

# Supporting Children with Disabilities: Lessons from the Pandemic

Explore promising approaches and innovative strategies employed during the pandemic to address challenges faced by children with disabilities and their families, including access to clinical service and treatment needs, home caregiving, and mental health treatment with an emphasis on underserved/under resourced children and families

Consider policies and/or practices that might be sustained or implemented beyond the pandemic to support children with disabilities and their families

## Welcome to Day 3 of the Workshop

- Today we will cover Public Health and Emergency Planning as well as Planning for Recovery
- You may find the agenda and the slides from our presentations if you scroll down the page you are on now to the bottom
- ASL interpretation is available as is live captioning
- We encourage discussion and questions in the “ask your question” section just below the video player

# **Advancing Services for Children with Disabilities: Reflections and Thoughts**

Amy J. Houtrow, MD, PhD, MPH  
Professor of PM&R and Pediatrics  
University of Pittsburgh  
@HoutrowMDPhDMPH

# Themes to Support Children with Disabilities

Engaging people with lived expertise

Partnerships and coalitions

Flexibility

Technology

Children with disabilities have rights

Coordination and communication

# Recommendations to Support Children with Disabilities

## Engaging Lived Expertise

- Formalize relationships
- At every stage
- “Nothing about us without us!”
- Pay families for what they do

# Recommendations to Support Children with Disabilities

## Partnerships & Coalitions

- Use existing structures such as family-to-family networks
- To make real change MCHB can lead coalitions
- Undo structural hierarchies

# Recommendations to Support Children with Disabilities

## Flexibility

- Medicaid waiver flexibilities should be extended
- Schools need to maintain flexibility to serve children as risks and needs change
- Remove administrative roadblocks

# Recommendations to Support Children with Disabilities

## Technology

- Continued payment for telehealth services
- Make broadband a public good
- Recognize preferences for technology use

# Recommendations to Support Children with Disabilities

Children  
with  
disabilities  
have  
rights

- These rights cannot be an afterthought
- Utilize laws to assure access
- Clarify EPSDT care coordination benefit
- Increase the Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage



