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10 PROMISING PRACTICES in Early Learning for Boys of Color¹

Current educational systems, created by a society based on an organized system of racial hierarchy, have deeply entrenched policies and practices that produce inequitable outcomes for children of color, especially boys of color. To improve early learning outcomes for young boys of color—the charge of the OSSS Boys of Color work group—we must address institutional racism in early learning classrooms, programs, schools and districts. These 10 Promising Practices represent fundamental actions that move toward dismantling an educational system that does not work for all children and moves toward building one that does.

Culturally Responsive & Sustaining Practice

1. Learn about and value children’s lived experience and their families’ cultural assets.
2. Implement culturally and linguistically responsive practices that represent the diversity of the boys of color in a program/school, including high-quality curriculum and instructional approaches that reflect the images and lived experiences of young boys of color.

¹ The 10 Promising Practices reflect key strategies for improving educational equity for young boys of color. They are drawn from a review of educational research, interviews, the OSSS BoC “[Promising Practices Portfolio](#)”, the OSSS [ROCK](#) Project, and “Creating Equitable Early Learning Environments for Young Boys of Color: Disrupting Disproportionate Outcomes,” which is under review with CDE.



Family & Community Engagement

3. Build meaningful, trusting and reciprocal partnerships with families of boys of color, and include parents and caretakers in all aspects of project and program planning.
4. Secure community partnerships to support boys of color and their families.

Educator Anti-Racism / Racial Justice Toolkit

5. Build educator knowledge of structural racism, oppression, power and racial equity,² and how these factors disproportionately affect boys of color.
6. Strengthen educators' self-awareness of positionality (social categories of identity); their cultural values, assumptions and beliefs; and their understanding of the role that conscious and unconscious bias plays in their work with young boys of color.
7. Learn and use evidence-based strategies to interrupt conscious and unconscious bias.

Systems Equity Capacity

8. Collect data to identify progress made on equity goals for boys of color and disrupt inequitable outcomes before they occur.
9. Audit existing policies, procedures and practices through a racial equity lens in order to build programs, schools, agencies and systems that improve outcomes for boys of color.
10. Use trauma-responsive, resilience building and healing-engaged approaches and practices to inform relationship-building, policies and procedures, instruction and communication.



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² According to the [Center for Social Inclusion](#), racial equity is both an outcome and a process. As an outcome, racial equity is achieved when race no longer determines one's socioeconomic outcomes; when everyone has what they need to thrive, no matter where they live. As a process, racial equity is applied when those most impacted by structural racial inequity are meaningfully involved in the creation and implementation of the institutional policies and practices that impact their lives.