

Reducing Racial Disparity in the Continuum of Care

Wednesday, October 21, 2009

Handout Materials



**New York State
Office of
Children & Family
Services**

New York State
Office of Children and Family Services
and
PDP Distance Learning Project

REDUCING RACIAL DISPARITY IN THE CONTINUUM OF CARE

October 21, 2009

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National studies consistently show that neglect and abuse—the main preconditions to a child being placed in foster care—occur at the same rate among children of color as they do among white children.

Children of color account for 42 percent of the U.S. child population yet make up 57 percent of all children in foster care. This overrepresentation and disparate treatment of children of color in the foster care system is referred to as disproportionality.

It is an indicator that the child welfare system is not functioning fairly or equitably.

Disproportionality exists among African American children, American Indian and Alaska Native children, and, in several states, Latino children.

The keystone of Casey Family Programs' strategy to improve child welfare is to safely reduce the number of children in foster care by 50 percent by the year 2020. If children of color were not overrepresented in the foster care system, but instead reflected the average rate for all children in foster care, the overall number of children in foster care would decrease by about 22 percent—or almost half of Casey Family Programs' 2020 Strategy safe reduction goal.

Children of Color Treated Differently at Every Stage

Research shows conclusively that children of color are treated differently than white children at every stage of the child welfare system, from the way reports of maltreatment are investigated to whether they are substantiated to the decision on whether to place a child in foster care.

Once in care, children of color experience a greater number of placements and moves. They receive fewer support services, have less contact with case workers and stay in the system longer. Ultimately, they are less likely to be adopted or reunited with their birth families.

Children do best growing up in stable homes as members of families whose connections will last them a lifetime. Disproportionality leads to children of color having less of a chance to experience the loving embrace of a permanent family.

As long as children of color are overrepresented in the foster care system, they will face an inordinate number of obstacles along the path toward successful adulthood.

This doesn't just hold back individuals. It holds back entire communities.

The first step to correcting this inequity is for states to understand the extent to which disproportionality exists in their systems.

To do this, they must first analyze the data and diagnose the problems. Then, they must set out to address the issues within child welfare systems—as well as government policies—that perpetuate disproportionality.

Disproportionality Facts

- Percentage of children in foster care who are children of color: **57%**
- Percentage of children of color in U.S. child population: **42%**
- Percentage of children in foster care who are African American: **33.9%**
- Percentage of African American children in U.S. child population: **15.1%**
- Percentage of children in foster care who are American Indian and Alaska Native: **2.1%**
- Percentage of American Indian and Alaska Native children in U.S. child population: **0.9%**
- **Note: 19% of children in foster care are Latino, which is about the same percentage of Latinos in the U.S. child population. A 2005 report, however, shows that Latinos are overrepresented in foster care in 16 states.**

Promising Practices and Recommendations

Promising practices are reducing racial disparities in child welfare. Texas, for example, has reduced disproportionality through staff training, case review and community engagement. Michigan has completed a comprehensive analysis of disproportionality within its system, a strong first step to correcting the disparities. Casey Family Programs assisted both states in their efforts.

System-wide approaches such as investments in prevention, early intervention and increased permanency options—which benefit all children in care—have the additional effect of reducing racial disparities.

Casey Family Programs and its partners will issue the following policy recommendations on disproportionality:

1. Congress should mandate the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to publish an annual report that provides a national summary and state-by-state breakdowns regarding the racial and ethnic disproportionality and disparities that exist in child welfare.
2. The Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) process should be modified to specifically assess racial disparities in outcomes for children and youth. Ongoing assessment of racial equity in state child welfare systems should become part of the CSFR process.
3. Congress should mandate that State Program Improvement Plans, developed as a result of the CSFR process, include evidence-based strategies to reduce racial disparities in treatment and outcomes.

Racial disparities are a symptom of much larger problems within the child welfare system. As such, we must ensure that this work is done as part of larger efforts to help all vulnerable children at risk of entering, or already in, the child welfare system.



www.casey.org

Presentation to Symposium on Reducing
Disproportionality and Disparities in Child
Welfare

Baruch College/CUNY, New York City

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▣ September 21, 2009

Definitions

- ▣ Disproportionality-the relationship between a groups presence in the general population and their presence in the child welfare system
- ▣ Disparate outcomes - the varied levels of resolution of child welfare cases by group (reunification, adoption, guardianship) or status of well-being outcomes (length of stay, education, mental health) by group.

Foster Care Population

Of the national foster care population (513,000) on September 30, 2005:

- Black children comprised 32% as compared to 15% of the child population (2.1x).
- Hispanic children comprised 18% as compared to 19% of the child population (1x).
- White non Hispanic children comprised 41% as compared to 59% of the child population (.7x).
- American Indian children comprised 2% as compared to 1% of the child population(2x). (Public child welfare data only, not tribal)

Theories on Why Disproportionality Exists?

