

Writing for Equity

Practical Guidance

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- Ivelisse Martinez-Beck, Project Officer





Agenda



Presentation on Writing for Equity – Six Guidelines



Workshop



Discussion



Resources

Start the presentation to see live content. For screen share software, share the entire screen. Get help at pollev.com/app

How would you describe your role?

Researcher or evaluator **A**

Practitioner **B**



Funder **C**

State representative or policy maker **D**

Federal representative or policy maker **E**

TA Provider **F**

Something else **G**

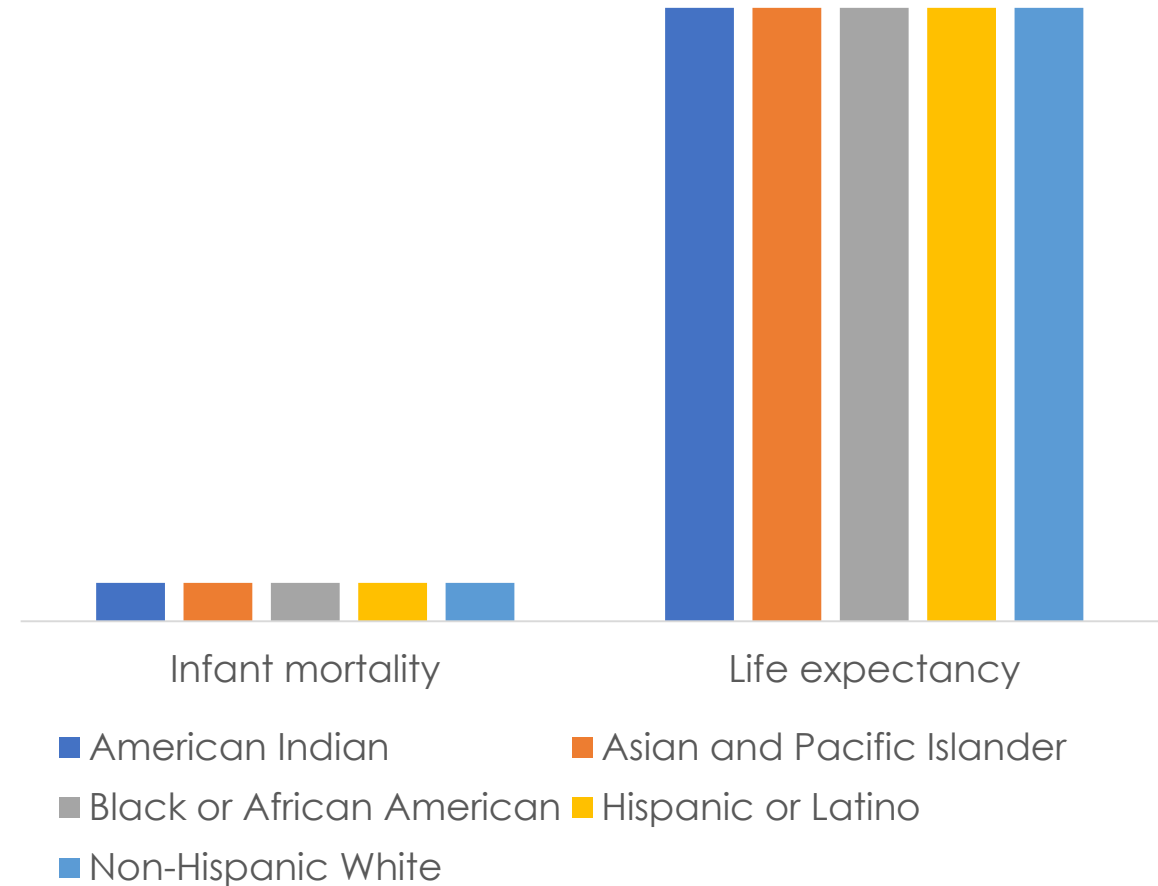


For those who said something else, how would you describe your role?



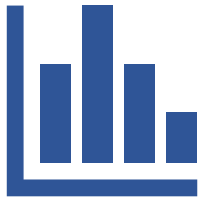
What is equity?

The condition we will achieve when personal characteristics outside our control (e.g., our race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability status, religion, age, class) no longer predict how we fare.





What is equity in research?



