

Welcome to the Child Care Justice Activist toolkit! You have read the book—now, where do you go from here? We have provided this toolkit to help you start your journey of seeing, reflecting, and taking actions that will improve the over-all life outcomes of the oppressed and exploited low wage, low status workforce. Of course, this work must occur within a rapidly changing world, with major cultural shifts in attitudes and behaviors that too often promote hatred and discord with little regard for the well-being of other people, nor the historical struggle of marginalized people in this country. It is against this backdrop and reality that we must continue our fight the good fight, keep the faith, and march on until victory is won.

The initial steps of self-reflection and information gathering are integral to the collaborative and effective advocacy that is necessary for this cause to become a movement. With this in mind, we encourage you to work your way through the toolkit sequentially.

As educational activists and progressive, social justice activists across disciplines and fields of endeavor, who are committed to issues related to race equity, wage equity, and gender equity, you know that in the fight against racism, sexism, and capitalism that is necessary in order to attain childcare justice, America has a long way to go. We hope that these resources will support you in becoming agents of change who work together to:

- Give voice and witness to the historical, structural, racist roots of child care in the United States
- Apply social and political capital to upend inequity and injustice in the child care industry
- Commit strategic acts of activism as they relate to closing the achievement gap, the wage gap, and the higher education gap
- Exercise courageous, compassionate, and applied critical leadership as child care agents of change
- Rethink, reimagine, and reconstruct a more equitable and just system of child care

Self-Reflection & Identity

Personal learning through identity and self-reflection work.

Engage in self-assessment and non-critical discovery.

Know the terminology, including common language such as capitalism, sexism, racism.

Articulate your own identifiers, and the role that they play in your activism and in the societal power systems.

Engage with humility and without being derailed by shame, guilt, or defensiveness.

Recognize the societal assumptions that are part of your culture, and try to unpack them so that you can understand the impact on you, and on differing points of view.

Action:

Take some self-assessment surveys to identify your strengths. These are fun and informative, and will give you information about your characteristics, ask you to identify how you became the person you are now, help you understand where you have had choice in your life, and examine ways of collaborating and approaching challenges. You can take this information into working with other activists, opening you to understanding others, and recognizing how your styles complement each other.

Resources:

Identity charts, which can also be used to analyze groups.

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/identity-charts>

Social identity wheel

<https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching/wp-content/uploads/sites/732/2020/07/Social-Identity-WheelDefinitions.pdf>

Examining your biases

[Harvard's Project Implicit](#)

[Crises as a Catalyst: A call for Race Equity & Inclusive Leadership](#)
[Cultural Iceberg - Understanding Unseen Culture](#)

Power Systems

Understand systems and social constructs that control and define equity and justice in our societies.

Take some time to research economic, cultural, criminal justice, and historic influences on your issue.

Action:

Explore how bias, stereotypes, discrimination, and systemic inequity can block our path toward the ideal of equality.

Research the work that is being done on this topic by groups such as the [National Equity Project](#), and their systemic oppression model.

Resources:

[What is Equity?](#)

[Systemic Oppression](#)

Racism:

[ADL pyramid of hate \(can be used as example of systemic oppression\)](#)

<https://www.nationalequityproject.org/frameworks/lens-of-systemic-oppression>

<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2020/06/06/871023438/this-list-of-books-films-and-podcasts-about-racism-is-a-start-not-a-panacea>

Economic Injustice:

[Equal Pay Today Campaign](#)

[Equal Pay and the Wage Gap](#)

[Workplace and Economic Equity](#)

[One Fair Wage](#)

[Economic Inequality: It's Worse Than You Think](#)

Purpose & Direction

Know your issue. Understand the historical context and power systems that impact your issue. Recognize

the root causes of the issue. Connect with the key players.

Know what you are talking about. Know the current and former legislative efforts around your issue. Investigate the historical and cultural construct of the issue, which will make people more confident to trust your leadership.

Action:

Connect with the power sources at your community, state, and national levels. You are a constituent. The leaders have an obligation to meet and/or talk with you, and the more informed about the issue that you are, the better. As with building community, working to have them supporting your cause will help you go further faster, without hitting potential roadblocks. This is not always successful, but worth a concerted effort.

Resources:

[The Center for Law and Social Policy](#)

[Child Care Aware – A Seat at the Table podcast](#)

[NAEYC Advancing Equity Initiative](#)

Community Connections

Build community.

Whatever you are doing, raising awareness, advocating for a cause, fundraising for a nonprofit, speaking out against injustice, all of this is much stronger done with a community of people. The exchange of ideas, the ability to have courageous conversations across lines of differences, to form learning groups, to share tasks, and to have support from likeminded individuals, will help make impactful change.

