



Early Childhood Education Bridging the Equity Gap

Equality vs. Equity

"Educational equality is providing all children access to early childhood programs independent of quality. Educational equity is providing all children with sufficient access to the resources and educational rigor they need to be successful. In sum, equality and equity are not one and the same. Equity may mean providing additional resources to certain students to level the playing field. For example, English learners may receive funding to support their English language acquisition, plus additional funding if they are living at or below the federal poverty level."

NCSL, 2017

Research shows that children who are part of a high-quality early childhood program, particularly those children from disadvantaged neighborhoods, benefit in all aspects of development, lasting a lifetime.

Comprehensive high-quality preschool programs had lasting effects on IQ, academic and economic achievement, and prevention of disease and obesity in adulthood (Heckman, 2016).



State and federally subsidized programs such as California State Preschool Program (CSPP), Head Start, and Early Head Start, offer opportunities for eligible families to access high-quality early learning opportunities. In addition, those families that are part of the Cal Works programs can receive support through the Alternative Payment Program (APP).

(Please refer to Children's Home Society of CA on the back.)

Opportunity and Achievement Gaps

"Some children and their families have fewer opportunities when it comes to high-quality education, including access to experienced and effective teachers and adequate school resources. These gaps in opportunity can be considered a significant contributor to the achievement gap."

NCSL, 2017

The Early Childhood Policy Framework & Equity in Early Care and Education

The Early Childhood Policy Framework uses the lens of equity to guide policies to support organizations in ensuring that readiness and academic achievement gaps are eliminated for children birth through eight. Early Childhood OC recognizes that special populations need special attention and is committed to supporting our Early Care and Education professionals.

The Early Development Index

In an effort to bridge the achievement gap, First 5 Orange County supports the implementation of the Early Development Index (EDI) which helps to identify neighborhoods where children are most vulnerable in their development. The EDI provides data for school districts, cities, and community-based organizations to make informed decisions and drive policies, resources, and supports directly to those families with young children who are most at risk.

The Early Development Index is a measure of early child development and school readiness in five key domains:

- physical health
- social competence
- emotional maturity
- language and cognitive skills
- communication skills and general knowledge

This valid and reliable tool provides population-level data Orange County can use to make decisions on where resources and supports to families, communities, and early care and education programs will have the greatest impact in bridging the achievement gap.

Resources

1. [Early Childhood OC's Policy & Equity Position Statement](#)
2. [Early Development Index ~ First 5 Orange County](#)
3. [Heckman Equation](#)
4. [Closing the Opportunity Gap](#)
5. [Resource & Referral for Orange County - Children's Home Society of CA](#)

For more information on Early Childhood OC and the
Early Childhood Policy Framework,
please visit us at:
earlychildhoodoc.org