field. Ensure all child care professionals are prepared in a learning style and topics that meet their interests.

ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	MINIMUM STANDARD	RESOURCES NEEDED	LEAD	TIMELINE
2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1
Review DHS Workplan for Child Care Aware Districts and Regions (Goal 3 Access and Outreach)5 to determine established language relating to equity/DEI commitment and expectations	At minimum, all Districts/Regions reporting the activities implemented throughout the year directly relating to their target communities at annual site visits, with one activity addressing racial equity.	The Contract Manager meets with Coordinators to discuss language in the DHS Workplan for Child Care Aware Districts and Regions Goal 3, Access and Outreach, specifically focusing on developing a shared understanding of the populations identified. Coordinators gather data and specifically identify target communities before developing plans.	Minimum implementation requirements established for activities/tasks relating to addressing racial equity, plans submitted to the contract manager, and reported on at annual site visits.	Requirement is already included in the DHS Work Plan for Parent Aware. Staff time to meet with Coordinators and to review DHS Workplan for Child Care Aware Districts and Regions Goal 3, Access and Outreach plans.	CDS Parent Aware Contract Manager	Annual site visit - next is Spring 2022
Incorporate the knowledge, experiences, and best practices of BIPOC parents, providers/EC professionals and BIPOC researchers into professional development training.	_____	_____	_____	_____	2.2	2.2
Review DHS Workplan for Child Care Aware Districts and Regions Goal 3, Access and Outreach. Contract Manager to meet with District and Region Coordinators to identify plans targeting specific communities identified in Required Service section of Goal 3, with a minimum requirement of addressing racial equity. Provide clarification and examples of appropriate plans. Discuss with BUILD on how to bring racial equity into workforce preparation and professional development into the state workgroup.	2.2 Revised RBPB endorsement requirements that take into consideration community engagement and experience as a supplement to college credits (9A or B on Achieve Career Lattice). Additional endorsement for multilingual RBPB specialists.	Use of outside facilitators skilled in DEI work may be needed (DHS Director of Equity assigned to CDS).	2.2 New recommendation for RBPB Specialist endorsement, specifically Quality Coaching.	2.2 Staff time to meet with committees and coordinators to review current requirements and job descriptions, contracted consultant to facilitate	Project manager for contractors	To begin by the end of 2022. To be completed by June 2025 to coincide with the Parent Aware standards and indicator review.
	2.3 Reporting to DHS on the training topics covered	2.2 Create a review team or utilize DHS Access Committee and Coach Champions, CDS Team, Achieve (to understand how they review transcripts and determine career lattice steps), create new recommendations for RBPB Specialist endorsement.	2.3 Added to DHS Work plan requirements	2.3 recommendation work, staff time to review recommendations.	2.4 CDS Parent Aware Team and Contract Manager	2.3 To begin in SFY 2023-2024 and continue each contract year.
	2.4 Action plan for recruiting and retaining trainers and RBPB Specialists.		2.4 High level understanding of community makeup of each District and identified gaps in staffing.	2.4 Regular funding added to contract budgets, Staff time to review plans at the beginning of FY (or date determined)	2.5 CDS Parent Aware Team	2.4 Possible contract amendment for FY 2023-2024
			2.5 At minimum, cohort model revised to allow quarterly participation			2.5 To be completed by June 2025 to coincide with PA standards and indicator review

ACTION (Continued)

Embed racial equity in workforce preparation and development for Parent Aware educators in the field and organizations supporting the field. Ensure all child care professionals are prepared in a learning style and topics that meet their interests.

ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	MINIMUM STANDARD	RESOURCES NEEDED	LEAD	TIMELINE
<p>2.2</p> <p>Review Relationship Based Professional Development (RBPDP) requirements through an equity lens and identify barriers to creating a diverse workforce</p> <p>Review current DHS requirements for all RBPDP endorsements directly related to Parent Aware contract implementation. Review Grantee job descriptions for positions under DHS contract to determine inconsistencies across agencies. Outreach and Engagement to determine gaps/barriers in career pathways for educators and students in BIPOC, Tribal, Immigrant, and other underserved communities. Make recommendations for updated RBPDP endorsement requirements.</p>	<p>Support to meet the particular needs of small, isolated providers, culturally specific providers, providers serving diverse families and special needs caregivers.</p> <p>Align MDE, DHS, and Parent Aware support for greater continuity and flexibility. Create a cross departmental implementation plan with the input of diverse providers and EC professionals.</p> <p>Additional indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of surveys conducted in each region. • Participation rates of BIPOC providers. • Participation rates of different types of providers: family, isolated, centers, special needs. • Documentation of how data is being used to improve support for children and families, disaggregated by race. 	<p>2.3</p> <p>Contractors work with Project Manager to determine timing and requirements for existing, as well as new staff as they onboard</p> <p>2.4</p> <p>Coordinators, Contract Manager, DHS Data Analyst, Community demographics overviews specific to ECE if possible.</p> <p>2.5</p> <p>DHS in partnership with key stakeholders to conduct extensive review of the current Parent Aware cohort model, generate recommendations, and oversee rollout of the new Parent Aware cohort model.</p>	<p>in Parent Aware versus bi-annual).</p>	<p>2.4</p> <p>Staff time to perform data analysis of community demographics, staff time to review District action plans</p> <p>2.5</p> <p>Funding - Cohort model review team, external equity evaluation, budget adjustments for grantees, additional system staff needed to support the new cohort model.</p> <p>Project Manager(s)</p> <p>Parent Aware data specific to BIPOC communities</p>		
<p>2.3</p> <p>Require each agency offering community based supports for Parent Aware offer annual bias training for all trainers and RBPDP specialists related to</p>						

ACTION (Continued)

Embed racial equity in workforce preparation and development for Parent Aware educators in the field and organizations supporting the field. Ensure all child care professionals are prepared in a learning style and topics that meet their interests.

ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	MINIMUM STANDARD	RESOURCES NEEDED	LEAD	TIMELINE
Parent Aware work Add to DHS work plan. Discuss with BUILD on how to bring workforce development and professional development into the state workgroup 2.4 Require each agency offering community based support to use data information about their service area, to recruit trainers and RBPD specialists that represent the community racially and linguistically. Collect qualitative data disaggregated by race (See FaCET) [9] that gives voice to parents and program staff while protecting their privacy. Use the information to improve policy and practice in professional development, classroom management, program design, and the assessment of children--with particular attention to unmet needs of BIPOC children and families. Support the training of diverse facilitators in each of the 5 Parent Aware regions of the state to administer the surveys.	2.5 Recommendations for new cohort model identified. Grantee staffing needs identified to support new cohort model and new budget recommendations established Develop updated to reflect new cohort model Fully contracted Rater Team to support continuous rating of Parent Aware participants throughout the year					
<p>Footnote [9] Family and Community Engagement Tool (FaCET); https://wilderresearch.org/tools/facet/</p>						

ACTION (Continued)

Embed racial equity in workforce preparation and development for Parent Aware educators in the field and organizations supporting the field. Ensure all child care professionals are prepared in a learning style and topics that meet their interests.

ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	MINIMUM STANDARD	RESOURCES NEEDED	LEAD	TIMELINE
2.5 To be responsible for BIPOC educators' experiences within Parent Aware, restructure the cohort model to provide greater opportunity for participation. Form Cohort model review committee Data collection and review of cohort participation specific to BIPOC communities Third party equity assessment of cohort model						

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A – Background Information

Appendix A-1. About the Parent Aware Quality Rating and Improvement System. [10]

Parent Aware Mission

Parent Aware, Minnesota's Quality Rating and Improvement System, offers tools and resources to help:

- Families find quality child care and early education
- Programs improve their practices
- Children benefit from care and education that will prepare them for school and life.

Parent Aware Principles

We believe that...

- Every child has unique gifts and abilities to celebrate and nurture
- All families deserve equitable access to quality care and education for their children
- Quality early learning from trained and culturally competent professionals makes a difference for children
- Children learn through relationships and playful interactions with their families, peers, providers, teachers and environment.

We commit to...

- Advancing inclusive practices that build on family, child, and community strengths
- Helping care and education programs adopt best practices and serve children of all cultures, races, ethnicities, languages, beliefs and abilities
- Offering services and supports from people who reflect our diverse community
- Supporting practices that will lead to closing the achievement gap for young children.

We will...

