

A MANIFESTO DEMANDING THE END OF EXPLOITATION OF BLACK AND BROWN WOMEN IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Preamble:

Human capital constitutes a nation's most important natural resources. Therefore, those who nurture young children are of fundamental importance to America's welfare. Nevertheless, for centuries, there has been a wrongful devaluation of the work performed by Americans who contribute significantly to the full range of children's development from birth through age 8. Recently, the 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic underscored the reality that early childhood educators, most of whom are women, are quintessential essential workers providing child care so that parents may work without worry or distraction. Ironically, they are among the lowest paid education professionals and, within their ranks, there are salary [disparities](#) according to race with Black women being paid the least. Unfortunately, this is in keeping with the fight for equality and [justice](#) during the ongoing Racism Pandemic that plagues our nation.

We assert that:

1. Whereas, high quality early childhood education (ECE) is an essential service for the purpose of maximizing each child's developmental opportunities so that ALL young children thrive benefiting families and providing the linchpin to our nations' economy.
2. Whereas, the majority of young children in the United States today are children of color who are deprived of equitable opportunities that would allow for their comparable school success with other groups.
3. Whereas, the education profession is built on a foundation of gender and racial [inequities](#) that deny early childhood educators the respect, resources, and remuneration comparable to educators across the spectrum of the field.
4. Whereas, the early childhood education ranks include disproportionate numbers of Black and Brown women in essential but low-end roles and thus are underrepresented in the variety of leadership positions in the pipeline.

We conclude that:

1. Black women have been exploited from at least as long ago as slavery and their ranks have been subsequently joined by Brown women over time up through to the present.
2. Black and Brown women have had little or no voice in comparison to their numbers in the field due to their absence from leadership roles, including that of teacher as well as [policy maker](#).
3. Structural racism has produced quality inequities in early childhood education programs that have denied children of color and Black and Brown women opportunities to reach their full potential.

Therefore, be it resolved that:

America's "new normal" must include the public and private sectors' implementation of the necessary and sufficient conditions for high quality, appropriately compensated, child care staff who provide essential services to all in need of them. We must:

Rethink the tenets of quality early childhood education casting off the strictures of structural racism;

Reimagine an early childhood education system that does not exploit Black and Brown women with discriminatory wage gaps and lack of opportunities for career advancement; and,

Re-construct an early childhood education system that truly fulfills the promise of anti-racist, socially just opportunities for ALL adults engaged in its delivery, thus, fully supporting the children, families and our nation already depending on this essential service.

A new and just America must provide a sea change in the working conditions of Black and Brown early childhood professionals. With the intent to radically change the long "course of human events" that contribute to the exploitation of the early childhood profession, we realize, as did Martin Luther King Jr., "...that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed." With that in mind, we **demand** the following next steps be taken **within an anti-racist perspective**:

1. ***Just compensation which, at a minimum, includes salaries and benefits equivalent to public school educators***
2. ***Professional development opportunities that include***
 - a. ***agreed upon qualifications,***
 - b. ***supportive working conditions, and***
 - c. ***professional preparation with access to high quality higher education and substantive continuing education; and***
 - d. ***career pathways from high school to PhD***
3. **Leadership opportunities – nothing about us without us! Leadership includes meaningful influence in the governance and regulation of the profession.**

What You Can do Now:

1. **Create:** professional change agent networks of ECE educators of color
2. **Analyze:**
 - a. local and state wage and salary data with a racial and ethnic equity lens as a starting point for policy and regulatory changes related to compensation
 - b. state by state access to and funding for *high-quality teacher preparation programs, with emphasis on* candidates who reflect the ethnic and linguistic diversity of the jurisdiction; and
3. **Fund:**
 - a. strategies that immediately set in motion equal pay for equal work to close the wage gap between Black and Brown early childhood educators and their White counterparts
 - b. place-based financing models that lead to adequate financing for high-quality early childhood education programs that employ well-compensated professionals with special attention to equitable compensation for Black and Brown early childhood educators.

Please Join Us!

1. Sign this manifesto thereby indicating your active support and recognition of the essential service provided by early childhood educators. Manifesto signatures will be updated on July 22, 2020. Please indicate your desire to be included with an email to p2ppeopleofcolorcaucus@gmail.com.
2. Demand an immediate end to the inequitable compensation of Black and Brown early childhood professionals (equal pay for equal work)
3. Take the lead in your community to build consensus toward a sustained response to the systemic factors that exploit the female workforce in early childhood education; and
4. Share this manifesto, along with your action ideas via the various media platforms you use as well as your professional affiliations.

Signatures

P2P People of Color Caucus (Consisting of NAEYC Asian, Black Caucus, Diversity and Equity Education for Adults, Latino, and Tribal and Indigenous Early Childhood Network Interest Forums)