

Primary Hashtag: #BUILD2021

Secondary Hashtags: #BUILDConference21, #BUILDConf21, #BUILDConference, #QRIS2021, #QRIS21

For a vast majority of families, some form of child care is an economic necessity while parents and caregivers work or attend school. In addition to the economic advantages, research demonstrates that young children experience both short- and long-term benefits from high-quality early care and education. Four pivotal studies of early childhood programs, all serving primarily low-income Black children, demonstrate the importance of high-quality early experiences for lifelong educational, developmental, and economic gains. But the programs in these studies had important attributes—especially related to the comprehensiveness of services provided—that are not prevalent in early care and education today.

Equitable, high-quality programs are needed to combat persistent poverty and racial marginalization. But state leaders must explore what constitutes high quality from the perspective of families, young children, and communities that are furthest from opportunity.

- Is quality an objective term that applies equally to all? Or are there some generalizable standards of quality and then many others that differ based on context, culture, language, race, and other factors?
- Do concepts of quality in early childhood quality improvement efforts tend to reflect dominant group concepts of quality at the expense of those held by historically and currently marginalized communities?
- How intentionally and consistently are the voices and perspectives of the early childhood workforce from Black, Latinx, American Indian, Asian American and Pacific Islander communities centrally involved in framing quality improvement strategies?
- Does evidence support the assumption that the QRIS movement and other quality improvement strategies across states decreases the grave inequities in early care and education systems? Or are we finding that some of these strategies maintain or even increase inequities?
- Are state leaders collecting the data to be able to determine whether efforts address or contribute to perpetuating inequities?
- Do some of these efforts leave intact or increase opportunity gaps between young children living in historically and currently marginalized communities and children living in well-resourced communities?

How can state leaders rebuild child care and reinvent quality improvement strategies democratically—with families who have been underserved and the growing number of multilingual children and children of color represented in the design? And, how can states support and maintain a workforce that represents the racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity of our young children that respects experience and capacity and is supported by equitable professional development, coaching/mentoring, and higher education systems?

This conference, with over 30 sessions, will include preconference (half-day) sessions, 1-hour conference sessions, poster sessions, and several affinity discussion groups, will explore these questions and share promising practices and strategies for building a racially equitable, high-quality early care and education system that is continuously improving and connected to other child- and family-serving systems.

Monday, July 19, 2021: Preconference Day

Tuesday, July 20, 2021: Opening Plenary & Sessions

Wednesday, July 21, 2021

Thursday, July 22, 2021: Final Day of Conference