

## **Annie E. Casey Race Matters On-Line Toolkit**

<http://www.aecf.org/KnowledgeCenter/PublicationsSeries/RaceMatters.aspx>

This toolkit is designed to help decision-makers, advocates, and elected officials get better results in their work by providing equitable opportunities for all. The approach described in the toolkit deals specifically with policies and practices that contribute to inequitable outcomes for children, families, and communities. The toolkit presents a specific point of view on addressing unequal opportunities by race and simple, results-oriented steps to help you achieve your goals. The following tools are designed to help you make the case, shape the message, and do the work.

**WHAT'S RACE GOT TO DO WITH IT?** This guide promotes evidence-based decision-making about racial disparities. Included in the guide are fact sheets that offer a quick source for analysis and strategies surrounding a variety of issues:

- Unequal Opportunities for HEALTH AND WELLNESS
- Unequal Opportunities for SCHOOL READINESS
- Unequal Opportunities in EDUCATION
- Unequal Opportunities for YOUTH IN TRANSITION
- Unequal Opportunities for ADOLESCENT REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH
- Unequal Opportunities for INCOME SECURITY
- Unequal Opportunities for FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ECONOMIC SUCCESS
- Unequal Opportunities for RURAL FAMILY ECONOMIC SUCCESS
- Unequal Opportunities for NEIGHBORHOOD VITALITY
- Unequal Opportunities for CIVIC PARTICIPATION
- Unequal Opportunity within the CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM
- Unequal Opportunities for JUVENILE JUSTICE
- Unequal Opportunity within CRIMINAL JUSTICE
- Unequal Opportunity within NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE

**HOW TO TALK ABOUT RACE:** This guide promotes effective discussion and advocacy concerning race.

**RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT ANALYSIS - ASSESSING POLICIES, PROGRAMS, AND PRACTICES:** This guide assesses equity effects of policy proposals and programs and implementation decisions.

**SYSTEM REFORM STRATEGIES:** This guide identifies the steps needed to ensure equitable results in the systems that govern our lives.

**COMMUNITY BUILDING STRATEGIES:** This guide identifies steps needed to ensure equitable results in community building.

**ORGANIZATIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT:** This guide helps organizations evaluate staff competencies and organizational policies and practices.

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# RACE matters

## Unequal Opportunities in EDUCATION

### Why Equal Opportunity is Important

- We know much of what is needed to ensure children's and youth's educational success. The most critical factors to effectively promote student success are quality teachers, smaller class sizes, access to high quality after-school programs, advanced curricula, and modern learning facilities.
- The consequences of failing to ensure educational success are far-reaching. The adverse impact is long term and reflected in future employment prospects, poverty and incarceration rates, as well as limited capacity to participate in the world community.
- Embedded racial inequities produce unequal opportunities for educational success. Systematic policies, practices, and stereotypes work against children and youth of color to affect their opportunity for achieving educational success. We need to understand the consequences of these embedded racial inequities, how disparities are produced, and how they can be eliminated to ensure that all children and youth have the same opportunity for educational success.

