

CLASP

Policy solutions that work for low-income people

Shaping Equitable Early Childhood Policy: Incorporating Inclusive Community Engagement Frameworks into Expanded Data Strategies

Alycia Hardy & Alyssa Fortner

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Child Care and Early Education Data

- Data is critical in identifying and scaling public supports to meet community needs.
- Administrative, survey, individual outcome, observational, etc.
- Exacerbated long-standing inequities in child care and early education (CCEE).
- A critical moment to reimagine how the CCEE system uses data to drive policy.
 - Using data to identify and address the immediate impacts of COVID in a way that targets federal investments at communities that have been most impacted and allows those communities the flexibility to use those funds.
 - Developing the long-term infrastructure and capacity to create data processes that center equitable community engagement to address long-standing inequities in how communities of color are engaged in the data process.

Disconnected Communities & Inequitable Data

- Administrative, program evaluation, and individual level performance and other one-dimensional data replace the voices, narratives, and experiences of impacted people.
- Historically, the disconnect between those who inform and make policy decisions and those who are directly impacted by those decisions has been intentional.
- Presently, the absence of equity centered community engagement in data processes has resulted in the weaponization of data:
 - Deficit language
 - Reinforcing the disconnect and inequitable power structures between those who drive ECE policy and those who are directly impacted by those policies

Equitable Community Engagement

- Current data processes were created within the same systems, institutions and structures that have been shaped by the impacts of white supremacy culture and systemic racism.
- Equitable community engagement can help bridge the disconnect between those who drive policy decisions and those who are directly impacted by those decisions.
- The lack of community engagement frameworks in data processes and decision making creates intentional and unintentional barriers to participation.
 - This produces inequitable outcomes in the form of laws, policies, and practices that enslaved, excluded, and devalued Black, Indigenous, and other people of color.
 - These historic barriers, which blocked access to critical supports that could help strengthen economic, educational, health, and social wellbeing in communities of color, continue harming these communities to this day.

Equitable Community Engagement Frameworks

- ~~Difficult to reach communities~~ Poorly engaged communities
- Equity ≠ Sameness
- Community Access points
 - Inviting people to the table vs. finding already existing tables
 - Co-creating tables
- Minimal, foundational characteristics of an equitable framework:
 - Building trust
 - Relevant methods that are tailored to incorporate language, culture, communication styles, community history and other factors that shape engagement.
 - Direct compensation for those being engaged, for their time and expertise as well as other mutual community benefits.
 - Equitable power structures that allow directly impacted people to lead and contribute throughout the data process, meaningfully and consistently.

Data Cycle Processes

- Planning
- Collection
- Coding/cleaning
- Analysis
- Contextualization
- Design
- Dissemination
- Decision Making

Integrating Data Across State Agencies

- Often, data collected from various CCEE programs remain in disconnected state agencies.
- Integrating data across state agencies allows for more holistic, inclusive CCEE policy decisions.
- The recent relief funds offer opportunity to build this integration infrastructure prioritizing equitable community engagement.
 - Community members' time and expertise are valued in building this infrastructure and the subsequent collection, use, and privacy of their data.

Equity Mapping

- Using data to physically map resources and supports through spatial analyses.
 - Resource location
 - Who has access and where they're located
 - Identify inequities in resources across geographies
- Centering equitable community engagement frameworks in equity mapping.
- Layering data strategies on a foundation of equitable community engagement.

Making Data Accessible, Usable, & Inclusive

- Accessibility: informs the limitations on how people acquire data and how people interact with data and technology.
- Inclusion: addresses how race and/or ethnicity intersects with income, education, language, disability status and other factors that impact how communities experience and interact with the ECE system.
- Usability: is the intersection of accessibility and inclusion, where meeting both criteria creates practical data resources regardless of race and/or ethnicity and other intersecting identities or factors.

Making Data Accessible, Usable, & Inclusive

- Language

- The content of data reports should be translated into the languages that best fit context of the community that is receiving it.
- Researchers should continuously engage with the current lexicon of the communities to ensure their identities and experiences are accurately and inclusively reflected.
- Any content from the data process for the public should avoid wording that may be more fitting for internal program staff and academic audiences.

- Visualization

- Understanding colors are more than a design feature: color association, visual impairment, gendered color palettes
- Language labels

- Dissemination

- Offline vs. Online options
- Privacy measures or barriers to equitable access
- Resource format

Equitable and Inclusive Policy

- Equitable, inclusive CCEE policy is inextricably linked to equitable, inclusive data processes rooted in equitable, inclusive community engagement frameworks.
- Expanding data strategies beyond disaggregating individual level data by race/ethnicity, income, & other characteristics:
 - Integrating and linking data across state agencies to better understand and meet community needs and create aligned ECE resources.
 - Using data to physically map resources through spatial analyses to gauge and increase equitable access to appropriate resources.
- Accessible, usable, and inclusive for practitioners, families, and advocates; not just researchers, policy analysts, and policymakers.

Additional Considerations

- Conducting equity assessments at the individual, team, and organizational level.
- Hiring and retaining staff who reflect impacted communities and who have the authority to lead and contribute.
- Assessing current data governance policies and processes related to privacy, security, ethics, access, and quality.
- Conducting an inventory of currently available interagency CCEE data.

Contact Us

Alycia Hardy

Email: ahardy@clasp.org

Twitter: [@ahardyMPA17](https://twitter.com/ahardyMPA17)

Alyssa Fortner

Email: afortner@clasp.org

Twitter: [@alyssadfortner](https://twitter.com/alyssadfortner)

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