Documenting disparities



Identifying underlying
causes



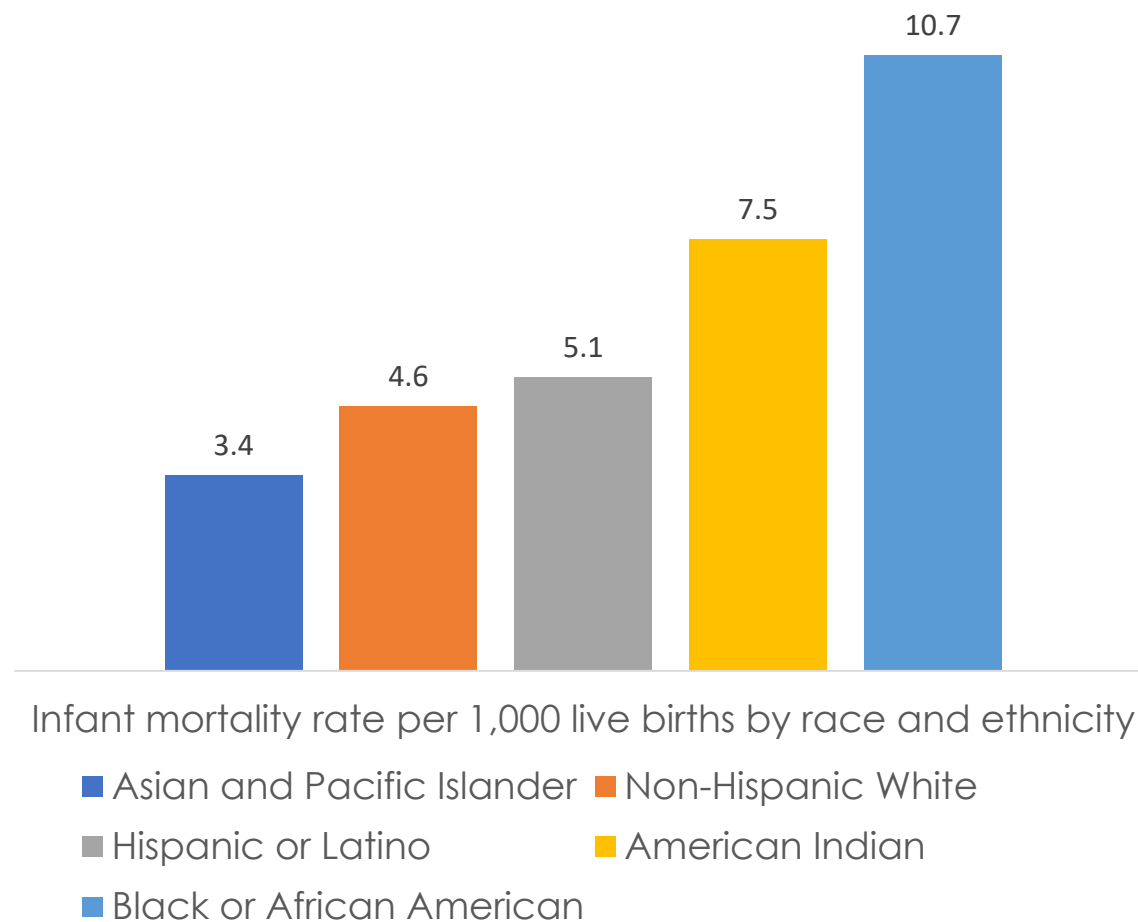
Proposing solutions



Why is equitably communicating data and research important?

- In 2018, the United States infant mortality rate was **5.7** deaths per 1000 live births.

Source: KIDS
COUNT Data Center





Guiding Principles

1. Examine our own backgrounds and biases.
2. Commit to digging deeper into the data.
3. Recognize that the research process itself impacts people and communities; researchers play a role in ensuring that their research benefits communities.
4. Engage communities as partners in research and credit them for their contribution.
5. Guard against the implied or explicit assumption that white is the normative, standard, or default position.



Stages of the Research Process

Landscape

Who has power? What power differentials exist within the community you are working in?

Design

What measures do you have that examine root causes?

Data Collection

How does the community like to share/give information?

Data Analysis

How do community stakeholders interpret the data and how does this differ or align with researchers' interpretation?

Dissemination

Where do community stakeholders want to see this data go?
What are their next steps?



Six Guidelines on Equitable Writing

Does your organization have guidance on equitable communication or writing?

Yes

No

Not
Sure



Guidelines on Equitable Writing



Say what you mean



Use person-centered language



Do not assume there will be differences



Include context on structural inequity early



Be aware of attributing value and stigma



Center the voices of the people who are impacted

What are you most interested in learning from today's presentation?



Say what you mean

- Precisely define the population
- Avoid euphemisms (e.g., diverse)
- Be explicit about the norm
- Say “I do not know”



- Who are we really talking about?
- Who are we making visible or invisible?
- Are we implying that one group is the norm?



- Diverse children
- Non-English speakers
- Low-income parents



- Children who identify as Black or Latino
- Spanish speakers
- Parents who earn less than minimum wage



Use person-centered language

- Avoid labeling individuals with their circumstances
- Engage and elevate the voices of community stakeholders
- Some communities may prefer identity-first language or disagree on appropriate language
- Explain why you chose your language



- Would the population consider this an identity? If so, how would they refer to themselves?
- Is this characteristic a temporary circumstance?
- Is this characteristic stigmatized?



