

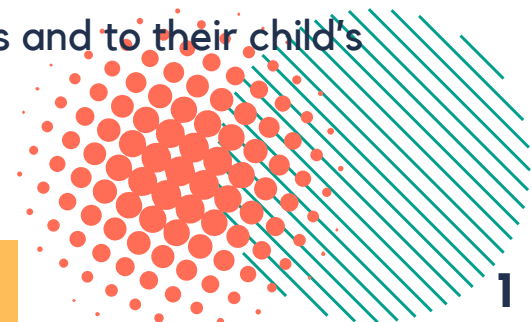


justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) statement

Partnering with parents and caregivers to promote healthy early childhood development in Kansas City begins with believing in the innate promise every child holds while acknowledging the identities, privileges, and barriers that influence their trajectory. Every child holds promise; yet, inequitable outcomes are most likely for children and families from historically marginalized communities, including Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color. Our service-delivery approach is intentionally anti-racist, anti-bias, and is attuned to the unique needs of participating families. We observe the incredible assets families maintain, including the richness of unique family culture and belief systems.

We are attuned to disrupting institutional racism through anti-racist action and understand that continued reflection and purposeful action will change the status quo in Kansas City.

The early care and education field has historically exploited women of color, and currently devalues the women of color who primarily comprise our early childhood/childcare workforce. We consider the ongoing inequities we see in maternal and child outcomes during the critical perinatal, birth, and postpartum stages. The families with whom we partner commonly lack access; access to housing, jobs that pay a living wage, safety net benefits, and beyond. Access to stabilizing and strengthening services is critical to enduring successes and to their child's healthy early childhood development.





JEDI statement (cont.)

In our work, we choose to not simply dismantle the inequitable systems that exist - we boldly seek to innovate and build new ones. We do this proactively by centering the voices of BIPOC communities and those with lived experiences in the work at the intersections of early care and education, parent education and home visiting, public health, doula care, and environmental justice. We support and champion the innovation, impact, and success of BIPOC leaders in the early care and education field.

To bring these ideas to life, Start at Zero makes the following commitments:

(1) We will continuously financially invest in the individual, personal learning journeys of SAZ staff and board members in order to acknowledge and identify our own biases, privilege and participation in white supremacy culture.

(2) We commit to prioritizing our resources--our time, connections, influence--toward partnering with BIPOC children and families particularly those impacted by higher poverty rates, residing in historically marginalized areas, and residing in zip codes with decreased life expectancy and health inequities that come from their community environment (including, but not limited to, limited access to healthy foods, lower quality housing, and higher crime rates).



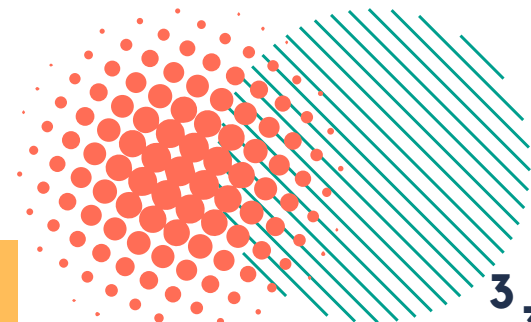


JEDI statement (cont.)

(3) We will promote JEDI principles in our organizational and strategic planning as the foundation of our organization, throughout every layer of work. Every individual, every team, every project, and every strategy will center JEDI.

(4) We seat individuals of varying socioeconomic levels and professions as board members (with the commitment to promoting healthy early childhood development as the common denominator). We are committed to our board membership reflecting the demographics of our target beneficiaries.

Start at Zero believes the understanding and embodiment of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) is a journey, rather than a destination. We are proud to share this living document and affirm that it reflects our current thinking. We choose to maintain a culture of regularly accepting feedback from our partners, community, and beneficiaries who believe in our vision with an open invitation to partner with us to advance our understanding of what it means to center JEDI both in theory and practice. This requires humility. We expect our engagement of JEDI to deeply affect our work and bring about transformation. As such, this statement will evolve and we will update it to reflect the current leg of our journey.





JEDI statement (cont.)

JEDI is an acronym that stands for Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, and these principles embody the work of Start at Zero. Justice can be considered as a “true north”, with equity, diversity, and inclusion being steers that empower us to remain on course. Stated another way, Start at Zero views equity, diversity, and inclusion as fundamental elements of justice.

updated: June 16, 2023