### Barriers to Equal Opportunity

- Ongoing racial segregation. Black and Latino students are more educationally segregated now than two decades ago. Data from the 2002–03 school year show that in Chicago, 87 percent of public-school enrollment was Black or Hispanic; less than 10 percent of children in the schools were White. In Washington, D.C., 94 percent of children were Black or Hispanic; less than 5 percent were White. In St. Louis, 82 percent of the student populations were Black or Hispanic; in Philadelphia and Cleveland, 79 percent; in Los Angeles, 84 percent, in Detroit, 96 percent; in Baltimore 89 percent.<sup>1</sup>
- Unequal school resources. Because of race and class segregation and its relationship to local school revenues, students in high-poverty racially segregated schools are not exposed to high-quality curricula, highly qualified teachers, or important social networks as often as students in wealthier, predominantly White schools.<sup>2</sup> The wealthiest 10 percent of U.S. school districts spend nearly 10 times more than the poorest 10 percent, and spending ratios of 3 to 1 are common within states.<sup>3</sup>
- Unequal academic opportunities. Schools where White students are in the majority are more than twice as likely to offer a significant number of advanced placement classes as schools where Black and Latino students are in the majority.<sup>4</sup> Black and Latino students with the same test scores as White and Asian students are less likely to be placed in accelerated courses and more likely to be placed in low-track academic courses.<sup>5</sup>
- Differential teacher quality. Schools with the highest percentages of minority, limited-English proficient and low-income students are more likely to employ beginning teachers than those with the lowest percentage of minority, limited-English proficient and low-income students.<sup>6</sup> Teachers who have higher test scores, attended higher-quality colleges and universities, and have more experience teaching mainly teach upper middle-class students, very few of whom are African American and Latino.<sup>7</sup>
- Differential discipline. Students of color are more likely to be more harshly disciplined than their White counterparts for a similar or less serious offense. 14.6 percent of White students had been suspended or expelled in grades seven through twelve compared to 38.2 percent Native Americans, 35.1 percent of African Americans and 19.6 percent of Latinos.<sup>8</sup> One study found that Black students are sanctioned for more subjectively determined infractions. Racial disparities drop dramatically when the offense is determined more objectively, such as with weapon or drug possession.<sup>9</sup>

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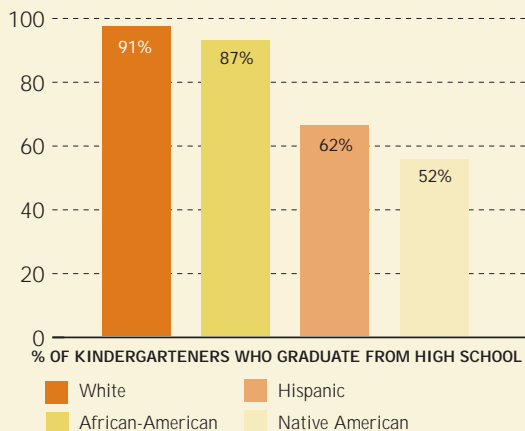
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### The Consequences of Unequal Opportunity

- **Differential achievement levels.** According to the Education Trust, “by the end of the fourth grade, African American, Hispanic and low income students are already two years behind grade level... by the time they reach the twelfth grade they are four years behind.” National Assessment of Educational Progress data show that, on average, African American and Hispanic students trail White students academically by four grade levels by the time they finish high school.<sup>10</sup>
- **Differential high school completion rates.** High school graduation rates are substantially lower for minority groups than they are for non-minorities. 91 out of every 100 White kindergartners graduate from high school, only 87% of African Americans, 62% of Hispanics, and 52% of Native Americans ever finish high school.<sup>11</sup> According to a report by the Harvard Civil Rights Project the numbers are even more staggering for a few hundred schools in the 35 largest cities in the U.S. where a number of schools graduate less than 50% of their freshman class.<sup>12</sup>



- **Differential access to higher education.** Whites and Asian represent greater proportions of those who participate in and complete higher education than African Americans, Latinos and Native Americans. According to one study, the single largest barrier to college entrance for African Americans and Hispanics is high school completion. The same is likely true for Native Americans. Sixteen percent of all 18 year olds in the U.S. are Latino and only 7% of the college degrees in the U.S. are awarded to Latinos. African Americans represent 14% of 18 year olds and only 10% of the college degrees awarded.<sup>13</sup>