- Promote the importance of high-quality inclusive care and education programs and practices to all Minnesotans
- Offer professional growth for child care and early education professionals through cutting-edge, culturally responsive training, education, and coaching
- Always improve Parent Aware services through evaluation, listening to parents and providers, and use of the latest methods, models and research.

Parent Aware Website

<http://parentaware.org>

Appendix A-2. About the Child Development Services Unit.

Child Development Services Mission

Child Development Services offers a variety of services to ensure child care programs and child care professionals are ready to meet the diverse needs of Minnesota families and their children, creating a solid foundation for children to be successful.

Child Development Services Vision

All families have access to safe, quality child care of their choice that is affordable. Child care professionals are fairly compensated and have access to culturally appropriate training, supports and education they want and need. Child care programs have access to a variety of supports to increase or maintain quality services to children. CDS programs and services ensure equitable access for those seeking supports.

Child Development Services Values

Decision making processes engage communities and stakeholders: those impacted, using or providing the services. Equity includes ensuring access to opportunities when implementing or correcting programs, policies or systems. This requires us to look not just at intent, but also impact. Our programs and policies can always be improved and we will engage in a culture of innovation and continuous improvement.

Footnote:

[10] In 2017, DHS Child Development Services, with the Parent Aware Advisory Committee, established a mission and principles for Parent Aware. Minnesota's Parent Aware Principles were inspired and strongly informed by those developed by New Mexico and found in New Mexico FOCUS: Essential Elements of Quality for Center-Based Early Care and Education Programs, January 2015.

See Parent Aware Quality Rating and Improvement System: Standards and Indicators, October 2016
<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-6346B-ENG>

APPENDIX B – Detailed Materials Developed By Parent Aware Racial Equity Action Planning Group

Appendix B-1. List of Parent Aware Racial Equity Problems Identified.

Children of color attending a four-star rated program are not receiving the same preparation & education that white children attending four-star rated programs receive.

Parent Aware structure does not equitably support educators in terms of creating/giving access to resources that will help them meet the Parent Aware requirements.

There is a disconnect between the Parent Aware standards & indicators and the communities they serve.

The following has not been adjusted to align/reflect the expansion of the Knowledge and Competency Framework (KCF) for Early Childhood Educators to include cultural relevance:

- A. Parent Aware
 - a. Revision of quality standard and indicators to include cultural relevance at all levels
- B. Professional development system (Develop)
 - a. Expand offering on cultural competence available to providers
- C. Development of incentives
 - a. [not directly relevant to cultural competence] Change Quality Improvement Grants in Parent Aware so it's not only available on a reimbursement basis
 - b. Recognize cultural competence via badges, awards, etc.
- D. Funding for Implementation of Required Changes

Bureaucracy means change is slow; rarely able to be responsive in real time.

Parent Aware has more work to do in its cultural responsiveness given the existing disparities between white children & children of color as well as the ever-increasing population of people of color in the st



Appendix B-2. List of Parent Aware Racial Equity Strategies.

PROBLEM	STRATEGY
<i>Children of color attending a four-star rated program are not receiving the same preparation & education that white children attending four-star rated programs receive.</i>	<p>Require and/or provide support to key participants of Parent Aware in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program/Educator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Require training and coaching on anti-racism and cultural competency. • Recruiters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Require training and coaching on anti-racism and cultural competency. - Provide census data for local districts to understand the demographics of their areas. - Collaborate with other system staff (coaches, PD, and workforce development) to understand the needs of the area. - Provide marketing materials in other languages for recruiters to use. • Coaches/Specialists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide support to Rated and participating programs on implementing learning approaches that are developmentally appropriate, child-centered, and play-based curriculum. • Families <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement regular parent evaluations of rated or participating providers. - Gather family stories on their meaning of quality and what a quality rated program means to families. <hr/> <p>Conduct a new Parent Aware Validation Study, with the study design and tools developed by an advisory group made of people of color, a sample design large enough to allow disaggregation by race/ethnicity, and using tools measuring components of school readiness as identified by the aforementioned advisory group to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify what areas children of color may not have received the same quality education as their white peers (kindergarten preparedness & non-discriminatory/inclusive experience), and 2. Dive deeper into the specific challenges providers of color face in order to maintain their four-star standard (staff levels, staffing skills, resources/cost, etc.) <hr/> <p>DHS adopts an agency-wide goal of closing the achievement gap.</p> <hr/> <p>Modify Parent Aware standards & indicators to increase its whole family system approach/Two Generations approach: include attention to families' diverse needs & contexts (e.g., connecting families to supports, having trusting working relationships with families, etc.)</p> <hr/> <p>DHS Childcare Services Division works with an advisory group to develop a policy/standard that specifically addresses discipline and expulsion in Parent Aware rated programs (e.g., a PA rated program should not be allowed to expel children from their program.)</p>

PROBLEM

Parent Aware's structure does not equitably support educators in terms of creating/giving access to resources that will help them meet the Parent Aware requirements.

