



**Early Childhood Policy Council
Joint Parent and Workforce Advisory Committee Hybrid Meeting**

Tuesday, June 21, 2022

12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Summary Report

Advisory Committee Members in Attendance:

Tonia McMillian, Mary Ignatius, Lisete Frausto, Patrick MacFarlane, Yenni Rivera, Patricia Lozano, Cherie Schroeder, Deborah Corley-Marzett, Naima Facih, Miren Algorri, Patricia Alexander, Virginia Eigen, Amelia Soto, Zoila Carolina Toma, AnnLouise Bonnitto

Early Childhood Policy Council Members in Attendance:

Janet Zamudio, Kim Johnson, Lupe Jaime Mileham, Robin Layton, Stephanie Myers

Presenters: Dr. Chrishana Lloyd, Keisha Nzewi, Dr. Lea Austin

Interpreters: Diana Orozco, Giovanna Wormsbecker, Ya-nan Chou, Sarah Sun

Facilitation and WestEd Tech Team: Karin Bloomer, David Burchiel, Margarete Lee

Introduction

The meeting started with opening words from Tonia McMillian, chair of the Workforce Advisory Committee, and Mary Ignatius, chair of the Parent Advisory Committee. Ms. McMillian touched on the significance of Juneteenth, stressing that its unfortunate lack of recognition as a holiday in all states is an indicator that Black people are still in the struggle against racism in the United States. Ms. McMillian mentioned a pending bill to make Juneteenth a legal holiday in California. She also expressed hopes that “one day we will celebrate child care, and child care workers, the way that we deserve to be celebrated in this country.”

Ms. Ignatius added that there is still a lack of awareness regarding Juneteenth and the joint meeting was an opportunity for everyone present to learn from each other and reflect on how “the system isn't broken, it was designed this way.” She also stressed the need to unify efforts to dismantle the system.

After her opening remarks, Ms. Ignatius introduced three guest speakers: Dr. Chrishana Lloyd, Keisha Nzewi, and Dr. Lea Austin. Before each speaker's presentation, Ms. Ignatius informed the audience of the speaker's professional background. The first speaker at the joint meeting was Dr. Chrishana Lloyd.

Research About Black Families to Advance Early Care and Education Policy and Practice

By Dr. Chrishana Lloyd

Dr. Lloyd is a nationally recognized expert on the study and implementation of interventions to support education and human service professionals in early care and education (ECE) and community-based settings. She has more than 20 years of evaluation experience, often using a racial equity lens to guide her work. A common theme throughout her career is the integration of research and policy to inform and support the application of equitable and high-quality education and human service practices. Dr. Lloyd spoke about the cultural assets and strengths of Black families and current shifts in their demographics that should be considered as we think about resources and supports.

The first goal of the presentation was to describe themes in historical and contemporary research about Black families with children and the demographic trends and shifts related to these families. The presentation also addressed how to think about and use research and data to inform the development of policies and practices that can potentially shape ECE and strengthen Black families with children. A copy of [Dr.Lloyd's presentation](https://www.chhs.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/6.21.2022-ECPC-Joint-Parent-Workforce-Advisory-Committee-Meeting_ADA.pdf) can be found at: https://www.chhs.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/6.21.2022-ECPC-Joint-Parent-Workforce-Advisory-Committee-Meeting_ADA.pdf.

Dr. Lloyd noted that when discussing Black families and the assets they bring to the table, it is important to recognize that we're talking about descendants of enslaved people, even if individuals may not identify in that fashion. Four assets consistently appear in the literature about Black families:

1. Extended kin and social networks: the close ties among Black family members—both among consanguineal (blood) relatives and friends integrated into the family as fictive or voluntary kin.

2. Religiosity and spirituality: the role of faith and a belief in and connection to a higher power that is external to the individual.
3. Optimism: the penetrating belief held by most Black families that conditions will improve.
4. Role flexibility: the idea that an individual's responsibilities in a family adapt and change based on circumstances and/or need.

