Conclusion: The Equity Project

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ABSTRACT. The Issue. As a result of the work completed during the meeting and summarized at the last session, 4 implementation groups have been established as the organizational framework for the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)-Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) Equity Project. This project will be the mechanism by which the RCPCH and the AAP will continue the endeavor that was initiated at this meeting. The Equity Project Implementation Groups will focus on Education and Training, Practice and Advocacy, Research and Public Policy, and Children’s Rights. The goals and objectives of each group reflect the accomplishments of the conference participants. A call will go out to members of the AAP and the RCPCH to join these groups as the core of the operation of the project. Objectives will be prioritized and joint initiatives developed to focus on these priorities. The project thus will evolve as a broad-based effort to engage as many members of the AAP and the RCPCH as possible in the project endeavors. Pediatrics 2003;112:771–772; the AAP-RCPCH Equity Project, education and training, practice and advocacy, research and public policy, children’s rights, AAP, RCPCH, marginalized children, social determinants, health disparities, evidence-based.

ABBREVIATIONS. AAP, American Academy of Pediatrics; RCPCH, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

IMPLEMENTATION GROUP 1—EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Goal
To ensure that all pediatricians and other providers of child health services understand the issues and experience of marginalized children, the impact of social determinants on direct health, and the health implications of inequities and have the knowledge, attitude, and skills to deal with health disparities among all children.

Group Charge
This group will focus on efforts and activities related to the education of pediatricians and other child health providers. Objectives include:

- To develop curricula dealing with equity in child health and the care of marginalized children and families
- To develop curricula and training materials on child advocacy and community development
- To identify competencies and process and outcome measures of these competencies required of pediatricians who practice community pediatrics
- To develop training material that defines the fundamental role of children’s rights in the practice of pediatrics
- To develop common criteria and methods for assessing trainees
- To develop processes for accrediting training programs in community pediatrics
- To develop a network to share teaching material and resources (web based)
- To establish joint rewards and prizes for innovation in training, joint fellowships, and other exchanges for advancing educational goals
- To develop leadership and mentors in community pediatrics

IMPLEMENTATION GROUP 2—PRACTICE AND ADVOCACY

Goal
To enable pediatricians to work toward societal equity in child health and improve health outcomes of marginalized children through health service and child advocacy.

Group Charge
This group will focus on activities related to professional practice and the child advocacy initiatives of pediatricians and other child health providers. Objectives include:

- To develop joint American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)-Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) policy statements on child health equity, the care of marginalized children, and mental health
- To develop a compendium of evidence-based successful Community Access to Child Health model programs dealing with equity and marginalized children (organized by type of marginalization)
- To develop advocacy initiatives for marginalized children
- To integrate the concepts of social capital into practice
- To provide relevant pediatric care to incarcerated children
- To develop evidence-based home visiting programs in the United States and the United Kingdom

IMPLEMENTATION GROUP 3—RESEARCH AND PUBLIC POLICY

Goal
To improve our understanding of the genesis of health disparities and ways to resolve them through research and the development of evidenced-based public policy.
Group Charge
This group will focus on research activities related to child health disparities and the development of relevant public policy. Objectives include:

- To develop a theoretical framework to identify factors that lead to the success or failure of Community Access to Child Health initiatives
- To document the differential health outcomes of marginalized children
- To define measures for social exclusion
- To research and develop policy statements dealing with the risk factors (determinants) of adverse outcomes for marginalized children
- To define the potential impact of reduction of income inequalities on child health outcomes and the reasonableness of this approach, including identification of current data and a definition of terminology
- To implement a Pediatric Research in Office Settings initiative dealing with marginalized children and/or child mental health
- To research the question of why income inequalities affect the health of everyone in a population and the effect of income gradients on health
- To understand the mediators of health outcomes in populations of children
- To define the financial value of guaranteed health care to a family
- To determine the factors limiting the potential impact of universal access to care (United Kingdom) in comparison with a system with limited access to care (United States)
- To develop a common data set for tracking inequalities, monitoring intergenerational change, determining the cost of not delivering health care to populations of marginalized children, and corresponding measures for health status and well-being
- To define a common health insurance benefits package that describes the essentials of what is required to promote well-being, defines the criteria to determine how primary care can impact poverty, and serves the needs of marginalized children

IMPLEMENTATION GROUP 4—CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

Goal
To implement a children’s rights paradigm as a framework and strategy to reduce child health disparities.

Group Charge
This group covers activities in relation to research and the development of a framework for the integration of children’s rights into pediatric practice and public policy. Objectives include:

- To develop a children’s rights index to quantify the determinants of child health outcomes and as a measure of the marginalization of populations of children
- To develop a response to the perceived dichotomy between children’s and family rights
- To develop a curriculum for training pediatricians, child health practitioners, and child advocates on children’s rights and their use as a paradigm and framework for impacting child health disparities
- To identify the role of children’s rights as determinants of child health outcomes through root cause analysis and other social science methodologies
- To develop strategies and methods for integrating children’s rights into pediatric practice

The vision that is the Equity Project now must focus on engaging pediatricians in the United States and the United Kingdom to pursue equity in child health. The implementation groups and their objectives provide the framework for joint initiatives to generate new knowledge, ensure the relevance of pediatrics to the determinants of child health, and improve health outcomes for all children. Joint endeavors must involve community pediatricians in the development of a new pediatrics that addresses the critical issues affecting children. Such efforts must include seminal changes in the way we conceptualize and approach child health. The goals and objectives for the Equity Project provide insight into a new vision for community pediatrics.
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