OVERCOMING RACIAL INJUSTICE
&
ENSURING THE SUCCESS OF ALL CHILDREN

ICS Webinar Series
October 5, 2020

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Dr. Jill C. Shelnut, Ph.D.-Clemson University
Dr. Dee Stegelin, Ph.D.-Institute for Child Success & Clemson University
LaTisha Vaughn, M.A.-Tri-County Cradle to Career
Today’s Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Racial Injustice & Black Children
3. Preschool Suspension & Expulsion
4. Implicit Bias in the Classroom
5. What Now? TCCC & ICS Share
Today’s Panelists

Mary C. Garvey, M.S.
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LaTisha Vaughn, M.A.
Chief Operating Officer at Tri-County Cradle to Career
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- Racial Injustice & Black Children
- Preschool Suspension & Expulsion
- Implicit Bias in the Classroom
- What Now? TCCC & ICS Share
Racial Injustice & Black Children

A Collection of Stories

Two informal surveys captured stories from 95 families in 17 states.

92% are parents or primary guardians to Black children age 18 and younger.

44% are from NY

24% are from SC

Other States: NJ, NC, CA, FL, GA, IN, MD, MI, TX, VA, CT, WA, IL, KY, NH
Question #1: Increased Worry

Do recent incidents make you feel more worried about your child’s future?

✔ Yes
✔ No
✔ Unsure
Increased Worry About Black Child’s Future

- Yes: 89%
- No: 9%
- Unsure: 2%
Regional Differences in Responses

Survey 1
- Increased Worry: 91%
- No Increased Worry: 7%
- Unsure: 2%

Survey 2
- Increased Worry: 86%
- No Increased Worry: 12%
- Unsure: 2%

Survey 1 - 73% NY
Survey 2 - 46% SC
The current racial tension in our country makes me worry about his future. Black people have been suffering with racism for so long that we teach our children tactics to stay alive. Over the years a few incidents will raise the issue, but nothing really changes. People do a lot of talking, but the system level change that needs to take place never gets addressed.

(SC, 3-year-old boy)
The media and BLM are making my sons feel that people hate them because of their color. They never felt like that before. I have taught them not to hate and they have not experienced hate. I will not allow the media and BLM to bring their division and racism into my children’s minds. I fight that every day.

(CA, 12 and 14-year-old boys)
“I feel that she has been treated unfairly as far as discipline [at] her school. After an altercation with a white student, my child was punished more harshly when [it was the other student who] instigated the situation.”

(CT, 14-year-old girl)
I am the mother to an Afro-Latina child. Recently, I was cooking and had news playing in the background. I did not think my daughter was paying attention. She saw police officers pushing peaceful protesters. She asked me what was going on and I had to explain to my four-year-old that sometimes Black people aren’t treated nicely. Protesters are trying to get change so that Black people get fair treatment. She should be concerned about dolls and painting, not racism. That upsets me.

(NJ, 4-year-old daughter)
Shortly after Michael Brown was killed, I got pulled over with my daughter in the car. Police asked where I was coming from and what I was doing, then asked me about whether or not I had drugs and guns in the car. I just knew – as a Black man – that I was going to jail, and my 8-year old was sitting in the back seat.

Afterwards, I drove a mile, then I pulled over and cried. In that moment, I was glad I had a Black daughter and not a Black son. A year later Sandra Bland died, and I realized that it doesn't matter if I have a Black daughter. We all have a target on our back. That is the most disheartening part, that even my Black daughter and wife aren't safe.

(MD, 14-year-old daughter)
Question #2: Emotion Based on Perception of Skin Color/Race

When thinking about how society may view your child’s race and/or skin color, what one word captures your emotion?
In saying I am terrified, I am. I'm very scared...What can I do as a parent to make my kids feel safe? Being “respectable” or engaging in respectability politics doesn't help. I want my kids to be their full and true selves, but I know that doing so could endanger them.

(TX, 1-year-old twins, boy and girl)
Uncertainty

“ Their race is polarizing in terms of how they are viewed, depending upon the person. I fear for their safety when they are away from family and major systems such as school where they are primarily safe. ”

(FL, 9, 15 and 17-year-old girls, 17-year-old boy)
Horrified

“...I live in the state where Breonna Taylor was killed in her home with her boyfriend...It has been 4 months and LMPD, Mayor Greg Fischer, and Attorney General Daniel Cameron still have not arrested the officers who killed her. That is horrifying.”

