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Commission on  
Improving the  
Status of Children

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## Putting Equity into Action

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LESSONS FROM INDIANA'S CHILDREN'S COMMISSION

MAY 19, 2021

# Session Agenda

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- Background on the Commission
- Our Equity Journey, in Brief
- Lessons learned so far
- Example of equity embedded into process/infrastructure
- Demonstration of policy analysis tool
- Additional resources

# Mission & Vision

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**Mission:** To improve the status of children in Indiana through systemic collaboration

**Vision:** Every child in Indiana will have a safe and nurturing environment and be afforded opportunities to reach their full potential and live a healthy and productive life.

# Origins

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Created by statute in 2013 to:

- Study and evaluate issues related to vulnerable youth
- Review and make recommendations concerning legislation
- Promote information sharing, best practices, policies, and programs
- Cooperate with other child-focused commissions, all branches of state government, stakeholders, and members of the community

# Vulnerable Youth

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2013 statute defines vulnerable youth as those served by any of these:

- Department of Child Services (DCS)
- Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA)
- Department of Corrections (DOC)
- A Juvenile Probation Department

# Children's Cabinet vs. Commission

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Made up of representatives from the three branches of State Government

- Executive Branch
- Legislative Branch
- Judicial Branch

# Commission Members

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- 4 Legislators
- Exec branch agency heads: DCS, FSSA, IDOH, IDOE, IDOC
- Gov's office, State Budget Agency
- Chief Justice, Attorney General
- Prosecutor, Public Defender
- Office of Judicial Administration
- Probation
- (Beginning July 2021) 2 youth members

# Size & Structure

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- Rotating Chairs, Executive Committee
- 5 Task Forces
- 5 Committees
- Numerous subcommittees
- 300+ professionals and volunteers involved
- One FTE



# Strategic Goals/Task Forces

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Child Health and Safety

Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Educational Outcomes

Juvenile Justice & Cross-System Youth

Juvenile Justice Reform

# Committees

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Child Trauma &  
Resilience

Equity, Inclusion  
and Cultural  
Competence

Data Sharing and  
Mapping

Communications

Child Services  
Oversight

# EICC Committee Development

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- Objective on cultural competence included in 2017 Operational Plan
- Planning to operationalize objective, discussions with Executive committee
- Presentation to Commission in October 2018
- Approval of work group with restated objective:

Ensure cultural competence, equity, and inclusion are demonstrated in the work of the Commission and its Task Forces and Committees

# EICC Committee Development

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- Committee charge:
  - Agree upon definitions of terms
  - Research existing frameworks and tools for integrating an equity and cultural competence lens into public policy work
  - Propose a framework and tools for the Commission and its Task Forces and Committees to use to ensure an equity and cultural competence lens is applied to each objective and all recommendations
- November 2018-Jan 2019, Co-chairs and committee members identified
- Group convened in February 2019

# EICC Tools & Resources

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## Common Language

- [Equity, Inclusion, Cultural Competence](#)

## Curriculum and Training

- [Vetted list of training resources](#)
- [Evaluation Rubric](#)

## Frameworks and Tools

- Revised CISC [recommendation form](#)
- [Guide for Equity Considerations](#)
- [Equity in Action Resource Packet](#)

# Learning: Equity-Focused Infrastructure

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- Look at processes, where can you inject an equity check?
- Get in the habit of always requesting data disaggregated by race, gender, geography, other relevant variables
- **Modify forms** to include equity-focused questions
- **Policy analysis**
- #1 Equity action: get people to the table who are impacted by the decisions being made.



# Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

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## Recommendation to the Commission

**Party Submitting Recommendation:**

**Date of Submission:**

**Type of Action Requested:**

- ☐ Legislation    ☐ Administrative Rule or Policy    ☐ Resolution of Support or Endorsement    ☐ Professional/skills development
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Which of the Commission's Strategic Priorities does this Recommendation help advance (check all that apply):**

- ☐ Child Health and Safety    ☐ Juvenile Justice and Cross-system Youth
- ☐ Mental Health and Substance Abuse    ☐ Educational Outcomes

**Summary of Recommendation:**

## **Background of Recommendation:**

What is the need or problem, and how does it impact disparate populations?

What data, research or other information did the recommender consult to formulate this proposal?\_\_\_\_\_

What disproportionality did the data reveal?

What is the current response to the problem by the State of Indiana?

What solution is the recommender proposing, and how does it affect disparate populations?

How does the solution address the disproportionality in the data?