STRATEGY

Address inequities in distribution and access to resources supporting educators participating in Parent Aware:

- Identify and define definitions of quality childcare reflecting diversity in various settings.
- Identify what resources should be available and accessible to all educators, e.g., culturally responsive curriculum and pedagogy.
- Collect quantitative and qualitative data specific to identified programs that serve traditionally underserved communities

Create an exploratory committee comprised of key stakeholders at all levels to assess the current Parent Aware cohort model and its effectiveness in supporting participation by programs serving traditionally underserved communities.

- Evaluate Continuous Quality Improvement
- Evaluate use of Parent Aware grant dollars
- Evaluate professional development access

Identify and implement processes that support BIPOC providers engaging in the Parent Aware structure, especially with pay, grants and contracts.

Offer opportunities to expand staffing with current programs, revise payment structure (so that providers do not have to pay up front), and increase funding and support to preferred language access services to BIPOC communities (providers, parents, and children).

Increase the relevance, value, and use of the Minnesota Center for Professional Development (MCPD) as a resource for trainers, coaches and providers by:

- Promoting the MCPD as a resource for trainers and providers, and simplifying/clarifying its purpose and use.
 - Adding more courses to the MCPD library that specifically address the needs of BIPOC families and children.
 - Ensuring that Parent Aware and MCPD trainers and courses also specifically recognize the validity of cultural knowledge and the lived experience that are so important to BIPOC families.
-

PROBLEM	STRATEGY
<i>There is a disconnect between the Parent Aware standards & indicators and the communities they serve.</i>	<p>Bring in/work with racially diverse stakeholder groups to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewrite the definition of quality for PA, • Revise the competencies and indicators so that they are culturally inclusive and responsive, and • Explicitly include racial equity in the definition of quality and in the competencies and indicators <p>Create a task force/ advisory group that continuously assesses the quality and improvement rating system. This group will include representation from families and culturally and racially diverse communities. They will provide recommendations and advise changes to Parent Aware.</p> <p>Create and provide more tools and resources, e.g., FACET and/or family engagement coordinators/specialists, to support families and providers to meet the PA indicators.</p>
<i>Elements of Parent Aware have not been aligned/adjusted to reflect the expansion of the Knowledge and Competency Framework for Early Childhood Educators to include cultural relevance.</i>	<p>Embed racial equity in workforce preparation and development for educators in the field and organizations supporting the field by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in educator preparation & professional development programs on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - History of race/system racism and its manifestation in early learning settings - Anti-racist pedagogy and racially equitable practices in early childhood settings - Anti-bias, family-centered approaches for educators • Requiring all educators and coaches to complete yearly training on topics listed above (1, 2, 3) • Requiring contracting organizations implementing quality rating support services to provide internal racial equity strategic plans <p>Outline 1:1 pathway between FACET-informed KCF indicators and the trainings that are available to support growth & capacity in each indicator. Develop trainings to align with indicators that do not presently have a corresponding training.</p>
<i>Bureaucracy means change is slow; rarely able to be responsive in real time.</i>	<p>Develop and implement consistent data gathering mechanisms to understand who the children participating in PA programs are (demographic info - including race, star level, etc.), and progress made (K readiness, etc.) while in programs and upon program exit. Determine whether the data gathering mechanisms occur through periodic external studies of children participating and/or ongoing collection of data on children's participation and progress made.</p> <p>Implement a data-driven continuous equity quality improvement cycle for Parent Aware. To ensure transparency, include community partners in these cycles, offer regular opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback and clear strategies for sharing information about changes made (i.e. website).</p>

Appendix B-3. Strategy Prioritization Matrix.