Action:

Be sure to research and join with other groups doing similar work, for collective power. It is critical that you include the voices and energy of those actually impacted by the issue and potential change. Listen and learn from those who have been affected by your issue, and make sure that they are leading the way.

Take the time to work with power-holders to get them to understand your concerns and points for change. Gain the support of those in recognized power, knowing that you have power yourself. This might be ECE administrators, or elected officials. If you get pushback for what you want to do, propose alternative pathways to your desired results.

Resources:

Generation Citizen Community Assets

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xfTRbxVHy9xR38tI2ty5pTj-DEgp7-4Q/view>

[Ben Marion Institute for Social Justice](#)

[Courageous Conversation](#)

Likeminded organizations:

[National Women's Law Center](#)

[Community Change](#)

[Black Lives Matter](#)

[Moms Rising](#)

[Parent Voices](#)

[Childcare Changemakers](#)

[Early Childhood Education Assembly on Twitter](#)

[Ms Foundation for Women](#)

Comradeship

Be a comrade and a collaborator

To be a comrade, as is the case to be an ally, one needs to have completed the earlier steps in order to approach this social justice work with an understanding of the issues, and with humility gained from an examination of your own privilege and implicit bias. However, to be a comrade requires eschewing the common pitfalls associates with allyship, such as performative statements and saviorism, and actively working to dismantle systems of oppression, even when one has not directly felt the effect of those systems or has benefitted from them.

Actions:

Use your voice to speak up. Demand and engage in swift, intentional, and measurable action. This requires a commitment to research, reflect, listen, talk with others about the severity and urgency of the issue. Be open to your ideas changing as you learn more. Be a model for others of comradeship, compassion, and humility.

Resources:

Limitations of Allyship

<https://www.colorlines.com/articles/white-folks-its-too-late-allies-op-ed>

<https://the-ard.com/2021/04/19/go-beyond-allyship-anti-racism-daily/>

On Comradeship

<http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/blackspeech/adavis.html>

<https://www.liberationschool.org/from-allies-to-comrades/>

Critical Consciousness

Know yourself and your opponents

Continuously develop your awareness and analysis of the systems of oppression that surround you in order to dismantle them. Analyze the intersectionality of the issues in news stories, particularly those related to racial, economic, and gender-based inequities. Develop your voice and agency.

Action:

Understand the counterarguments and opposition to your views. Beware of fallacies, propaganda, and internalized colonization. Reclaim power and agency as you engage in the work of liberation.

Resources:

[New Discourses – Critical Consciousness](#)

[Developing Critical Consciousness and Social Justice Self-Efficacy](#)

[Reclaiming the Hidden History of Blackness](#)

[What is decolonization, why is it important, and how can we practice it?](#)

[Language and the Decolonization of the Mind](#)

Influence & Activate

Influence others and organize activities

Making change is about convincing others that your changes are worthwhile. People, especially those who benefit from oppression or have internalized their oppressors' narrative, are resistant to change. Thus, your arguments must be engaging and compelling, but also relentless.

Working with power-holders, ECE center directors, local or legislative officials can result in faster and more sustainable change. Some will welcome the chance to listen to your concerns. However, some will not. If they are not receptive, be creative in finding other channels and people in power to support your efforts. Additionally, ensure your safety by keeping a record of communication and interactions.

Organizing activities requires substantial work. Plan ahead, and work out the logistics so that everything runs as smoothly as possible. Whom do you need to inform? Do you need permission, a permit? Should you pull in local authorities to support you?

Think about where and when it's safe to take action. Assess your risks, as certain situations may not be safe, and you may need to raise your voice in a different way.

Actions:

Along with using social media, which can be a fast and effective platform to disseminate your ideas, learn how to write a press release and to be an effective public speaker.

Consider the power-holders you identified as you established your Purpose & Direction. Focus your message so people have immediate clarity about your desired outcomes. Many times, you have a finite time frame to engage your listener; use it wisely.

There are many ways that you can gather people together to advocate for change. You can organize a demonstration or protest, do a sit in, a silent protest, a boycott or a walk out.

Learn about your rights as an activist.

Protect yourself when using social media for your advocacy.

Meet with the power-holders who have direct impact on your issue.

Put together a petition.

Call your legislators. Phone calls get logged in.

Write letters to your local newspaper editors and to your ECE institutions administration, as well as to legislators, both federal and state, or city administrators. Know your audience. Your message to fellow activists should be crafted differently than your message to funders, policy makers, policy influencers, or administrators.

