

Federal policies can address the impact of structural racism on Black families' access to early care and education ^[1]

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Excerpted from introduction

As we wrote in the first brief of this series, Black Americans' social standing in the United States has been shaped by a long history of racism in laws, policies, and practices that has built racist institutions and created and exacerbated inequality. This inequality is built into the infrastructure of our country and has formed the foundation for structural racism—a system that privileges White people and results in intentional disadvantage for Black Americans. These inequalities negatively impact the lives of Black people in a number of ways, including where they live; the education they receive; their employment and economic opportunities, access to child care, mental and physical health outcomes, and political standing and power; and the way they are treated in our systems of law and justice.⁴ Virtually every facet of the lives of Black people in the United States—both adults and children—is shaped by race. America's racist laws and policies have long impacted Black Americans, regardless of their socioeconomic status or social standing.

This second issue brief sets a vision for how the federal government can pursue policy strategies that support access to early care and education for Black families by drawing on historical, contextual, and demographic data related to Black family structure, employment and income, and geography. First, we discuss the current and historical role of federal policy in the lives of Black Americans. Next, we review the importance of early care and education (ECE), as well as the barriers that Black families face to accessing these important services. We describe two federal programs—Head Start and the Child Care Development Fund—which have the potential to facilitate greater access to ECE for Black children. Finally, we present recommendations for developing policies and infrastructure to support and protect Black families from the harmful effects of structural racism, while promoting the country's economic recovery from COVID-19.

Region: United States ^[4]

Tags: families ^[5]

equity ^[6]

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