

For over 50 years, ParentChild+ has attempted to eradicate the educational opportunity gap for children and families from marginalized communities. From the beginning, our founder, Dr. Phyllis Levenstein, designed the program to equalize access to early childhood education and support so that all children could enter school ready to succeed because every parent has the information, skills, and resources to build school readiness where it starts: the home. Now, building and expanding on that goal and with a growing understanding of the work to be done to overcome systemic racism, ParentChild+ seeks to expand its work with children and families to end racial inequities in the early childhood arena. With a commitment to incorporate a racial equity lens and evolve its operations and practice, ParentChild+ will grow its work with families to build a future where all children, regardless of race and socio-economic status, succeed.

### **A New Focus and Commitment**

Recent events and our growing understanding of the devastating impacts of systematic racism have caused ParentChild+ to take a new look at our own organizational structure, training, and programming, and how we in our national and international work can address structural racism. This examination has prompted ParentChild+ to expand our goal of bridging the opportunity gap, to intentionally include eradicating systemic racism in home visiting, early childhood care and education, and family support work.

We are also reviewing how we approach and partner to provide services to families and children in multi-ethnic, multi-lingual communities. ParentChild+ is committed to embedding its race equity lens throughout the organization: Developing a more inclusive and diversified Board of Directors; hiring national staff who reflect the communities that we work in; being inclusive in our training and curricular materials, content, and approach by utilizing books and toys that give voice to the communities in which we work; and working with our partners and state and local staff to elevate the voices of our staff, families, and communities. We also commit to re-emphasizing a key aspect of our approach to hiring home visiting staff, requiring staff who are community-based, a linguistic and experiential match with the families they are working with, and, as often as possible, parent graduates of ParentChild+.

### **What is the ParentChild+ Racial Equity Lens?**

According to the Government Alliance Racial Equity Guide and Toolkit, a racial equity lens is defined as a means of paying systematic attention to race and ethnicity in

examining and analyzing problems or issues within any social or cultural environment, or relational or group dynamics. It focuses organizations on increasing individual and group skills and capacity to see patterns related to inequities, separating symptoms from causes, seeking effective strategies and solutions, and creating pathways for improving life chances, outcomes, and success for all groups.

Developing and applying a racial equity lens requires looking both internally and externally – building both personal and institutional awareness. It takes into account history, technological and cultural context and patterns, identity, and requires us to institutionalize new policies and practices for improving and equalizing life chances for all groups.

ParentChild+ recognizes that racial equity is critically important to getting to the desired outcomes in the communities in which we work. We must go beyond “closing the gap in education” as a goal, and create benchmarks that lift up all populations, while amplifying voices from communities that have for too long been excluded because of systemic racism. As such, we are exploring the most effective ways to create these new benchmarks, which include, but are not limited to, raising the voices of the families and children we work with, hiring from the community, co-creating new training materials with and for our staff and those implementing the program across the country and internationally, and re-examining our current curricular materials. We will also explore new strategies to “close the gaps” that limit success for families by recommitting to and enhancing our “strengthening families” approach” and embedding it across ParentChild+’s unique practice and all operations.

By adopting this focus and commitment, ParentChild+ seeks to put into action “Racial Justice,” “the systematic fair treatment of people of all races that results in equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone. All people can achieve their full potential in life, regardless of race, ethnicity or the community in which they live. Racial justice — or racial equity — goes beyond “anti-racism.” It is not just about what we are against, but also what we are for.”<sup>1</sup>

We are committed to early education of children and the strengthening of families that is focused on achieving equitable positive outcomes from the start and that leads to future success and community impact.

### **ParentChild+ Values**

Examining all of ParentChild+’s work through a racial equity lens will enable us to ensure that we are practicing our values at all levels and in all contexts of our work, and are truly

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<sup>1</sup> Culturally-Responsive-Education Framework, New York State Department of Education, pg. 61, June 2020.

engaging with our mission to close the equity gap, support parents, and utilize education to provide opportunities. As such we commit to:

- Recognizing that families are always the experts on their own lives.
- Expanding hiring from within the communities where we work and supporting a livable wage for all.
- Building training and professional development that reflects the staff and families that we are working with.
- Taking a deep dive into racial equity issues internally to examine our own culture and leadership and broaden the diversity of our Board of Directors.
- We will take all necessary steps to reflect on our own implicit biases.
- We will stand for equality and against racism.
- We will intentionally work at the local, state and national level to improve racial equity with all systems, i.e. home visiting, health, social services, schools, etc.