

It's past time to tear down the structural barriers to opportunity faced by Iowans of color

The following statement is from the entire staff at the Child and Family Policy Center:

We at the Child and Family Policy Center have been working through feelings of sadness and anger watching the violence and pain convulsing our communities. It's a fire lit by the murder of George Floyd, built out of racism rooted in our nation's earliest days and still alive today. We stand with our black neighbors, colleagues and friends.

Black lives matter. Black children and families matter. Their dreams matter. Their futures matter.

The Center often advocates on policy issues that do not directly or solely affect children because children are integrally connected to their larger communities. A community can't thrive when some of its members are harassed and disproportionately killed by law enforcement and systematically deprived of opportunity by our health, educational, human service and justice systems. Black children can't thrive when they are treated as less than fully human.

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At the Center, we pledge to listen to and learn from our partners in communities around our state. We will work to not just be not racist, but, to borrow from the work of author and scholar Dr. Ibram X. Kendi, to be anti-racist: to actively advance concrete policies and practices to dismantle the persistent inequities experienced by black Iowans—and by Latinx, Asian and other marginalized communities with their own histories and traditions but having faced similar oppression.

We ask our elected officials to do the same. Tomorrow state legislators return to Des Moines to finish the legislative session they paused in March due to Covid-19. We call on them to be anti-racists, to act starting this week to tear down the structural barriers to opportunity codified in our laws and made real in our budgets. Yes, time is short and the budget is tight. But Iowans of color have waited too long already. They cannot, and ought not have to, wait any longer to see meaningful and equitable change.