RACIAL EQUITY STRATEGY PRIORITIZATION MATRIX

What we said we wanted in all that is developed:

- **Bold moves/high impact** (Strategies with depth that are incorporated into systems – sustainable & long-term)
- **Maximum effectiveness** (Quantified & proven results that can be tangibly seen)
- **Quick wins** (Immediate impact on kids – want our two year olds to be experiencing the changes by the time they are four years old)
- **Doable** (Clear next steps for partners, implementable, and with clear measures for success)

	5	4	3	2	1
MEANING	Extremely	Very	Moderately	Not very	Not at all

PROBLEM(S) IDENTIFIED	STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS PROBLEM(S)	<i>This strategy specifically addresses an identified problem related to Parent Aware's racial equity outcomes.</i>	<i>This strategy will actually impact the problem.</i>	<i>This strategy is aligned with principles of child development & high-quality care to children.</i>	<i>This strategy will advantage/beneficially impact BI/ COC* in Parent Aware rated childcare programs.</i> (*BI/COC = Black, Indigenous, Children of Color)	<i>This strategy is sustainable.</i> (Consider potential cost, personal requirement, enforcement mechanisms, will/ readiness to undertake, etc.)
Children of color attending a four-star rated program are not receiving the same preparation & education that white children attending Four-Star rated programs receive.						

PROBLEM(S) IDENTIFIED	STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS PROBLEM(S)	<i>This strategy specifically addresses an identified problem related to Parent Aware's racial equity outcomes.</i>	<i>This strategy will actually impact the problem.</i>	<i>This strategy is aligned with principles of child development & high-quality care to children.</i>	<i>This strategy will advantage/bene- ficially impact BI/ COC* in Parent Aware rated childcare programs.</i> (*BI/COC = Black, Indigenous, Children of Color)	<i>This strategy is sustainable.</i> (Consider potential cost, personal requirement, enforcement mechanisms, will/ readiness to undertake, etc.)
Children of color attending a four-star rated program are not receiving the same preparation & education that white children attending Four-Star rated programs receive.						
Parent Aware structure does not equitably support educators in terms of creating/giving access to resources that will help them meet the Parent Aware requirements.						
There is a disconnect between the Parent Aware standards & indicators and the communities they serve.						
Bureaucracy means change is slow; rarely able to be responsive in real time.						

PROBLEM(S) IDENTIFIED	STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS PROBLEM(S)	<i>This strategy specifically addresses an identified problem related to Parent Aware's racial equity outcomes.</i>	<i>This strategy will actually impact the problem.</i>	<i>This strategy is aligned with principles of child development & high-quality care to children.</i>	<i>This strategy will advantage/bene- ficially impact BI/ COC* in Parent Aware rated childcare programs.</i> (*BI/COC = Black, Indigenous, Children of Color)	<i>This strategy is sustainable.</i> (Consider potential cost, personal requirement, enforcement mechanisms, will/ readiness to undertake, etc.)
The following has not been adjusted to align/reflect the expansion of the Knowledge and Competency Frame- work (KCF) for Early Childhood Educators to include cultural relevance.						

Appendix B-4. Racial Equity Action Plan Framework.

RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN FRAMEWORK FOR SELECTED STRATEGIES

PROBLEM: Name the issue we are addressing.

STRATEGY: Name the strategy we are proposing to mitigate/resolve the problem.

DEFINITION OF SUCCESS: Name the SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound) goal related to this strategy. [What is the overall result of the steps we propose taking?]

INTENDED IMPACT: Name how this goal will reflect and impact our racial equity values.

ACTIONS	ACTION STEPS	LEAD	INDICATORS	IMPLEMENTA- TION PLAN	RESOURCES NEEDED	MINIMUM STANDARD	TIMELINE	STATUS
<i>Specific actions to accomplish the SMART goal</i>	<i>Specific steps to accomplish actions</i>	<i>Staff or department responsible for the action and accountable to its completion</i>	<i>Deliverables for the action</i>	<i>To do list outlining who needs to meet, what needs to be created, etc. to achieve action</i>	<i>What is needed to perform action: financial, human, and/or material</i>	<i>Minimum measurable standard attached to each deliverable</i>	<i>Date by when action should be completed</i>	<i>The action's current status (update regularly)</i>