



## **Build It Back Better:** What Questions Should Drive the Recovery and Rebuilding of the Early Childhood System? Dialogue Resource Kit

### **Overview**

Over the past several months, both the strengths and shortcomings of the system designed to support the development of young children and their families in the United States have been exposed by the challenges and dire circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color combined with increased national attention to ongoing systemic racism and police brutality have contributed to renewed and more urgent calls to action around issues of racial equity.

Together, as we move through this crisis and collective reflection on our values, the early childhood system must consider the lessons learned through our challenges, our resilience, and persistent inequities to determine how we will collectively ensure a stronger, brighter future for all young children and those who care for them. This process must prioritize the voices of those most directly impacted by early childhood systems -- families, caregivers, and practitioners – to ensure that we rebuild our systems in ways that are responsive to their needs.

As a first step toward encouraging responsive system evolution, the Ounce of Prevention Fund (the Ounce) and many others, are hosting, participating in, and encouraging conversations to inform how we rebuild a better, more equitable and comprehensive early childhood system. A truly diverse collection of experiences and ideas is crucial to ensure we **build it back better**.

### **Goals**

The goals of the Ounce's **Build It Back Better** initiative are to:

- **Generate critical questions** to inform development of a stronger, brighter future for all young children and families through realization of a responsive, equitable, and comprehensive early childhood system.
- **Increase and democratize participation** in conversations about how to build the system back better, prioritizing family, practitioner and community needs.
- **Facilitate courageous conversations** that increase connectivity, cohesion, and inclusion across the early childhood system.

### **Resources**

Visit the links below to view the materials that will help you organize a Build It Back Better dialogue in your community or with your networks:

- ✓ [Sample invitation](#): Download and customize a sample email to send to those participating in your dialogue.
- ✓ [Sample slide deck](#): Download and customize presentation slides that will help you introduce Build It Back Better to dialogue participants and guide them through the discussion questions.
- ✓ [Summary form](#): Use this form to share the key themes discussed during your dialogue.

## Process

### 1. Host *Build It Back Better* Dialogues

Families, practitioners and leaders from across the country are participating in and hosting virtual conversations with people involved in and impacted by early childhood systems. Through these dialogues, we hope to together identify key questions and themes from across different perspectives. While there is no wrong approach to planning a dialogue, here are a few simple resources and recommendations:

- ✓ **Keep it manageable.** Consider engaging a group/s of 5-15 people in dialogue around what should guide rebuilding the early childhood system.
- ✓ **Schedule enough time.** Allow 60-90 minutes if utilizing all the questions listed below.
- ✓ **Be inclusive.** Consider inclusion of diverse perspectives (by race, age, income, geography, role) for richer dialogue.
- ✓ **Use questions that work for your group.** Utilize the *Build It Back Better* Dialogue resources linked above (slide deck, questions, and summary submission form) and/or adapt them to meet the needs of your participants.
- ✓ **Engage participants after the conversation.** Share a meeting summary with participants. Make sure you have captured their ideas accurately. Ask them how they would like to stay connected.
- ✓ **Share your findings.** Capture and submit key themes ideas, and questions generated by dialogue participants using this [summary form](#).
- ✓ **Acknowledge the current reality.** We are all still working through emotions and impacts associated with a global pandemic and a growing social justice movement. The following questions were designed to recognize and honor that reality, but acknowledging current conditions is also important.

#### ***Build It Back Better* Dialogue Questions:**

**Q1:** When you think about your children or the children in your care/community, what is a hope, dream or goal that you have for them?

**Q2:** What are your biggest worries or concerns for your family or the children in your care/community? What keeps you up at night?

**Q3:** COVID-19 has clearly highlighted systems challenges in every state and community. How did the supports for young children and families respond or fare in your state or community? *Both positive and negative experiences are helpful to share.* Who has been disproportionately impacted by these challenges in your state or community?

**Q4:** With respect to the challenges, concerns, and inequities, what has or would help alleviate these issues or make things better? *This could be at any level (family, program, community, or policy).*

**Q5:** What questions should we all be asking as we think about how to make sure ALL young children and families thrive?

### 2. Engage and Connect with Others

As ideas, priorities and questions are generated through *Build It Back Better* dialogues, themes will be shared on the Early Childhood Connector ([ECCconnector.org](http://ECCconnector.org)) to seed expanded conversation and engagement among members of this online community of early childhood stakeholders from across the country. Through generated blogs, articles and moderated discussion via the ECCconnector, dialogue hosts and participants are encouraged to broaden and deepen conversations around building a more comprehensive, equitable and responsive early childhood system.

- ✓ **Create an account** on [ECCconnector.org](https://ECCconnector.org), and invite dialogue participants to join.
- ✓ **Share resources** from work happening in your organization, community or network.
- ✓ **Seek ideas** and resources from other members about common challenges.

### **3. Build Public and Political Will**

The Ounce will develop tools designed to highlight key themes, questions, and points of cohesion generated through Build It Back Better dialogues, thought leadership writings, and ECCconnector discussions. These tools will be intended to inform local, state, and federal program and policy rebuilding and advocacy efforts. Tools planned for development and dissemination include:

- ✓ Summary report with synthesis of core dialogues, thought leadership writings, and ECCconnector discussions.
- ✓ Multi-media communication tools including social media posts, media/legislative talking points, video clips and infographics conveying key themes and questions.

### **Questions?**

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