



Standing with Black Children and Families

Once again, the often-ignored grip of racism has erupted in America. Last week another unarmed Black man, George Floyd, was killed by a White police officer. It took nearly nine minutes to kill Mr. Floyd and he pleaded for his life for seven and a half of those minutes. This happened on the heels of the killing of first-responder Breonna Taylor, a Black woman who was ambushed and murdered by police officers in her home while she slept. Her murder coincided with a surfaced video of the reckless, cold-blooded killing of Ahmaud Arbery who was hunted down by white American domestic terrorists, while he jogged in his neighborhood.

These deaths are not isolated incidences; these are the ones that made the headline news. They are visible markers of racism – a White supremacy system built to oppress. All of this unfolds against the backdrop of the COVID-19 global pandemic that has killed over 103,000 Americans with communities of color, particularly Black communities, falling ill and dying at disproportionate rates. The trauma of this pandemic coupled with the terror of relentless racism calls for us, stewards of philanthropic resources, privilege, and power to speak up, stand up, and act against discrimination, injustices, and oppression being visited upon Black communities and other communities of color.

The United States is built on the backs of enslaved people and systematically maintained through our various systems, policies, cultures, and biases. Unfortunately, the perniciousness of racism begins before Black and Brown children are born and is imprinted throughout their life course. It can be seen in the segregated and low wealth communities, resource-poor educational institutions and health agencies, and in many communities, the boarded-up houses. As funders who focus on young children and their families, we see effects that are wide ranging across lack of access to high quality care for physical and mental health, racial disparities in early education, and a lack of economic justice.

As a philanthropic network focused on ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive, we, the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative, are committed to improving the wellbeing of our children and their families and being a catalyst to solve social problems. Racism is more than a pernicious social problem that impacts children's early years and their families and communities — it is a root cause problem driving other social disparities. We cannot ignore it and we recommit to naming and centering racial equity in our analyses and investments.

We stand with George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Eric Gardner, Sandra Bland, Tamir Rice, Alton Sterling, Michael Brown, Freddie Gray, Oscar Grant, Natasha McKenna, Laquan McDonald, Philando Castile and so many known and unknown Black people that have been killed by police because Black Lives Matter.

As a collective and as individuals who work on early childhood, we acknowledge that we are indebted to the Black and Brown women and families on whose backs we've built our economy- especially through their care of the country's children for no pay or poverty wages. We are committed to being a catalyst for change in ensuring that a child's race or zip code do not determine their school success, but most importantly the value of their ability to breathe and live. We commit as individuals and as philanthropic partners to ensure that Black children and other children of color have a chance at a fair and just life.