# Recommendations to Support Children with Disabilities

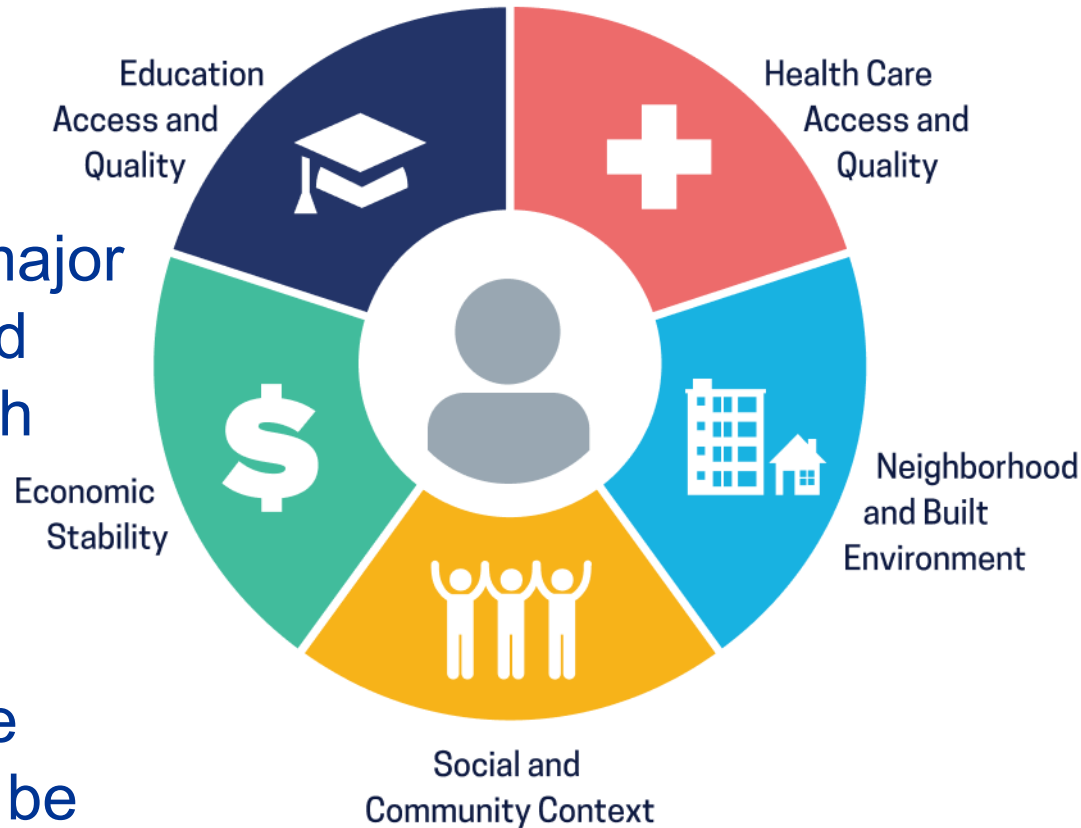
## Coordination and Communication

- Focus on what children and families need
- MCHB can foster across sector coordination
- Find the right stakeholders
- Communications should be cultural responsive
- Title V registries can help coordinate in future emergencies and for services generally

# Political & Social Determinants of Health

Poverty is a major barrier to good health + health equity

Children with disabilities are more likely to be poor than other children

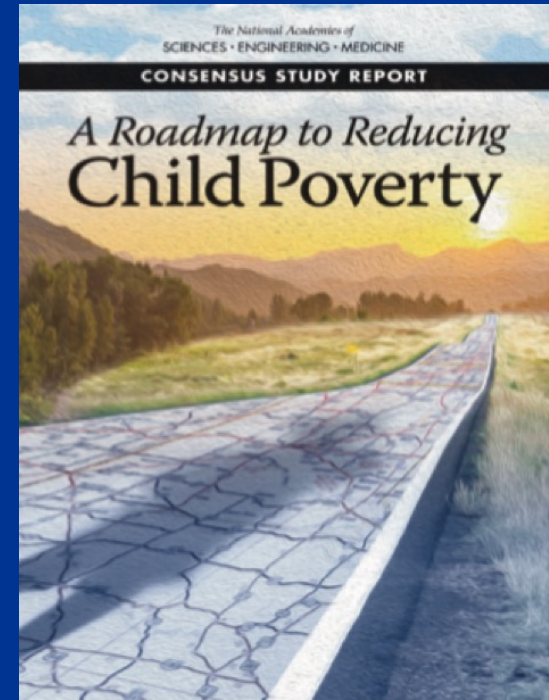


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# Reducing Child Poverty by 50% in 10 Years

- Convert the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit to a fully refundable credit that concentrates benefits to the families with the lowest incomes
- Increase the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Increase housing vouchers (accessible housing for children with disabilities)
- Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit to increase payments



# Address Policies That Keep People with Disabilities Poor

- Reduce burden of accessing programs that support economic stability
  - Single point of entry
- Eliminate Sub-minimum wage
- Extend FMLA coverage
- Expand Vocational Rehabilitation programs (partnering with schools and Title V services)
- Make sure home and community-based services are covered and available for all who need them
- Recognize the extra cost of having disabilities and pay families
  - Revolutionize Supplemental Security Income

# Political & Social Determinants of Health

Children with disabilities cannot access the care they need



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# Medically Underserved Populations

- May face economic, cultural, or language barriers to health care
- Face a shortage of primary care health services

<https://bhwhrsa.gov/workforce-shortage-areas/shortage-designation>

- Authorize people with disabilities as a “health disparities population” under 42 USC Section 285t(d)(1)

<https://ncd.gov/publications/2021/ncd-letter-nimhd-ahrq-health-disparity-population-designation>

# Federalize Medicaid

- Cover all children and young adults
  - Destigmatize minoritized and poor children
  - Eliminate churning
  - Eliminate the need for children to be covered by private insurance (increase flexibility for families who are often tied to jobs because of the adequacy of their private insurance)
  - Decrease administrative hurdles and burdens
- Fund to fully realize EPSDT
- Fund to fully realize the promise of Olmstead (HCBS)
- Pay providers appropriately for their services
  - Preventative services
  - Care coordination (including across sectors)
  - Team based care
  - Address family needs

# Political & Social Determinants of Health

Children with disabilities are underserved by their schools



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# Addressing Educational Inequities

- Eliminate the divide between rich schools and poor schools
  - Use a strategy to re-align funding
- Provide things children need at school
- Prioritize funding for special education services
- Use evidence-based strategies to promote inclusion and self-determination
- Foster relationships with other sectors that serve children and youth with disabilities

# SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

Today's Students Experience...