In addition to these cultural assets, Dr. Lloyd outlined trends and shifts related to Black families:

1. An increasing number of individuals are identifying as Black, including those who are multiracial. (Some of this change is related to the Census recently starting to record more detailed information on the race of an individual.)
2. There is a rise in different types of family structures and an increased importance of alternatives to the extended family such as single-parent households, married households, LGBTQ households, etc.
3. There has been growth in the number of Black immigrants, primarily those coming from West Africa and the Caribbean.
4. Differentials exist between Black men and women in the rate of marriage outside of the race. Black men are marrying outside of their race at twice the rate of Black women. Dr. Lloyd noted one important implication of this trend is that white women are more likely to raise multiracial children in a "race-neutral" manner, which means potential changes in mentioned cultural assets and ties to their extended families for those children.

While not discussed in detail, four other trends among Black families were identified:

1. Changes in religious worship preferences for younger generations
2. Varied religious preferences among immigrant populations
3. Shifts in residential locations
4. Improved educational attainment, moderate incomes, and low levels of wealth

Another topic discussed by Dr. Lloyd was the impact that systems, institutions, and organizations have on Black families with children and to what extent these families can maintain their agency. These social entities impact and shape the lives of Black families, but due to systemic racism, oppression, and discrimination, the power in the hands of families is not that strong. As we move forward, it is important to think about what research and data are being collected on Black families and how it is used to inform programs and policies, with the understanding that the current data collection

and research do not adequately address issues related to race and ethnicity in a changing landscape.

For example, current data and research very rarely deal with or touch on strengths, particularly in larger scale data sets. Also, when you have federal, state, and local policies all playing different roles in ECE (for example, subsidies and other issues that affect families), cross-comparison of data is quite a challenge when there's such heterogeneity in Black families.

Dr. Lloyd offered some strategies to overcome these challenges and shortcomings of data:

- Use frameworks that combat anti-Black racism in policy
- Dedicate the time and resources to critically think, question, and reflect on biases, experiences, values, and cultures
- Utilize a non-comparative lens when planning research, programs, and policies for Black families
- Include, investigate, and report on intra- and inter-family contexts.

Black Californians United for Early Care and Education

By Keisha Nzewi

Keisha Nzewi earned her B.A. in social welfare from the University of California, Berkeley and her Master of Public Health from San Francisco State University. She has enjoyed a social justice-driven career that began as a Vista volunteer in Sacramento.

Ms. Nzewi's presentation centered on the racist roots of child care in the United States, the evolution of Black Californians United for Early Care and Education (BCUECE), and how liberation can be achieved for Black child care providers, families, and children.

The presentation began with a history of the need for child care in white families and the roles Black women have had. First they were enslaved caregivers, then after slavery ended, they became domestic workers because it was the only job available for Black women. In the post-WWII economy, the majority of Black women's workforce participation remained in child care. In many instances, they were unpaid domestic labor because they were considered "family."

The second part of the presentation was dedicated to introducing the work of BCUECE. Established in 2020, the main goal of this network of caregivers/providers, researchers, academics, nonprofit leaders, educators, and others is to fill the gap in the child care

system “because no one talks about Black children specifically, no one talks about Black families or the Black child care workforce.”

Ms. Nzewi shared BCUECE’s 10-Point Policy Plan, which aims to “hold California accountable for its participation in causing racial harm in the early learning system.” The Plan is quoted in its entirety below.

We demand a Black “whole child,” whole family,” “whole ECE workforce,” and “whole community” approach. We will no longer tolerate a generalized approach to the needs of Black ECE constituents.

We demand a shift that results in California using policies and resources to address anti-Blackness in its structures while also investing in, affirming, and advancing the cultural assets of Black people.”

1. We want Black families to have options to choose from when determining which setting will work best for their children.
2. We want Black children to receive an additional \$500 in their CalKids account.
3. We want Black children to be engaged in culturally affirming care and education.
4. We want Black families with varying experiences to be intentionally included in state-level input convenings and working groups.
5. We want Black advisories established and adequately funded at the local, county, and state levels.
6. We want basic universal income for Black families, especially women and mothers.
7. We want Black early educators to receive stipend payments to address the racial wage gap.
8. We want a pipeline for Black educators to work across settings, and job roles, and to provide Black children access to Black caregivers and educators.
9. We want state grants and contracts for early care and education services to prioritize independently and Black-owned ECE programs.
10. Reparations: Yesterday is already too late and tomorrow is not soon enough knowing every day Black children in California lack equitable opportunities to thrive academically and socially.

