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Session 3 – Race for Results

Led by Charlie Bruner – Des Moines

Notes by Maia Woluchem

Present - Monique Baptiste-Good, Maia Woluchem, Greg Sanders, Laura McKiernan, Cathie Walsh, Jennifer Clary, Liza Morehead, Mark Abraham, Kerri Campbell, Joe Baldwin

Bruner: Casey foundation released document yesterday calling for action based on the disparities that exist by race. Leading toward action instead of just illumination. Think it’s a well done report, especially for people in Kids Count. They're nervous about how things get presented. Having done this, it's an ending for further activities around these issues.

Couple things are interesting—Casey looked for data points but there aren't a lot of things that can be broken out by race. Lots of these are broken out by census and can capture the same info by place. One indicator is residing in a high poverty neighborhood. If they'd done it for state level, are there another ways of using the info and mining it to look at substate level? Not a lot of opportunity to overlay what you've got through NNIP and add an additional layer of info to this. One thing is with BUILD initiative—there's a conference for states, around early childhood head start partnership. There are grants and we can weigh in on that. Identifying high poverty and high risk neighborhoods to do that. So how do you get to a level that's below the county level and goes to neighborhoods?

Sanders: What is BUILD?

Bruner: Program spends on early childhood initiatives so kids start schooling in a good way. Focuses on public policy and developing state strategies for child health, education and family support. Financed by early childhood founders collaborative. Consortium of fifteen foundations working in the area of early childhood.

Walsh: Do you have a sense of the intention of the document? From a state perspective, often the data is broken down by race and ethnicity so this isn't really new on a state by state basis. What is the hope of this? What's the insight?

Bruner: Casey has committed to race language and culture and has tried to put that frame on their various initiatives. So the Kids Count initiative is the signature piece. At the state level, state agencies have already done this by race. This is creating an actual index to say what the aggregate score is across these twelve indicators that allows one to rank state and look at the degree of disparity and do some other levels of analysis. A lot of times, things get reported about easy things like graduation rates, infant mortality, juvenile justice system. I’m saying that if you put all of this together, this is what it shows.

Baptiste-Good: The index scale is from 0 to 1000. What was the weighting?

Bruner: Yes there's a description of what was done, they're all normalized.

Walsh: A thought. Anytime we can be intentional about disparities, that's critical because it's attending to that issue in regards to money flows and other things. So taking the conversation from the report to intentional use?  What are the opportunities that people see? Example: the minimum wage discussion doesn't talk about disparities. Should it be an added value? I think knowing that or best practices would be useful.

Abraham: I see it as cross cutting through everything. Coming up with immigration, migration, transportation, education, maternal health, it's always important.

McKiernan: Trying to think of ways to get people to not be scared to talk about it. Bear County has a habit of killing toddlers. 5 year homicide is 4.1 percent as opposed to 14.1 percent among blacks. Never once heard someone talk about homicide rates in terms of race like this. So if we are all having the same problems, we can figure out ways to communicate and talk about it that aren't going to allow people to shut down the conversation. They asked me not to include race and ethnicity in confirmed child abuse stats and I'm not sure what the value of not talking about it is.

Baptiste-Good: Relating to this report, what comes to mind is that it might be useful to take the methodological report and do it at municipal level.  Generally Jersey shows up pretty well nationally. But looking at the city level, there's disparity relative to affluent families of color. Thinking that if it might make sense to replicate and see if our kids in Newark are to New Jersey standards? We lose the urban context in Jersey because the cities aren't large. More times than not, we have to pull out the top three or five cities statistically so we can see what's happening in highly concentrated poverty.

Walsh: Same in Massachusetts. Could be added value to localize this to a few of the stats and using it as an opportunity through a conversation, you can have conversations and talk about the disparities that underlay all of this. I think it's fab because it highlights the issue but the results aren't intuitive. Wisconsin has the highest disparities but you have to do the same analysis there to see what's really happening here. To count grantees to do that would be useful.

Bruner: Eight indicators are from the census. In 2000 we looked at all census tracts in the US. One is that for the highest vulnerability census tracts, they are rich in young children and the population is mostly single parents with kids. They don't have the working age population to sustain it. According to the notion of looking by place, you've got to look at those geographies and make more investments in education. The other thing is that looking at population of the census tracts with no risk factors were 83 white non-Hispanic, with 6 or more were 83 percent color. We do this under NNIP work but to look at it not through a child lens and through a race lens, it focuses on where some of the greatest needs are for taking actions. Look at the neighborhoods and overlay data like where the parks, childcare centers and other types of things that are good building blocks for families with young kids.