## Prison-Like Environments

SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS  
POLICE DOGS  
ARMED GUARDS  
SCHOOL AND LOCAL POLICE ON CAMPUS  
METAL DETECTORS  
STRIP SEARCHES  
PHYSICALLY UNINVITING BUILDINGS

## Under Investment

CUTBACKS ON COUNSELORS, SOCIAL WORKERS AND MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES  
UNDERFUNDED AND UNDER-RESOURCED SCHOOLS

## Harsh School Discipline

OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS  
EXPULSIONS  
TRANSFERS TO ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS  
ZERO TOLERANCE POLICIES

## Pressures & Uncertainty

SCHOOL CLOSURES  
PRIVATIZATION  
HIGH-STAKES TESTING PRESSURES ON STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS  
IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT BIAS

Youth of color, LGBTQ students, and students with disabilities are punished **more often** and **more harshly** than their peers for the same misbehavior.

## Out-of-School Suspensions

OVER  
**3,000,000**

students receive an out-of-school suspension annually.

A NUMBER THAT HAS BEEN RISING FOR DECADES.

## School Arrests

OVER  
**70%** of students involved in school-related arrested or referred to law enforcement are Hispanic or African-American.



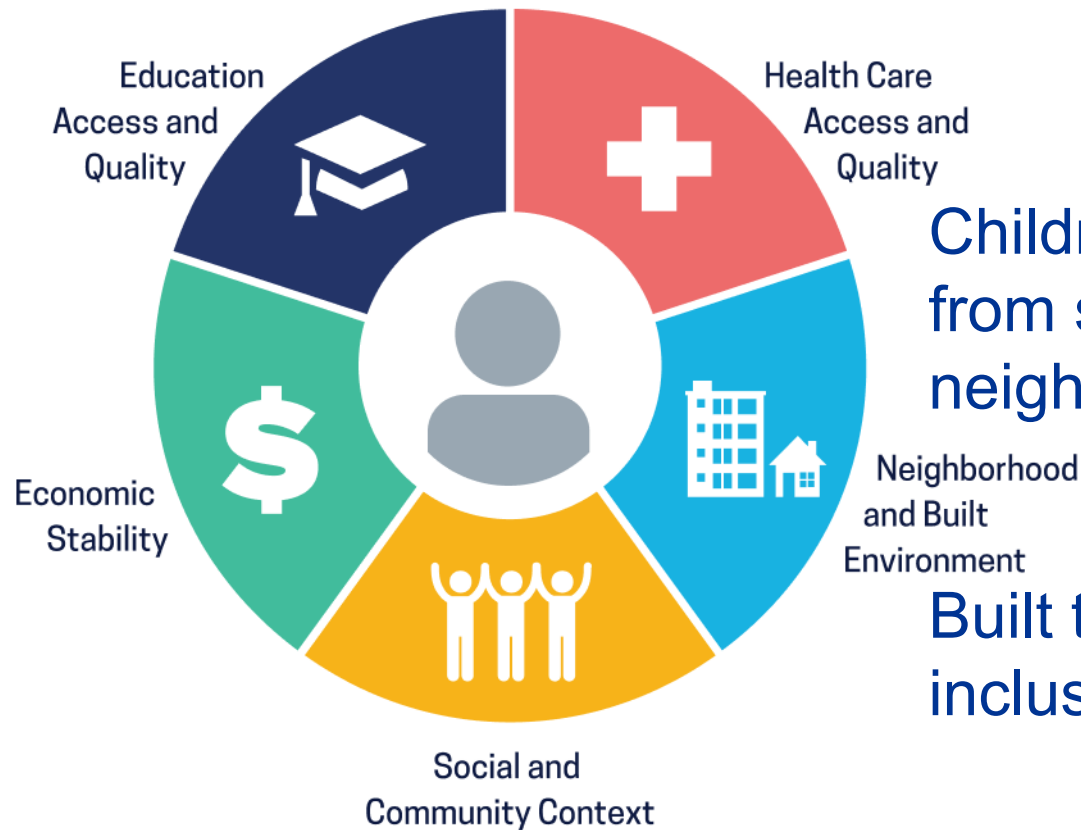
SUSPENSIONS, RACE & DISABILITY

Likelihood of Being Suspended at Least Once

Source: <https://advancementproject.org/resources/school-to-prison-pipeline-infographic/>

- Behavior & Discipline problems thought as criminal problems
- Fewer nurses
- Fewer counselors
- More resource officers

