

PSU Child Welfare Partnership's Statement in Solidarity of Racial Equity

We want to acknowledge the pain and injustices people of color have and continue to experience in our society as a result of individual, and systematic racism.

Both ODHS and Portland State leadership have made it explicit that our institutions stand in solidarity with communities of color. Director Fariborz, ODHS and Dean Coll, PSU have not only made clear statements but have provided concrete examples on ways in which we can take action. Here at the Child Welfare Partnership, equity is at the center of our mission and vision. We envision a child welfare system that honors the resilience of black, brown and indigenous families, one that works in solidarity with communities to keep children and young people safe, and families together. However, we have a long way to go to make this vision real. Child Welfare has a long history of harm to communities of color. It is our mission to work on that, and to write a new future together with you starting training here today.

Specifically, as trainers, we are constantly working to improve our skills in interrupting racism as it occurs and bring all of us along our learning path. We regularly review our curriculum to unpack and eliminate racism when we find it. As a team, we are at work on our own learning and growth.

We recognize that we each bring our own lens to the classroom and to the work of child welfare and that we will have different perspectives, views, and degrees of understanding regarding racism and its impact on children and families involved with the child welfare system. We're all learning.

As we go through this learning experience together, we want you to be thinking about how the policy, practices and engagement strategies we discuss impact families of color, families who have a trauma history and families who have been disenfranchised. In Oregon, we know that African American and Native American children are disproportionately represented in the Child Welfare system. We know that racism and prejudice exist, and we know we need to take action, to actively change this.

Kim Lorz, the Director of Workforce and Training Development for ODHS has expressed the significant responsibility that each of us has in examining our biases when working with families who are of a different race or ethnicity than our own. He has also emphasized the agency's expectation and commitment to working with families in an equitable manner.

If you see something, say something. If there is something said in the classroom or content in our curriculum that is not in alignment with racial equity, please let us know. If you can't find the words right at the time, you can talk with a trainer individually or provide feedback on your evaluations. And if you have a question to learn, please ask. We want to do better and we will do better. We know the same is true for you.

Together, we can make a change!