**If a legislative request, cite the current relevant code and specify what change is being recommended.**

**If a policy request, cite the current relevant policy and specify what change is being recommended.**

**If the recommendation involves an endorsement or public promotion of a specific initiative or statement, attach the document of which you are seeking the Commission's support/endorsement/promotion.**



# Guide for Equity Consideration

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- <https://www.in.gov/children/files/Commission-Equity-Guide.final.pdf>
- Set of 7 questions to use in policy analysis, before enacting or when reviewing/revising policies
- Policy=any application of power to the lives of others
- Federal, state & local government, organizations, employers

# Does the intended action:

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- 1) Have data analyzing its effect on disparate populations?
- 2) Engage and integrate disparate populations' voices? If so, how?
- 3) Benefit disparate populations short- and long-term? If so, how?
- 4) Potentially harm disparate populations short- and long-term? If so, how?
- 5) Come from a position of privilege?
- 6) Promote equitable connections for disparate populations to resources and services?
- 7) Protect individuals and/or groups if they respond to issues of inequity? If so, how?

# Example: School Retention Policy

## ABC School's Retention Policy

In order for a student to be considered for retention at a particular grade level, the following procedure will be used.

1. The classroom teacher makes a referral to the Rtl Team and interventions will be suggested.
2. When considering the retention of a student, the parents will be consulted, and topics may include:
  1. Current level of academic achievement
  2. Potential for success at the next academic grade level
  3. Emotional, Physical, and social maturity
3. A conference must be scheduled no later than early April of the current school year, and the following individuals must be in attendance:
  1. Classroom Teacher
  2. Parent(s)
  3. Building principal

Final decisions in student promotion, placement, or retention rest with the building principal.

# Equity Considerations in Action

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**Does the intended action:**

1) Use data to analyze effects on disparate populations?

Status Quo	With Equity Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Data is not currently examined</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Institute data collection at the individual level via MTSS</li><li>• Aggregate and analyze the data by demographic variables to monitor outcomes</li></ul>

# Equity Considerations in Action

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**Does the intended action:**

2) Engage and integrate disparate populations' voice? If so, how?

Status Quo	With Equity Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parents consulted and required to attend a conference</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Intentional steps to consider needs of parents</li><li>• Add language to policy that requires a mutually agreed upon time for conference, asks about needs for accommodations</li><li>• Involve families who have been through the process in updating the policy</li></ul>

# Equity Considerations in Action

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**Does the intended action:**

3) Benefit disparate populations short- and long-term? If so, how?

Status Quo	With Equity Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Intent of policy is to enhance children's short- and long-term educational outcomes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Set benchmark goals</li><li>• Define root causes of barriers</li><li>• Identify means to address barriers</li><li>• Measure students' academic outcomes after retention, and analyze by group</li></ul>

# Equity Considerations in Action

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**Does the intended action:**

- 4) Potentially harm disparate populations short- and long-term? If so, how?

Status Quo	With Equity Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Current policy has the potential to widen achievement gaps</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider access to resources, needs of child and family</li><li>• Does retention actually address the child's needs?</li><li>• Does it do more harm than good?</li><li>• Would another solution better address the needs without incurring harm that could come from retention?</li></ul>

# Equity Considerations in Action

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**Does the intended action:**

5) Come from a position of privilege?

Status Quo	With Equity Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policy developed by educators or administrators with advanced degrees, stable homes, steady salaries, mostly (or all) white</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Include diverse families who have experienced a retention conference in a process of revising the policy</li><li>• Include considerations such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• scheduling conferences</li><li>• virtual/remote options</li><li>• interpreter needs</li><li>• time of day</li><li>• reading level of materials, acronyms and jargon</li><li>• opportunities to ask questions and prepare</li></ul></li></ul>



# Equity Considerations in Action

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**Does the intended action:**

- 6) Promote equitable connections for disparate populations to resources and services

Status Quo	With Equity Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policy does not mention resources and services available to families</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use MTSS or RtI to collect information about services and resources that would help student progress throughout the year</li><li>• Educate families about available resources and services</li><li>• Ask the family what they think their child needs</li><li>• Link families with services and resources</li><li>• Clarify how services, either with or without retention, are expected to lead to academic progress</li></ul>

# Equity Considerations in Action

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**Does the intended action:**

- 7) Protect individuals and/or groups if they respond to issues of inequity and how?

Status Quo	With Equity Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The policy does not provide any redress options for families</li><li>• Family input is through their participation in the meeting</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Include expectation of psychological safety in conference</li><li>• Provide parents the option of sharing concerns with a designated person who is not part of the conference (e.g., the school-to-home liaison)</li><li>• Routinely ask families for feedback after conference, including at intervals throughout the next year to get their assessment of the outcome of the decision</li></ul>

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# Commission on Improving the Status of Children

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