# Political & Social Determinants of Health



Children benefit from supportive neighborhoods

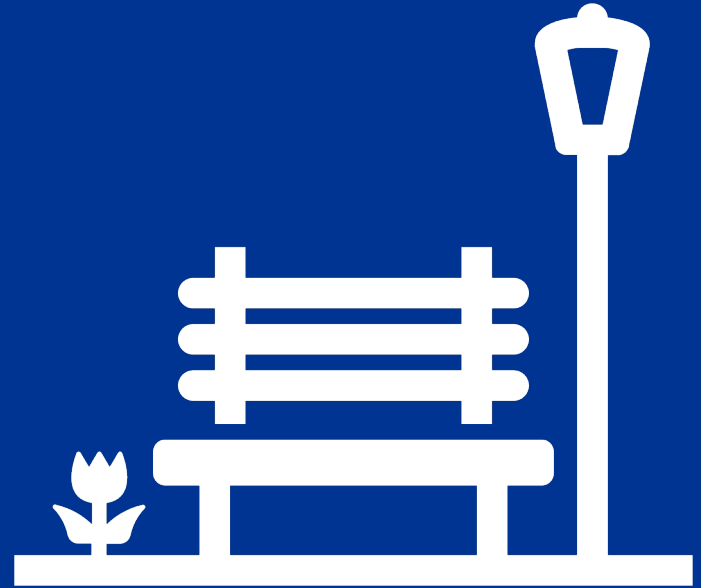
Built to be inclusive

Social Determinants of Health

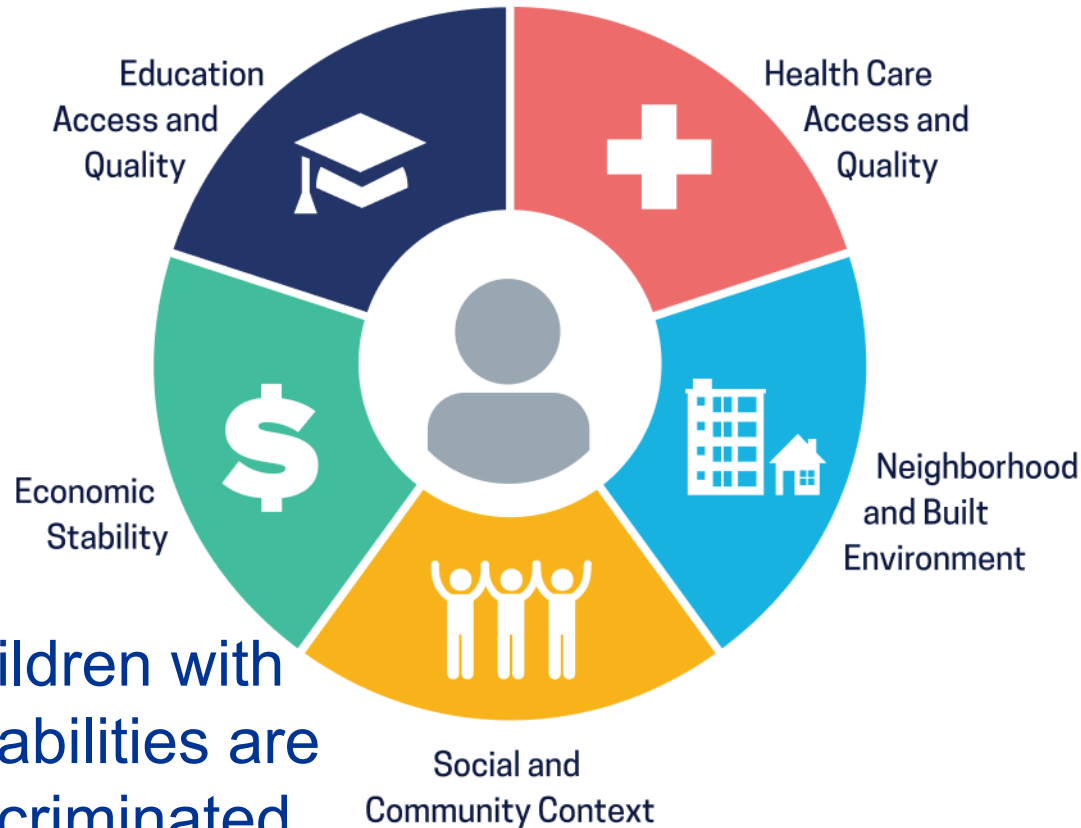
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# Neighborhoods