(KY, 5 and 11-year-old girls, 7-year-old and 6-month-old boys)
Never call us that. Treat us the same way as you treat [other people]. Help reprogram people from using that word and any other slave master word. We as black people have feelings and we need equal treatment as anyone else. Stop placing roadblocks for us.
Question #3: How to Better Serve Black Children

Given the current and ongoing climate of racial injustice in our country, what advice would you give or what would you want an organization committed to improving outcomes for children to know, so that the organization can – with empathy and understanding – effectively serve Black families and Black children?
Combat Adverse Childhood Experiences

“I recommend that organizations provide therapy for PTSD, depression and anxiety. My children are fearful of what may happen to them.”

(FL, 12 and 15-year-old boys, 17-year-old girl)
Diversity & Anti-Racist Training

"Companies need to learn how to become culturally sensitive. It starts with diversity training. I believe diversity training should be for everyone...Diversity training should be built into every school and every organization that serves children or influences policy."

(NY, 13 and 18-year-old girls)
Focus on Policy

“
I had to have “the talk” with my two boys at age 7. I never expected that this would be on my list of things to do as a mom so soon in their development.

An early childhood research and policy organization has got to get ahead of the conversation. A think-tank influences policy. Without your organization's guidance on these things we will never get policy that will shift the conversation. You are the experts sitting at the table.

(NC, 9-year-old twin boys)
Do the Work! Minimize Implicit Bias.

I am the chair of the Black alumni board at my alma mater, and I know that I cannot solve racism. I deal with racism, but I cannot solve it. White people, especially white teachers, need to not see Black children as a threat. In 3rd grade my teacher asked me how I could dress so nicely if I have a single mom. “Dressing nicely” didn't make her think I was from a home where I was taken care of. Instead it made her suspicious of my means. White people need to do the work.

(TX, 1-year-old twins, boy and girl)
Get To the Root of the Issue

“I shouldn’t have to provide advice. That’s the problem. Why does anyone need to tell racist and bigoted people how to not be that way?”

(NY, 15-year-old twins, boy and girl)
Silence is Consent, Speak Up!

“I would want an organization to know that parents are afraid, that we don't trust the very systems that have been oppressing us for years. Racism will not change until our white peers open their mouths and speak. With racial injustice, silence equals consent. Organizations should also note that children begin to recognize their differentiated treatment as early as age 2 and 3. The silence is also noted by children.”

(NC, twin 9-year-old boys)
Admit It... We All ‘See Color’

‘Not seeing color’ is part of the problem. We all see color, but the respect and dignity need to be the same.

(NY, 13 and 18-year-old girls)
Use White Privilege for Good

"Use white privilege to educate, inform and change systems."

(SC, 3-year-old boy)
Race-Baiting?

“I just want the race-baiting to stop. I have not been treated differently and maybe someone of my color has been, [but that] is not [the case for] me. I fear that my children will be looked down on because of the hatred that is going on in the world.”

(SC, 9-year-old boy, 14-year-old girl)
Poll Question

During this climate, should discussions of bias, racism and injustice be considered “race-baiting?”

YES – NO – UNSURE
ICS believes that there is value in making visible the potential for beauty, hope and joy in the future of our world – a future that includes the Black children we know and love, as well as the little ones we have not met yet. What would you like community leaders to know about your child?
“Her life matters. Her past, present and future matter. Too many times we as adults dim the lights of kids because we need them to conform to what's normal. What if we listened to them more and realized that what's normal for us can dim their light and make them less hopeful for their own futures?”

(IL, 3 and 7-year-old girls)
God gave him a phenomenal brain. I have watched him grow and he has an exceptional ability in the engineering and math realm. He is loving and mischievous. He is a great orator. He loved to go on stage at Barnes and Noble and tell jokes from the latest joke book. He is friendly. He loves chicken nuggets and chocolate milk. He will come and hug you for no visible reason.

His love language is that he seeks approval. He learns with little or no effort. It comes natural to him. He has wanted to be a race car driver since he was 2. He still loves Lightning McQueen. To meet him is to love him. Did I mention that he is cute too? Thank you for letting me share about my gift from God.