Resources:

[Department of Labor Whistleblower Protections](#)

[Activist's Guide to Digital Security](#)

[Know Your Rights: Protestor's Rights](#)

[Start Early – Early Childhood Advocacy Toolkit](#)

[The Marriage of Social Media and Social Justice](#)

[How to Communicate Effectively with Legislators](#)

[Writing Your Elected Representatives](#)

[How to Write an Op-Ed](#)

[Zero to Three Childcare Advocacy Toolkit](#)

[Early Childhood Workforce Index Advocacy Toolkit](#)

Supporting Your Efforts

Gather financial support for your cause

Raise money for your cause. This may be for direct services, awareness raising, or advocacy.

Action:

Online crowdfunding, is a popular way to gather financial support for a cause. Other ways to obtain financial capital to support the cause include selling branded merchandise or other goods as well as grant-writing and

Resources:

Crowdfunding

[Bonfire Giving Campaigns](#)

[Donorbox](#)

Email Campaigns

[5 Ways to Humanize Your Fundraising Emails](#)

[How to Write a Powerful and Effective Fundraising Email](#)

Grant Writing

[How to Write a Grant Proposal Step-by-Step](#) (video)

[Planning and Writing a Grant Proposal: The Basics](#)

[Grant Writing Cheat Sheet](#)

Well-being

Activism is a necessity, but it can also be taxing as you face setbacks, resistance, and potentially physical and financial threats. In order to be an effective activist with the longevity required to effect liberatory change, you must be mindful and proactive with regards to your well-being. While this is listed as the final step, it important to tend to your well-being as needed throughout the process.

Action:

Regularly take stock of your overall well-being. Listen to the cues that your body and your mind use to communicate their needs. Take the time to rest and recuperate; this is not wasted time—burnout is much more costly to your aims as an activist.

Resources:

[The Activist's Guide to Self-Care](#)

[Self-Care for Activists: How to Sustain Yourself While Saving the World](#)

[Self-Care Tips for Student Activists, Advocates, and Allies](#)

[The Importance of Self-Care for Activists](#)

Glossary

Accountability

Being held responsible for one's actions or words, and for the impact those words and actions have on other people.

Activism

Activism consists of efforts to promote, impede, or direct social, political, economic, or environmental change, or stasis. Activism can take a wide range of forms from writing letters to newspapers or politicians, political campaigning, economic activism such as boycotts or preferentially patronizing businesses, rallies, street marches, strikes, sit-ins, and hunger strikes. Activism requires moving beyond advocacy into action that seeks to undo and disrupt inequity and injustice.

Advocacy

the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal

Aggressions

o Micro

- Comments or actions that present themselves in everyday conversation that are harmful to specific groups of people. "Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people" -wiki

o Macro

- Structural inequalities. When powerful corporations or institutions create and uphold practices that perpetuate existing oppressions

Ageism

Discrimination of individuals based on their age, i.e., of the elderly based on the notion that they are incapable of performing certain functions such as driving, or of the young based on the notion that they are immature and therefore incapable of performing certain tasks.

Allyship*

"An ally is a member of a dominant group who rejects the dominant ideology and takes action against oppression out of a belief that eliminating oppression benefits everyone."

The term "ally" acknowledges social power, or privilege. It implies that the person who is applying the term to themselves also acknowledges privilege and the knowledge that claiming the ally label doesn't actually mean anything if there isn't action behind it. Allyship means

realizing not only that language is imperfect, but that intention is nothing if it isn't actualized, and actualizing it is tricky.

Allyship is the work of creating space, which means stepping aside to make room for the voices of the oppressed.

Note: The concept of allyship is currently facing criticism in the social justice community as, in practice, it can often lead to a performative, passive stance rather than one that actively works to dismantle systems of oppression.

Autonomy

Acting on motives, reasons, or values that are one's *own*.

BIPOC

Black, Indigenous, persons of color

Capitalism

An economic system in which a society's means of production are held by private individuals or organizations, not the government, and where products, prices, and the distribution of goods are determined mainly by competition in a free market. This system prioritizes profits over people, leading to economic injustice.

Classism

The institutional, cultural, and individual set of practices and beliefs that assign differential value to people according to their socio-economic class; and an economic system which creates excessive inequality and causes basic human needs to go unmet.

Community Organizing

Community organizing is "a distinct form of organization building and social activism." It involves building of a membership organization that may conflict with existing organizations (ie. churches, schools, etc.). "These membership organizations engage in specific campaigns to change institutional policies and practices in particular arenas." Provides organizing space for activism

Critical Consciousness

Paulo Freire (2000), who advanced the educational pedagogy of critical consciousness, stated, "to surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation [revolution], one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity [liberation]."

Direct Action

“The face-to-face confrontation between your constituency and an individual target over a specific demand.”