Juneteenth to Today: The State of Black Early Educators

By Dr. Lea Austin

Dr. Lea Austin is the executive director of the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at the University of California, Berkeley. She leads the Center's agenda aimed at realizing a public ECE system that secures racial, gender, and economic justice for the women whose labor is the linchpin of its services.

She is an expert on the ECE system and workforce in the United States and has extensive expertise in the areas of compensation, preparation, working conditions, and racial equity.

Dr. Austin talked about the status, well-being, and contributions of Black early educators in California and across the nation, as well as the imperative to center the experiences, intellect, and leadership of Black women in the struggle to overcome early educators' systemic maltreatment.

She started her presentation by honoring the legacy of the women in her family who took care of children and the people on whose shoulders the child care in their communities was built. She reminisced on her childhood in Berkley, where two generations of her family were born and raised and had strong ties with their neighborhoods. Dr. Austin noted that the system has crushed child care providers and Black educators in many ways. Discussion of gentrification doesn't generally include child care, the women who were providing care, or those for whom they were providing care before neighborhoods were peeled apart in different ways.

Dr. Austin discussed the term "entrenched oppression" as a key part of the child care system both in California and across the United States. The difference between Black and white women in the legacy of the child care system is rooted in slavery and later racialized opportunities:

- Enslaved Black women: as our nation's first child care providers, they were forced to prioritize the care of white children over their own.
- Domestic workers: Black women shifted from one form of oppression to another and were joined by Native, Immigrant, and other women of color.
- Training Opportunities: early distinctions emerged between white women engaged in nursery school education and Black women training to take care of white children and families.

Dr. Austin mentioned a study she conducted in Marin County that found center-based teachers of color were paid more than \$6,000 a year less than their white peers overall.

She emphasized that while most early educators in California are women of color and immigrant women, the majority of center directors are white women, and the K–12 teaching workforce is also majority white. Dr. Austin pointed out that the child care system itself is reinforcing these differences in racialized opportunities.

Dr. Austin also mentioned quality rating and improvement systems, or QRIS, and how systemic oppression is built into those systems:

“[W]e're rewarding inequitable distribution of resources. We're rewarding programs that may have more to start with. Programs that may have less, that may be serving families with lower incomes and have fewer resources, are essentially punished. We're punishing scarcity and rewarding programs that may have access to more capital and resources. Our California Master Plan on Early Care and Education excludes recommendations to address the basic needs of the workforce and racial inequities.”

She also pointed out that the Master Plan starts with a statement about Black Lives Matter, but it doesn't include a specific recommendation to address the needs of Black educators, especially the pay inequalities they experience.

In summary, the major issues rooted in the child care system that reinforce oppression include the following:

- Racialized pay penalties: In California, Black educators experience poverty at double the rate of their peers. In Marin County center-based teachers of color are paid \$6,136/year less than their white peers.
- Racialized opportunity differences: Most early educators in California are women of color and immigrant women, yet the majority of center directors are white women.
- System-reinforced oppression: QRIS rewards inequitable distribution of resources and punishes scarcity. The California Master Plan excludes recommendations to address the basic needs of the workforce and racial inequities.

Dr. Austin also discussed the economic effect of the most prevalent issues:

- 98 percent of occupations are paid more than child care workers.
- Early educators' poverty rate is eight times higher than K-8 teachers.
- There is a wage gap of \$4,406 between Black center-based teachers and their peers. The wage gap persists across levels of education.

- A wage gap of \$9,542 exists between infant and toddler teachers with a bachelor's degree and their peers working with preschool-age children. Black educators are more likely to work with infants and toddlers.

