



Background

- Building equity into the data life cycle is imperative as we address inequities in our early childhood and education structures and systems. To do that, we need to:
- Engage a diverse community of stakeholders.
 - Address how data are gathered, monitored, analyzed, used, and disseminated.
 - Ensure local programs and staff recognize the usefulness of collecting high-quality data.
 - Understand how racial equity affects early childhood data is vital, by building relationships among those represented and not represented in the data.
 - Look at our institutional and structural systems to identify those policies and practices that:
 - ensure data is disaggregated to inform responses that mitigate, rather than further entrench, racial and ethnic disparities by implementing an equity lens, and
 - address the institutional policies, procedures, and practices that focus on the individual rather than the structure of the systems and programs.

Building Equity in the Data Life Cycle

- Be intentional to promote inclusion and equity and not to reinforce harmful stereotypes and perpetuate inequity and bias.
- Prioritize what is really needed and careful consideration of data collection, particularly demographics.
- Plan analysis as well as privacy and confidentiality of individuals.¹



Racial Equity in Planning

Planning is the first stage of the data life cycle. In this stage, ask:²

- “Why is the work necessary?”
- “Who does the work benefit?”
- “How does it benefit the community at large?”
- “Who can the process/product harm?”
- “Raise awareness to gain support from leadership to start a data team.”

| Positive Practice | Problematic Practice |
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| “Including diverse perspectives (such as community members with lived experiences and agency staff who understand the data) on planning committees” | “Using only token “representation” in agenda-setting, question creation, governance, or IRB review” |
| “Building capacity for researchers, administrators, and community participants to work together on agenda-setting” | “Using deadlines or grant deliverables as an excuse to rush or avoid authentic community engagement” |
| “Researching, understanding, and disseminating the history of local policies, systems, and structures involved, including past harms and future opportunities” | “Using only historical administrative data to describe the problem, without a clear plan of action to improve outcomes” |
| “Building data literacy among organizations and community members, which could range from light engagement through public activities like data “gallery walks” to more intense involvement, such as community-based participatory action research” | “Failing to manage expectations around what the data are capable of telling or how long it will take to see marked changes in data, actions, and outcomes” |
| “Establishing a common language and agreed upon sources and methods for reporting on community-based indicators” | “Failing to revisit indicator and outcome metrics regularly and revise when necessary” |
| “Clearly discerning who decides how to frame the problem or determine what questions to ask” | “Relying on academic institutions to frame the problem and research questions while failing to engage community-based organizations” |
| “Planning that includes the use of an asset; creating a framework that aims to clarify how to improve policy, services, and outcomes” | “Planning that includes the use of a deficit; creating a framework to describe outcomes” |
| “Lifting up the research needs of community to funders; helping shape funding strategy with funders to support community-driven research” | “Accepting grant/philanthropic funding for a project that is not a community priority or need” |

- What are other positive and problematic practices?

Teaming for Data Use

- Data teams are groups of individuals dedicated to using data to plan and make decisions about programs and services.³
- Whether starting a new data team or requesting support from an existing team, this infographic can be used to do the following:
 - Recruit data team members to give them an overview of data teams, how they operate and why multiple perspectives are so important to the success of the effort.
 - Raise awareness to gain support from leadership to start a data team.
 - Engage leadership on an ongoing basis about the work of the data team and to make recommendations for programmatic improvements.



Considerations for building a data team:

- What is the purpose of the data team?
- Are varying perspectives represented? How are members identified?
- Who serves on the data team? What are their roles?
- What are the goals? How are they prioritized?
- How long will the data team continue to work?
- What process will be used for data-informed decision-making or inquiry?

Prioritize Your Critical Questions

- The next step is to identify questions your team wants to answer and track the relevant data over time.
- It is critical to select questions that are relevant to the state’s local programs in the areas.
- This section of the DaSy *Data Culture Toolkit* provides information, resources, and tools to help state teams identify critical questions.
- Use the DaSy *Critical Questions about Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education* resource when developing questions.

Discussion Questions

- *In what ways are community members and families included in the development of your organization’s data life cycle?*
- *How are community members and families recruited to participate, and how is engagement solicited?*
- *What have been the successes and challenges of including community members and families?*

Sources

¹Kaplowitz, R., & Laroche, J., (2020). *More than numbers. A guide toward diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in data collection*. Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation.

²Hawn Nelson, A., Jenkins, D., Zanti, S., Katz, M., Berkowitz, E., Burnett, T. C., & Culhane, D. (2020). *A toolkit for centering racial equity throughout data integration*. Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy, University of Pennsylvania.

³The Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy). (n.d.). *Data culture toolkit: Data quality resources and tools*.

