



## About BUILD

BUILD is a national initiative that partners with and supports state leaders in building early childhood systems to provide opportunities for all children from birth through age five to start school healthy and prepared for success. We envision racially equitable early childhood systems resulting in equity in early growth and development for all children regardless of their circumstances.



BUILD promotes early childhood systems work that identifies and addresses the root causes of disparities and supports state remedies to address them.

### Why It Matters

The first five years of life set the foundation for all future growth and development, yet our society currently invests the least to this age group.

The healthy growth and development of all children is critical to the future prosperity of our country – where a child’s life chances for success are not determined by race or place.

Racial disparities, inequities, and more generalized underinvestment begin in these earliest years of life and have profound impacts. We are committed to helping states and communities develop services, supports, and public policies that can ensure the healthy growth and development of each and every child.

BUILD partners with public and private sector systems leaders as they work to establish state policy, provide services, and build their advocacy efforts for children from birth to age five.

BUILD provides tailored and timely technical assistance to leaders in partner states.

## Racial Equity: Our Point of View

Until now, BUILD’s Theory of Change has been silent on racial disparities that exist in the education, health and well-being of young children and their families. It neglected to state as an imperative that early childhood systems building must focus on addressing those disparities that are at the root of unequal childhood outcomes and under-resourced programs and services. BUILD also did not name the source of the disparities—racial privilege—that benefits some children and not all.

BUILD understands and appreciates that a core prerequisite of effectively meeting the needs of young children and their families is recognition of the relationship between the existing disparities (including opportunity and achievement gaps), racial privilege, and institutional and structural racism. Systems-building work at all levels can be neither “colorblind” nor passive. It must intentionally level the playing field in terms of power so that public action, allocation of resources, and oversight are shared responsibilities of a representative leadership. All actions need to be assessed to ensure their impact is equitable for children and families of diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds and for families of diverse socio-economic statuses.

BUILD promotes early childhood systems work that identifies and addresses the root causes of disparities and supports state remedies to address them. BUILD’s vision for a racially equitable early childhood system would ensure that all children have an opportunity to develop and reach their full potential, without experiencing discrimination or bias within the early childhood system. It would assure that early childhood systems provide equitable opportunities and resources for excellent educational and developmental outcomes for children from groups historically discriminated against due to race. In addition, an equitable early childhood system would take concerted actions to correct or respond to discrimination in other arenas that negatively impact young children and their

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BUILD facilitates learning communities that share the latest research and promising practices. Peer sharing and access to expert resources improves efficiency, fosters innovation, and nurtures leadership.

BUILD serves as a knowledge broker by shining a light on promising early childhood practices and highlighting new ideas and successful innovations.

BUILD supports new and emerging leaders and works to ensure diversity and equity in all aspects of early childhood systems building.

BUILD informs and influences state and national conversations and policy decisions by highlighting emerging issues, innovative approaches, best practices, and results from the field.



families. It would intentionally build leadership at all levels of systems that reflect the racial diversity of the children and families. It would ensure that systems recognize and provide culturally and linguistically responsive services contoured to the needs of the child in the context of the child's family and community. Race and place would no longer be predictive of children's healthy development and readiness for success in school and life.

BUILD has a long history of partnering with state leaders to support efforts to identify disparities and their root causes, develop racial equity principles, promote cultural competence, and to create more diverse and inclusive leadership of systems-building efforts than has existed to date. But we know our attention has not been sufficient. The BUILD national team members are redoubling our efforts to create a cadre of early childhood leaders for equity. We are working with our state partners to identify and support ways to help them take on systemic racial equity early childhood work that will have a direct, positive impact on outcomes for children in their state. Together we can help all children thrive.

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*BUILD is a virtual organization created in 2002 by the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative and staffed by a small team of early childhood policy experts and facilitative, experienced leaders. The initiative draws upon many consultants, researchers, experts, state policy leaders, and policy advocates in bringing state-of-the-knowledge to states working to develop and advance early childhood systems. We match a state's need to the expertise and support most needed.*