# Political & Social Determinants of Health



Children with disabilities are discriminated against

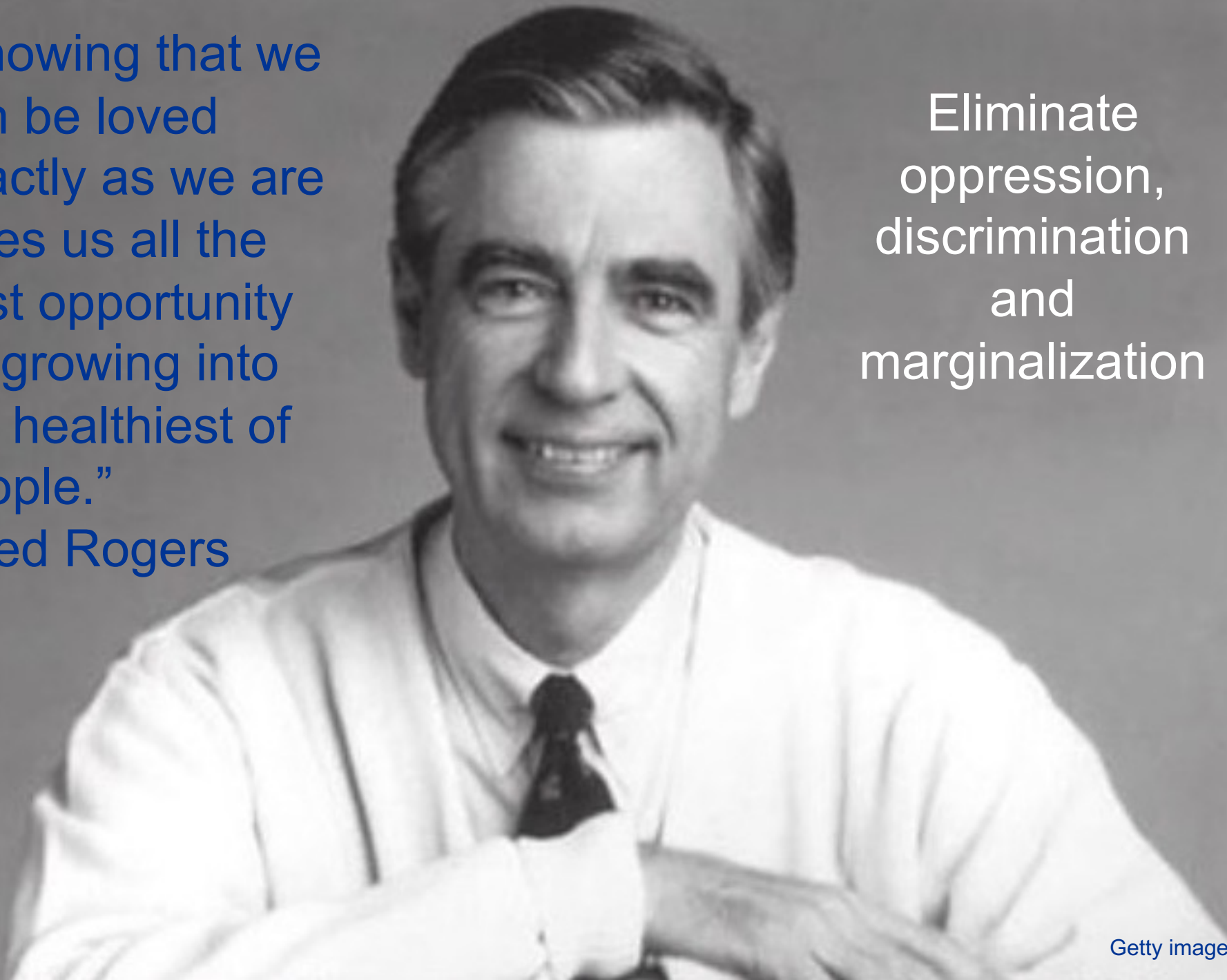
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“Knowing that we  
can be loved  
exactly as we are  
gives us all the  
best opportunity  
for growing into  
the healthiest of  
people.”

-Fred Rogers

Eliminate  
oppression,  
discrimination  
and  
marginalization



# Actions to Address Discrimination

- Assess one's own implicit biases
- Create and assess programs/interventions through a health equity lens
- Involve the people who are being marginalized in the planning, creation, implementation and assessment of programs and services
- Leverage medical-legal partnerships
- Teach professionals about ableism and how it impacts how they evaluate and treat/address the needs of children with disabilities



collaborate  
simplify  
community  
flexibility  
flexible  
listening  
change  
telehealth  
strength-based  
empower  
engage  
policy-change  
equitable  
pay-families  
innovate  
trust  
families  
pay  
empowerment  
coalition  
technology  
lived-expertise  
care  
knowledge  
partner  
caring  
navigate  
diverse  
need  
payment-reform  
listen  
leverage  
title-v  
family  
train  
share





**1) All need to row in the same direction to achieve our transformational goals**

**2) We have ample examples of programs, services and supports that should be continued**