(SC, 10-year-old boy)
“My children are so much more than the color of their skin. They're artists, athletes, computer coders, great friends, sensitive people. They are amazing people who can be great adults if they are given a fair chance.”

(NY, 13-year-old girl and 12-year-old boy)
“My 17 year-old daughter...is number one in her class. She was a Duke TIP Scholar for four years. She plans to attend NC A&T University in Greensboro to study Animal Sciences and obtain a degree as a Veterinarian Surgeon for Small Animals. She is 5’11” and gorgeous, articulate, and loves her church. She is a class act!”

(SC, 17 and 12-year-old girls)
Today’s Agenda

Welcome & Introductions

Racial Injustice & Black Children

Preschool Suspension & Expulsion

Implicit Bias in the Classroom

What Now? TCCC & ICS Share
Preschool Suspension and Expulsion

Dr. Dee Stegelin
Professor Emerita-Clemson
ICS Senior Fellow
dstegel@Clemson.edu
Important Facts

Preschool Suspension & Expulsion

• Needs greater public awareness

• Yale Study Center did foundation research (Gilliam, 2005).

• Issue of growing importance:
  1) expanded 4K in schools and
  2) disproportionate numbers for blacks (race) and boys (gender)

• Rate of suspension and expulsion for preschool is greater than for K-12.
Early Suspension and Expulsion: Another Form of Trauma

The experience of suspension/expulsion is traumatic for the child and family.

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), each year over 8,700 three- and four-year-old children are expelled from their state-funded preschool or prekindergarten classrooms (NAEYC, 2017).

10 years after foundational research (Gilliam, 2005), federal data reflect disproportionate number of minority male students (African American and Latino) are expelled, along with English Language Learners and students with disabilities, all of whom would benefit from daily attendance in high quality preschool programs (Horowitz, 2015).
Black children are more likely to be suspended from preschool than white children. Black children account for roughly 19% of all preschoolers, but nearly ½ of preschoolers who get suspended.
Most public preschool children suspended are boys:

- boys represent 54% of total preschool enrollment
- boys represent 78% of preschool children receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions
Preschool Suspension & Expulsion and Implicit Bias

Researchers are studying implicit bias as a part of the suspension and expulsion phenomenon.
Implicit Bias

• Noun

• unconscious favoritism toward or prejudice against people of a particular race, gender, etc. that influences one's actions or perceptions (Oxford)
Teacher implicit bias is believed to be a factor in suspension and expulsion.

Yale Child Study Center studies Implicit Bias as an important part of Pre-K suspension/expulsion (Gilliam et al, 2016:

- Teachers held implicit bias toward boys who were physically larger and black or Latino.
Teach about Implicit Bias:
*We all have them.*

Self-awareness and growth
- Gaining insight into one’s possible teacher biases

Support for EC teachers:
- class size
- behavioral analysis and intervention
- teacher well being
- mental health services
- effects of trauma
Preschool Suspension and Expulsion: Mental Health Issues

The practice of preschool suspension and expulsion should help us focus even more on the mental health of preschool children and the likelihood that these children are more likely to experience mental health issues.
Effects of Preschool Suspension & Expulsion: Can Lead to Later School Dropout

The effect of suspension and expulsion on the child is immediate and can *have long-term implications for the child’s overall emotional and social development* as well as the likelihood of permanent school dropout in the later years (Horowitz, 2015).
Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Policies in Early Childhood Settings

Joint Statement Department of Education (ED) and Health and Human Services (HHS)

The purpose of this policy statement is to support families, early childhood programs, and States by providing recommendations from the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education (ED) for preventing and severely limiting expulsion and suspension practices in early childhood settings.
State-Level Policy and Practice: Preschool Suspension and Expulsion

• Assessing practices and policies of preschool suspension and expulsion
• School-wide training on trauma
• Federal guidelines and protections for young students - All Staff
• Mental health and behavioral supports for children
• Teacher well being and support
• Moving to eliminate suspension
Policy Resources

**Stepping Stones to Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards** - assist programs in establishing disciplinary and expulsion/suspension policies

**Birth to Five Watch Me Thrive** - enhance developmental and behavioral screening practices in early learning settings

**National Center on Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, Center for the Social Emotional Foundation for Early Learning (CSEFEL), and the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention (TACSEI)** - bolster staff training on social-emotional and behavioral support for very young children
Recommendations / Best Practices: Preschool

★ Create and maintain consistent daily routines for classrooms.
  ○ Use daily calendars, visual schedules, and photos of the class routine.