- Difficult-to-reach parents
- Special needs children
- Rural children



- Parents who do not have access to reliable internet or transportation
- Children with disabilities or disabled children
- Children living in rural areas

Source: Hyams, K, Prater, N., Rohovit, J., Meyer-Kalos, P.S. (2018). Person-centered language. Clinical Tip No. 8 (April, 2018): Center for Practice Transformation, University of Minnesota.



Do not assume there will be differences

- Avoid reifying socially constructed categories by not assuming differences between groups
- Measurement instruments might have been tested with some populations and not others
- Structural discrimination against targeted groups can result in differences due to other characteristics

?

- How did we pick which groups to compare?
- Could “differences” be explained by measurement error?
- Could “differences” be explained by a correlated characteristic (e.g., income)?

X

More research should be done to understand the differences between understudied groups.

✓

More research should be done to explore whether these findings are representative.



Include context on structural inequity early

- When disaggregated data reveal differences...
 - Investigate structural explanations, not just individual
 - People skim, so include context on inequity in all sections
 - Be clear on information that could have added additional context that was not measured



- Did we provide the reader with sufficient context to interpret this finding?
- How could this finding be misinterpreted?



- In 2017, 42 percent of non-Hispanic white young adults, had attained at least a bachelor's degree compared to 19 percent of Hispanic young adults and 22 percent of non-Hispanic black young adults.



- Historically, laws, policies, and practices have served to limit Black, Hispanic, and American Indian families' access to high-quality educational opportunities.



Be aware of attributing value and stigma

- Interpretation of findings is subjective



- Does research support a positive or negative value for this finding? For all groups or just the dominant group?
- If research does support a negative value, could we lessen the stigma from the language?

- Sometimes we may attribute positive meaning to behaviors associated with dominant groups



- White teachers were most likely to say that early care and education was their calling, whereas Black teachers were more likely to say that they wanted to help families or needed the paycheck.



- Motivations for working in the ECE field varied by racial/ethnic identity. There is limited research on how these motivations impact children's outcomes.



Center community voice

- Qualitative data can lift up voices of communities who are impacted
- Use community members' words when possible
 - Quotes can help illustrate points and feelings
- Engage community stakeholders in interpreting, understanding, and framing



- Do your words shift, change, or dilute community members' original intentions/words?
- How would a community member describe what is happening?



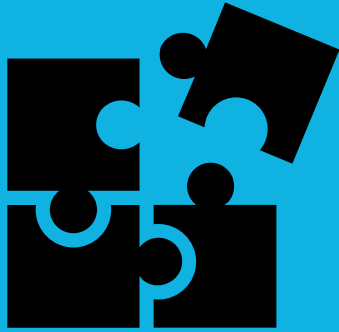
- Interviewees felt like young men had a careless approach to sex.



- Overall, interviewees felt like young men usually “just let [sex] happen” and that they “don’t ever talk about it.”



Questions?



Let's practice
applying these
guidelines!



Guidelines on Equitable Writing



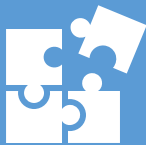
Say what you mean



Use person-centered language



Do not assume there will be differences



Include context on structural inequity early



Be aware of attributing value and stigma





Center the voices of the people who are impacted



Example 1

Children in U.S.-born families are less likely to be in low-income working families than their foreign-born counterparts.

- Say what you mean*
- Use person-centered language*
- Don't assume there will be differences*
- Include context on structural inequity early*
- Be aware of attributing value and stigma*
- Center community voice*





Children in U.S.-born families are less likely to be in low-income working families than their foreign-born counterparts.



Example 2

People of color and immigrant ECE providers are more likely to have a state certificate and less likely to have a bachelor's degree than their White, U.S.-born, counterparts.

- Say what you mean*
- Use person-centered language*
- Don't assume there will be differences*
- Include context on structural inequity early*
- Be aware of attributing value and stigma*
- Center community voice*



People of color and immigrant ECE providers were more likely to have a state certificate and less likely to have a bachelor's degree than their White, U.S.-born, counterparts.



Discussion

- Which guideline most resonated with you?

Which guideline most resonated with you?

Say what you mean

Use person-centered
language

Don't assume there will
be differences

Include context on
structural inequity early

Be aware of attributing
value and stigma

Center community voice



Discussion

- What was the most challenging part of the exercise?



What was the most challenging part of this exercise?



Resources

A guide to incorporating a racial and ethnic equity perspective throughout the research process

By Jenita Parekh, Shantai Peckoo, and Kristine Andrews

<https://www.childtrends.org/publications/a-guide-to-incorporating-a-racial-and-ethnic-equity-perspective-throughout-the-research-process>

Equitable Research Communication Guidelines

By Esther Gross

<https://www.childtrends.org/publications/equitable-research-communication-guidelines>

THANK YOU!

Esther Gross

egross@childtrends.org

Jenita Parekh

jparekh@childtrends.org



The views expressed in this presentation do not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, the Administration for Children and Families or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.