

Pathways Racial Equity Statement

Since its adoption in 1893, our state motto, “To Be, Rather Than to Seem” has both inspired and challenged North Carolinians to go beyond just speaking our values and truly live them. We pride ourselves on being a state that is a leader in creating opportunities for people to live with dignity, realize their potential, and achieve their greatest dreams. Yet current and historic laws, policies and practices – both official and unofficial – have created and maintained widespread barriers to opportunity and success for children and families of color.

Today in North Carolina, too many children from all racial groups are not meeting a critical developmental milestone – reading on grade-level by the end of third grade. However, there are vast differences in outcomes between racial groups, with 52 percent of white children meeting this benchmark, while only 22 percent of Black and 22 percent of Latinx children do. These disparities in outcomes are the result of systemic barriers both current and historic.

Ensuring that all our children and families have high quality child care and early education, effective public elementary schools, high quality health care and well-paying jobs that can support a family is the key to improving third grade reading proficiency – and the key to prosperity for all of us. To get there, Pathways focuses explicitly on racial equity, since race in America plays such a large role in determining children’s life outcomes. This racial equity lens guides Pathways to recommend dedicating more and different resources to support children and families of color and creating systems that work for all.

Leading with racial equity means prioritizing strategies that specifically work to improve outcomes for children of color and giving special consideration to the wisdom and innovation of people of color to develop responses that are lasting and reach all children. Targeted interventions that account for structural racism benefit all children. The Action Framework also aims to reduce disparities in children’s outcomes based on income, ability, language of origin, geography, gender or age.

Pathways uses a racial equity lens by:

- Disaggregating data so that we can clearly see and address the racial and other disparities in outcomes among groups of children,
- Ensuring that people of color and white people work together to make decisions about what to prioritize and how,
- Encouraging and supporting partner organizations and agencies to lead with a racial equity lens, and
- Convening organizations so they can learn together, support each other, and partner to advance racial equity work for young children.

When our systems work collaboratively and are shaped using a racial equity lens, we ensure the best possible future for our children and North Carolina.