★ Tell children when something out of the ordinary will occur.
  ○ Provide warning in advance to prepare young children for changes.

★ Offer children developmentally appropriate choices.
  ○ Empower children by allowing them to make choices about food, seating, etc.

★ Anticipate difficult periods and transitions during school days.
  ○ Offer extra support for children during these times.

(Statman-Weil, 2015)

Questions? Thank you!! dstegel@clemson.edu
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Implicit Bias in the Classroom

What Now? TCCC & ICS Share
What do implicit bias and racism look like in the classroom?

Dr. Jill C. Shelnut
Clemson University
A Kindergarten Classroom Scenario
At the beginning of the year in Ms. Verwayne’s class, the children are working on an “All About Me” project. They begin by drawing pictures of themselves based on observations of their reflections in a mirror. Next, the teacher provides them with sentence starters asking them to describe their hair color and texture, their skin color, and their eye color. In this racially and ethnically diverse class, the children learn a variety of vocabulary words they can use to describe these differences.

(NAEYC, 2018)
Poll Question:
Yes or No?

Should children be shielded from learning explicitly about race and racial differences?
Poll Question: Do you agree or disagree with Ellie’s statement?

“Since it’s the beginning of the year, the kids should be doing things that help them see what they have in common rather than emphasizing their differences.”
• Teachers who intentionally plan curricula that affirm children’s racial identities have seen the benefits this produces in supporting children’s growth and learning across many domains of development.

(Ladson-Billings 2009; Wright, Counsell, & Tate 2015).
COLORBLIND?

Ellie (parent) grew up in the Midwest in mostly racially homogenous environments and noted that race was never discussed in her upbringing. Echoing the “colorblind” view that many White families espouse, Ellie recounted, “I don’t think I thought about it much. I always thought, ‘Everybody’s wonderful. Everybody’s the same.’” When her daughter began to attend public school, Ellie and some of the other White parents discussed their concerns about Ms. Verwayne’s curriculum.
What can you do?

Strategies for home and classroom
Ask yourselves...

• Who am I as a cultural being?
• What cultural threads make up the fabric of who I am?
• What aspects of my identity afford me privileges?
• What are the racial and linguistic backgrounds of those who surround me in school/at work?
• What does this tell me?
• Do I see and actively question inequities in schools?
  → Not enough to read and be informed...**what can you DO?**

(Souto-Manning, 2014)
Culture Circles in the Classroom

• A safe space to discuss very difficult or painful issues in order to improve relationships and resolve differences.

• Geometry matters!

• Encourage students & facilitators to speak from their own lived experience:
  ➢ How have you been impacted? What has this situation been like for you? What has been the hardest thing for you? What do you need to move forward?

• Invite participants to share stories from their lives:
  ➢ Share an experience when you…
Children’s Literature

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<th>MIRRORS</th>
<th>WINDOWS</th>
<th>SLIDING DOORS</th>
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<td>• Allow children to see themselves in literature so they feel a connection to it</td>
<td>• Allow views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange.</td>
<td>• Allow children to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created and recreated by the author.</td>
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Children’s literature to support critical issues

- Poverty
- Disabilities
- Citizenship
- Social – emotional competence
- Feelings & fears
- Celebrations & traditions
- Race & ethnicity
Teaching Lens

• The majority of educators are white (83%) and female (75%) (Aud et al., 2012); therefore, most teachers view education through the lens of white females.

• Because the performance of children who are culturally and linguistically diverse does not always align with such parameters, it is often regarded as deficient (Klinger et al., 2005).
What does this mean for our children of color?
Maya – Kindergarten Racism Victim

• Biracial 5-year old female
• Called the “n” word by a male peer
• Does not recall if she did something wrong
• Was unsure if this was a term used by kids
• Name calling and rock throwing occurred
• Bus trouble and after school problems continued
• Frequent tantrums and crying spells
• Dad tried to explain history
• Grew up in town with 94% white people
Why do you think she is displaying these behaviors?