Abraham: For advocacy, it helps to have a common language. HUD is looking at that for low income investment. Looking at differentials in family mobility around race as part of that. Bringing it into a broader national framework willed help with the same framework and language.

Walsh: The housing conversations and the framing for children don't often talk to each other. We’re concerned about poverty but housing policy changes more rapidly and that’s an issue that can be addressed more quickly.

Baptiste-Good: We've been highlighting different sections and health and housing data as it relates to children. The language is tough because they speak two different ones. Looking at broader child outcomes as they relate to affordability of a family housing, it's tough to get them to think that way. Trying to figure out a way to present it so it can hit different types of populations and industry clustesr would be interesting. A lot has to do with housing concentration, in a certain demographic which puts them at a further risk.

Abraham: Frequency of moves is also getting brought in and that undermines equity.

Baldwin: CBG money that can be used for more than sticks and bricks. Because of way that community development works, you have three and five year plans that are really important for when folks want to make a difference. Be involved in those meetings so there's a lot of work that can be done so they have some money go towards other things instead of strictly housing. Like the comment about opening it up to a less loaded conversation that talks about facts. Chicken and egg thing. Some of it is a vestige of segregation that results in bad economic infrastructure which includes things for single mothers and social supports. It has to be multifaceted. In my work, we helped four of five that are longstanding minority places so it's not like the economic downturn caused it but it's at the places existed forever and until we look at it broadly, we won't have an impact.

Walsh: Going back to Laura's comment, we do have a hard time about being intentional about the conversation. City and community leaders avoid it, they don't talk about solution. The ways are going to be different if you're intentional or non-intentional. We don't want to have that conversation, but it's hard to take the risk to be wrong or to not be afraid of during those conversations. I was involved in the race matter works only one meeting, and one of the reasons they don't put juvenile justice on there is that there are administrative decisions that are inequities in themselves. The great thing about that is that it's willing to talk about those things. It's such a mish mash of everything.

McKiernan: You couldn't do anything about who you were born to so no one’s going to blame you but if you get to be fifteen, it's your fault if you get arrested. That’s how it seems. We could do bar charts forever but if no one talks, it doesn't matter.

Baldwin: In Pinellas, there are 25 municipalities. Going to it with an economic framework, it works for the Tea Party. At job, it's a great organization in that it's got a faith based leadership that works in the communities. Looking at foreclosure. To talk frankly, the cause is no doubt defacto racism or segregation but what exists now is not so much a function of race but a function of poverty and the community that has lost infrastructure. At the city level, they're doing a good job of bringing lots of folks together and focusing on the issues of housing and employment and health and those things aren't loaded. So eventually the staunchest of parties can say it's not entitlements. It has to do with framing as opposed to inequity and inequality.

Clary: Voice of dissent. Coming from Chicago, it's still profoundly segregated and race is definitely a factor. Lending practice definitely shows it clearly. White person gets better loan terms when you control for all other factors. At schools, the integration debate, they have a chapter on race in schools. If you take a white kid and black kid, a white kid will be more quickly identified for AP opportunities and blacks will be identified in a subpar way so we have to keep having the conversation about inequality and race.

Baldwin: Not saying that. You're right and I couldn't agree more. But I'm talking from a governmental perspective and even beyond that. Addressing the community and trying to do that, these things need to be addressed.

Bruner: Definitely the idea of a power holder. My organization has always worked with people who are in the community for two reasons. It's important to model and gives us a perspective on what this means. There are disparities in child outcomes and we do try to talk about what the systemic responses and gaps and barriers are. Engagement, participation and access gap. Universal preschool doesn't always reach non-English speakers, and there's a gap in cultural  and linguistic appreciation and competence. We do need training and support on that. And there’s a workforce gap. I don't think there's wrong with white teachers from the suburbs but we need as diverse a workforce. The fourth gap, there's a gap in the planning and decision making structure and now you create that opportunity and how do you create those planning and decision making structure so you do have appropriate representation.

Baldwin: You can't do to a community; the community has to be involved as well.

Abraham: How many NNIP partners do things directly with race-based community partners?

Baldwin: We have Asian based family centers.