### Strategies to Promote Equal Opportunity

- **Equitable funding.** Widespread dependence on local property-tax revenues gives students living in school districts with high-priced residential or commercial property substantially greater resources to support their education than students residing in poorer districts.<sup>14</sup> The National Conference of State Legislatures identifies three building blocks of an adequate school-finance system: articulating educational objectives for students; identifying and acknowledging the educational capacity needed to accomplish these objectives; and supporting that capacity with sufficient funding.<sup>15</sup>
- **Programmatic equity.** Because students of color are routinely overrepresented in special education and disciplinary systems and under-represented in gifted programs and quality bilingual programs, criteria for making decisions about educational placement and educational punishment should be standardized in order to minimize stereotypes as the basis for decision-making.
- **Quality teaching.** There is growing consensus among researchers and practitioners that high quality teachers are key determinants of students' opportunities to be academically successful.<sup>16</sup> Students of color and students from low income homes, historically, have less experienced teachers, teachers with less formal education and training, and more teachers teaching without certification and/or outside their area of expertise. Equity efforts must focus on the distribution of teacher qualifications throughout the schools in the district.<sup>17</sup>

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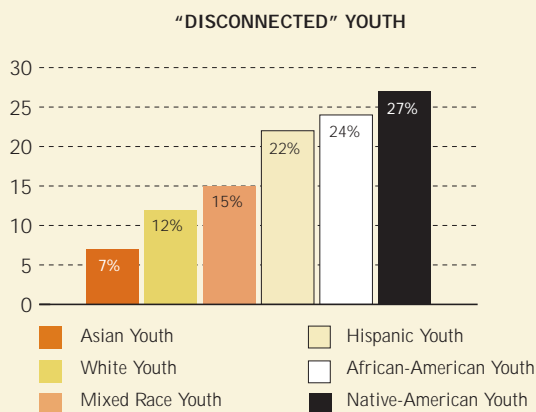


# RACE matters

## Unequal Opportunities for YOUTH IN TRANSITION

### Why Equal Opportunity is Important

- We know what it takes for youth to make a successful transition to adulthood: graduation from quality schools, some form of higher education, skills and habits to be productive learners and workers, good jobs that offer economic security.
- The consequences of unsuccessful transitions are far-reaching. Lack of success at school contributes to juvenile system involvement and early pregnancy, consequences that can reverberate over a lifetime by inhibiting youths' ability to complete school and find family supporting employment.
- Embedded racial inequities produce barriers to youths' prospects for successful transition. Systematic policies, practices, and stereotypes work against youth of color to undermine their strengths, deplete their resilience, and compromise their outcomes. We need to understand the consequences of embedded racial inequities, how they are produced, and how they can be challenged to ensure that all youth have the opportunity to make a successful transition to adulthood.



(See Disconnected Youth, p.2)

### Barriers to Equal Opportunity

- **Poverty.** Poverty is a strong predictor of challenges confronting youth transitioning to adulthood. Because African American, Latino, and Native American youth are proportionally more likely than White youth to live in poverty, they are also more likely to face significant challenges in the transition to adulthood.
- **Spatial segregation.** The de facto residential segregation experienced by low-income families of color translates into the segregation of their children in under-resourced schools where dropout rates are high and educational quality is often inadequate. Exclusionary zoning laws and real estate steering inhibit the opportunity for these families of color to seek better schools. And school funding arrangements that rely significantly on local property taxes exacerbate schooling inequities. Further, neighborhood segregation inhibits the opportunity to craft diverse social networks that are linked to educational and employment opportunities.
- **Racial stereotyping and discrimination.** The use of racial stereotypes in decision-making within various public systems produces more negative decisions against youth of color in comparison to their White counterparts, even when they face the same circumstances and have comparable backgrounds. The more discretionary the decision-making structure, or the more likely quick decisions are made, the more likely youth of color suffer from unfair assessments and dispositions.
- **Cultural incompetence.** High school and after-school curricula, youth services, and mentoring that fail to connect to the strengths and challenges of low-income youth, families, and communities of color are unlikely to be successful in achieving their stated goals. Decision-making too often fails to appreciate family and community cultural strengths, thereby underestimating the resourcefulness of these entities for youth success.