- Fear
- Confusion
- Frustration
- Lack of consistency
- Lack of trust
- No one is helping her find a solution

How will the trauma negatively impact her as a learner?

- Undermine her ability to learn
- Difficulty creating healthy attachments
- Trouble forming supportive relationships
- Hard to follow classroom expectations
- Potentially lead to being suspended or expelled...
Young Children’s Reactions to Trauma

- Over- or under-reacting to sensory input (physical contact, bright light, sudden movement, loud sounds)
- Increased distress
- Anxiety, fear, and worry about safety of self and others
- Worry about recurrence of the traumatic event
- New fears
- Statements and questions about death and dying
Young Children’s Reactions to Trauma

- Separation anxiety toward teachers/caregivers
- Regression in previously mastered stages of development
- Lack of developmental progress
- Recreating the traumatic event (talking, playing, drawing)
- Difficulty sleeping
- Increased somatic complaints
- Changes in behavior (e.g., appetite, unexplained absences, angry outbursts, decreased attention, withdrawal)
Classroom Idea

• Display photos of all of your students.
• Using Post-It notes:
  • Place a **GREEN** sticky note on the photos of children with whom you have connected.
  • Place a **YELLOW** sticky note on the photos of children whom you feel you know, but not very well.
  • Place a **RED** sticky note on the photos of children with whom you have not yet connected or do not know much about.
• Make an effort to connect with your RED and YELLOW sticky note students.
• These students are likely to be the ones who need the most support.
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Tri-County Cradle to Career
We Must Embrace These Truths…

1) Racial inequities look the same across systems
2) Socio economic difference does not explain the racial inequities
3) Inequities are caused by systems, regardless of people’s culture or behavior

*Adopted from “Racial Equity Institute’s The Ground Water Approach: Building a Practical Understanding of Structural Racism”*
Observations in the Tri-County Area & Beyond

- There is a collective awakening happening about the existence of systemic racism

- Lots of well intended people are doing work, however outcomes are not changing... disparities still exist

- Major corporations have made public statements about their alignment to the Black Lives Matter Movement including Ben and Jerry’s

- Our country is the most divided that I have ever seen

- Lots of people want to know what to do
Challenges in Tackling Racial Injustice

Although many organizations have made public statements, there is no other visual representation of anti-racist work being done.

Many folks who want to move to action do not have a true understanding of the problem or what it will take to solve the problem.
Successes Thus Far

TCCC is an anti-racist organization

Co-Development of Race Equity Statement in partnership with national collective impact organization

Framework for New Education Model and How We Measure Success Using Equity Framework (National Partnership)

Recovery Work Steering Committee Comprised of Cross Section of the Community (35 Members)
Successes Continued

Elevating the Voices of Children and Families (Regional Project in partnership with First Steps and E3)

Power Shifts

- Partnership with First Steps
- Backbone Support to Create a Childcare Provider Network (Advocacy)
TCCC’s Path Forward

LISTEN

EMPOWER
✓ Share/Shift Power
✓ Co-Develop Solutions

LEARN
✓ Racial Equity Institute

EVALUATE
✓ Equity Audit

CONNECT
Institute for Child Success
ICS
Mission: Why We Care

The success of all young children.
Strengthening Ourselves Internally

- Listening with Humility
- Anti-Racist Commitment
- 21-Day Equity “Kickstart” (Challenge)
- Understanding Implicit/Unconscious Bias Session

DEI Training

Anti-Racist

Research

Strengthening Ourselves Internally
Externally, In the Mission-Based Work We Do, ICS...

Continues to educate on and work to actively eliminate things such as implicit bias, preschool suspension and expulsion, the adultification of Black girls.

Stays informed of and contributes to the latest research on young Black children.

Will Reach out to representatives and policymakers to share stories we have gathered.
For The Things That Fall Outside of Our Wheelhouse…

Amplify the work of those organizations that are effectively doing the work on behalf of Black children that ICS cannot (e.g.-mentoring).
“Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Elijah McCain, the Emanuel Nine and countless other individuals were once children aged 0-8. So were those that took their lives. We did not have to find ourselves here. We must do better for young children – our children. Their future is one for which we are all responsible.”