“The key elements are a cohesive group, a target, and a demand.”

Economic Injustice

The unequal distribution of economic income and opportunity between different groups, wherein families with low income and low wage workers experience diminished economic mobility.

Feminisms

- Movements toward full social, political, economic equality of all human beings. This is not a complete list of various types of feminisms.
- **Liberal** — Changes within the system (reform vs. revolution), focus on individual rights and representation within existing institutions, gender neutral
- **Multicultural/Womanism*** — Intersectional approach that refuses to prioritize forms of oppression
- **Socialist/Materialist** — Marxist framework; focus on political and economic sources of oppression; Oppression of women in terms of their subordinate position in a system defined by patriarchy and capitalism
- **Radical** — Revolution over reform. The pie is rotten.

Gender

The behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex; a person's internal sense of being male, female, some combination of male and female, or neither male nor female

Globalization

Globalization is a process of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different nations, a process driven by [international trade](#) and [investment](#) and aided by [information technology](#). This process has effects on the [environment](#), on [culture](#), on political systems, on [economic development](#) and prosperity, and on [human physical well-being](#) in societies around the world.

Heteronormativity*

Societal norms that categorize heterosexuality as normal and any variant such as homosexuality, bisexuality, pansexuality, asexuality as deviant.

In U.S. patriarchal society, heteronormativity reinforces privileges that come with being heterosexual, White, middle/upper class, and male

Heteronomy

The condition of being under the domination of an outside authority. Antithesis of autonomy.

Horizontal Hostility

“The result of people of targeted groups believing, acting on, or enforcing the dominant system of discrimination and oppression. Horizontal hostility can occur between members of the same group or between members of different, targeted groups.”

Internalized Oppression

“The process by which a member of an oppressed group comes to accept and live out the inaccurate myths and stereotypes applied to the group.”

Intersectionality*

Intersectionality is an analytical tool used to determine how the various ways the multiple layers of an individual’s identity, such as gender, race, class, sexuality, nationality or other identity markers, intersect in different ways that ultimately privilege or oppress that individual. Assumes all oppressions are interconnected and held together by power. Non-additive.

Oppression

Freire defines oppression as “any situation in which ‘A’ objectively exploits ‘B’ or hinders his and her pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person... [interfering] with the individual’s... vocation to be more fully human” (2017).

Patriarchy

“A system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it.” – Google definition. “Feminist theorists have expanded the definition of patriarchal society to describe a systemic bias against women. As second-wave feminists examined society during the 1960s, they did observe households headed by women and female leaders. They were of course concerned with whether this was uncommon. More significant, however, was the way society *perceived* women in power as an exception to a collectively held view of women’s “role” in society. Rather than saying that individual men oppressed women, most feminists saw that oppression of women came from the underlying bias of a patriarchal society.”

Political Education

“Political education helps to connect activists to history, to a sense of how long it takes to make fundamental change. That connection to history inspires us and keeps us going through the inevitable losses and attacks.” “Helps prepare us to get our ideas out into the world.” “Political education is distinct from run-of-the-mill issue research because it is long-term. We might be fighting on issues of immediate concern while working out a strategy to do more.”

Privilege

Advantages and power awarded to specific groups from institutional inequalities. Cycling analogy: Blind to our own privilege when the wind is working with you, but when structures are working against you, you notice

Racism

The systematic subordination of members of targeted racial groups who have relatively little social power in the United States (Blacks, Latino/as, Native Americans, and Asians), by the members of the agent racial group who have relatively more social power (Whites). This subordination is supported by the actions of the individuals, cultural norms and values, and the institutional structures and practices of society.

Self-Reflection

Self-reflection is reflecting in the moment. It is used to understand the thoughts and feelings of an event while experiencing that experience. "Taking a reflexive approach means that we reveal as honestly as possible in the think and writing process, the fault lines in our observations and reflections by holding them up to the scrutiny of self and others."

Sexism

(Prejudice + Power) Conscious or unconscious action or institutional structure that subordinates a person because of gender. In American history, it has been women who have traditionally been subordinate.

Social Construction

The idea that the way we make sense of the world is defined by society. Our actions, thoughts, ideas, etc. about our reality are previously and continuously constructed by societal institutions and norms.

Systems Thinking

Systems thinking is a way of making sense of the complexity of the world by looking at it in terms of wholes and relationships rather than by splitting it down into its parts.

Victim Blaming

When the victim/survivor of a crime or injustice is held responsible for the harm done to them. Implying a victim/survivor could have avoided their trauma by somehow adjusting their own behavior.

***Adapted from the [Team Harmony Activist Toolkit](#)