In *“The Forgotten Ones”—The Economic Well-Being of Early Educators During COVID-19*, the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment reported findings from the 2020 California Early Care and Education Workforce Study. The study found that family child care providers—in particular, Black family child care providers—have faced severe economic insecurity. Just months into the pandemic, the researchers found that about a third of family child care providers were behind on rent or mortgage payments. For Black early educators, about 42 percent had been unable to make that payment. In addition, 43 percent of family child care providers were unable to pay themselves, 31 percent took on credit card debt to cover program costs, and a third of family child care providers and center-based teachers experienced food insecurity. Educators of color, immigrants, and those who were unpartnered were most impacted. Lastly, less than 15 percent of family child care providers and center-based teachers would be able to pay for a \$400 emergency expense without assuming debt.

In closing, Dr. Austin spoke about advocacy and organizing to overcome the oppression from the system and the economic insecurity of Black educators:

“Thinking about who's in leadership, how we challenge leadership, how we create pathways for leadership are all really critical to changing the status quo, challenging our systems, and really being able to push against the oppression that so many are experiencing and have an opportunity to make sure that people can see that joy and the contribution to community and service that our Black educators bring every day.”

Discussion

After Dr. Austin's presentation, the floor was open for discussion. The first question came from Tonia McMillian who asked the speakers what they thought was the reason for QRIS being racist. Keisha Nzewi took the floor and pointed out that when QRIS was established in the 1990s, the Black women who actually took care of children but didn't have academic degrees were excluded from giving input during the system's development. Ms. Nzewi also mentioned that QRIS is designed to fit the standards of the dominant culture, the white supremacist structures, and everything outside of it is low quality.

AnnLouise Bonnitto joined the discussion by agreeing that QRIS is racist, adding that what needs to be done is changing the Education Code because it is too vague and doesn't address the mentioned issues. Her second point was about making sure the

assessments are carried out by people who come from the same culture and the same community. Dr. Austin also joined the conversation about QRIS and pointed out that the educators' expectations were not met when QRIS was implemented:

“They talked about the environments, the conditions in which they were working and what they needed as the adults in the room: to be present, to be healthy, to do what they needed to do in the course of their work on a daily basis. And when QRIS came along, I think there was an assumption that of course we've created these things and somebody's listening and now these are like, here you go, right?”

Zoila Toma, a child care provider, took the floor next and talked about the ongoing separation of children and children who are yet to unite with their immigrant parents. She also mentioned that she just received her raise, which is four years behind and which was the result of educators' fight for it, not the state's appreciation of their work. Ms. Toma also pointed out the shortage of educators at her site, San Diego Unified School District, because they're asking for inadequate educational requirements and offer low pay. Deborah Corley-Marzett joined the discussion and talked about her own city and county, Bakersfield (Kern County), where there are not enough women and men of color in teaching positions.

During the discussion, Mary Ignatius asked Dr. Lloyd how the demographic changes she described would affect the system if it was to be redesigned to center the needs of Black children and families. Dr. Lloyd talked about the importance of shifting attitudes, ideologies, policy, research, data, and interactions. She raised the issue of segregation as one of the main causes:

“People are segregated by geography, by race, by ethnicity, in child care, in education, and somehow, we have to be able to start creating these opportunities where we can interact with each other, where we can talk to each other, we can share with each other, to get over that fear of the other, and to get over that fear of people feeling like ‘if I have, someone else doesn't.’”

Tonia McMillian also asked Dr. Austin about the importance of lessons drawn from history and where we go from here. Dr. Austin suggested that they center on Black women and their leadership, intellect, and experiences in framing their conversations, policies, agencies, and organizations. She also added that they need to change who leads and who has the power and authority in a system that still has heavily white-dominated leadership in communities that are predominantly non-white.

The discussion about the white-centered point of view continued with Kim Johnson, who discussed the significance of the equity lens in policies and program designs. Patrick

MacFarlane also joined the conversation to reflect on what Juneteenth means as a new holiday and give his appreciation for BCUECE's 10-Point Plan as presented by Ms. Nzewi. Dr. Lloyd also talked about the prevalence of the Eurocentric view of the family in the media and everyday life.

The meeting was adjourned by Tonia McMillian. In her final remarks, she reminded the guests about the formerly incarcerated women who have so much difficulty finding child care, the challenges they face and the many hoops they have to jump through. She thanked the speakers at the joint meeting, fellow committee members, ECPC members, and the public for participating.