## The Consequences of Unequal Opportunity

- **“Disconnected” youth.**<sup>1</sup> Youth of color are less likely to make the successful transition to adulthood. The percentage of disconnected youth – 18 to 24 year olds who are not presently enrolled in school, not currently working and have no degree beyond a high school diploma or GED – within each racial and ethnic group (see chart, p.1).
- **Quality High School Education.** Graduation from high school is a critical step on which to build the next phase of a youth’s life. Yet, students of color have less access to quality education than White youth. They are more likely to attend schools that are less resourced in terms of equipment and curricular materials,<sup>2</sup> have larger classes,<sup>3</sup> use more teachers teaching out of subject area,<sup>4</sup> offer a more limited curriculum,<sup>5</sup> and employ less experienced teachers.<sup>6</sup> These situations put poor and minority youth at significant academic disadvantage and retard their future education and employment prospects.
- **Lower completion levels.** High school graduation rates are substantially lower for minority groups than they are for non-minorities. The Harvard Civil Rights Project reports that only about half of African American, Latino, and Native American students graduated on time, compared to about three-quarters of Whites and Asian Americans in 2001.<sup>7</sup>
- **Fair Employment Practices.** Limited entry-level jobs and discriminatory employer practices produce a significant number of youth of color who “aren’t working.” Research shows that employers favor White job applicants who said they had a felony conviction more than comparable Black applicants with no criminal record at all.<sup>8</sup>
- **Juvenile system involvement.** When compared to White youth committing comparable offenses, African American, Latino/a and Native American youth experience differentially punitive treatment in terms of profiling, arrests, referral to juvenile court, detention, formal processing, waiver to adult court, incarceration in juvenile facilities, and incarceration in adult facilities. Even when White and African American youth with no prior admissions are charged with the same offense, African-American youth are six times more likely than White youth to be incarcerated. Latino youth are three times more likely.<sup>9</sup>
- **Early parenthood.** Because less than one in three teen mothers ever finishes high school, they are more vulnerable to living in poverty in adulthood.<sup>10</sup> Most youth of color have higher teen birth rates than White youth. In 1999 the birth rate per 1,000 teens aged 15 to 19 was 19 for Asian Pacific Islanders, 25 for Whites, 45 for American Indians, 58 for Blacks, and 83 for Hispanics.<sup>11</sup>

## Strategies to Promote Equal Opportunity

- **Racial equity impact analyses.** The Race Matters Toolkit includes an instrument that can be used to assess policy development and implementation to ensure that racial equity is not left to chance. Leaving it to “chance” is likely to perpetuate racial inequity because of the deep-seated ways in which barriers to opportunity operate routinely and inadvertently in systems.
- **Change of policies and practices that contribute to disparities/disproportionality.** See the Fact Sheets in this Toolkit on Education, Juvenile Justice, and Adolescent Reproductive Health for specific ideas about policy and practice reform.
- **Development of policies and use of assessment tools that minimize the chance of racial discrimination.** Wherever discretion in decision-making occurs, the opportunity for bias exists. Policies and tools that minimize the chance of bias tend to focus on behaviors rather than abstract evaluations and demonstrate an appreciation for the specific cultural strengths of families and communities of color.
- **Enforcement of existing non-discrimination laws.** Whether the issue is fair employment or fair housing for youth transitioning to adulthood, laws exist to ensure non-discrimination. These should be actively enforced by relevant authorities and oversight bodies, which may require strengthening enforcement staff.
- **Equitable resource bases.** Funding for essential systems like schools must be distributed to ensure the resources necessary for all children to succeed. Given class and race segregation, this suggests that regions, states and the federal government should play larger roles than local jurisdictions in revenue production and distribution.
- **Mobilization for systems changes.** Most programming for “at-risk youth” focuses on human capital development. Youth development should also promote youth political mobilization, since key sources of the inequities youth face are system-based and may require coordinated advocacy to produce change.

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