▣ Parent/Family Risk Factors

- Poverty
- Jobless
- Substance abuse
- Mental health issues

Community Risk Factors

- Poverty
- Homelessness
- Crime and violence

Organizational/structural Factors

- Bias
- Practices
- Policies
- Systemic racism

Jurisdictions Addressing Disproportionality/Disparate Outcomes

- * Nevada
- * Florida
- * Iowa
- * Hawaii
- * New Jersey
- * Missouri
- * New York
- * Arizona
- * Texas
- * California
- * Washington
- * Alaska
- * North Carolina
- * Ohio
- * Pennsylvania
- * Minnesota (sites listed are addressing the issue to varying degrees, from building awareness to demonstrating promising practices)
- * Maryland
- * DC
- * Kansas
- * Oklahoma
- * Wisconsin
- * Oregon
- * Colorado
- * Kentucky

CFP Collaborations

- The Alliance for Racial Equity (The Alliance consists of Casey Family Programs, Annie E. Casey, Marguerite Casey, JCYOI, and Center for the Study of Social Policy)
- Black Administrators in Child Welfare
- National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
- Praxis International
- Race Matters Consortium

Promising Strategies for Reducing Disproportionality and Disparities

- Woodbury County, Iowa
 - Child Welfare System Navigators
- Ramsey County, Minnesota
 - Differential Response
- Los Angeles County, CA
 - Point of Engagement
- North Carolina
 - Engaging Fathers
- Hawaii
 - Standardized Risk Assessment
- Texas
 - Worker Training and Advisory Committees
- Subsidized Guardianship

Estimated Cost Savings

- * 2006 an estimated \$4.1 billion in Title IV-E funds were spent on foster care
- * Including \$1.7 billion in maintenance and \$2.3 billion in administration costs
- * If disproportionality were eliminated for A.A, Lat., and A.I children, a reduction of 29% of overall CW population; a potential savings of \$1.17 billion could be realized

Disproportionate Minority Representation (DMR) in the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems

Disproportionate Minority Representation (DMR) or disproportionality occurs when a particular minority group's (racial/ethnic) involvement with a system is significantly higher or lower than that group's representation in the general population. This attachment considers DMR at various decision points in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. In the case of child welfare, the decision points discussed include child protective services reports made to the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR), the indication of an SCR report for abuse or maltreatment, foster care placement of any children involved in the child welfare system, and time to discharge for any foster children. In the case of the juvenile justice system, decision points reviewed include arrest, detention, admission of juvenile delinquents (JDs) and juvenile offenders (JOs) to OCFS custody to either OCFS facilities or voluntary agencies, OCFS youth in care at OCFS facilities and voluntary agencies, and time to community release for JDs admitted to OCFS facilities. For both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, a variety of measures are used to describe DMR at these decision points

Figure 1: New York City 2008 - Race/Ethnicity and Involvement in SCR Reports and Indicated Reports

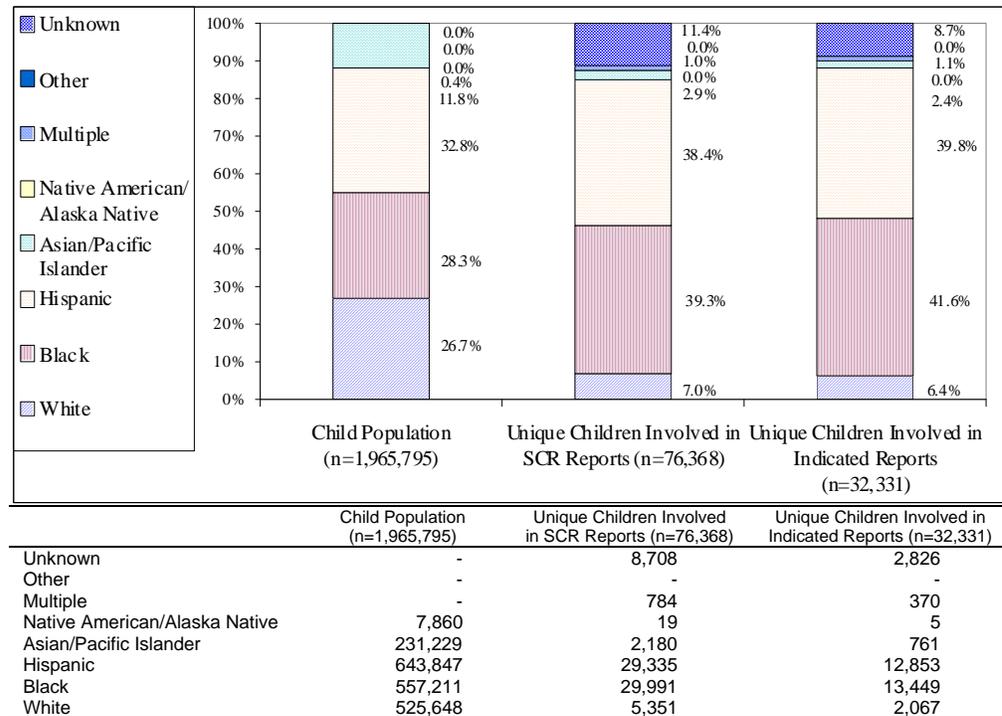


Figure 2: New York City 2008 - Race/Ethnicity and Involvement in Foster Care

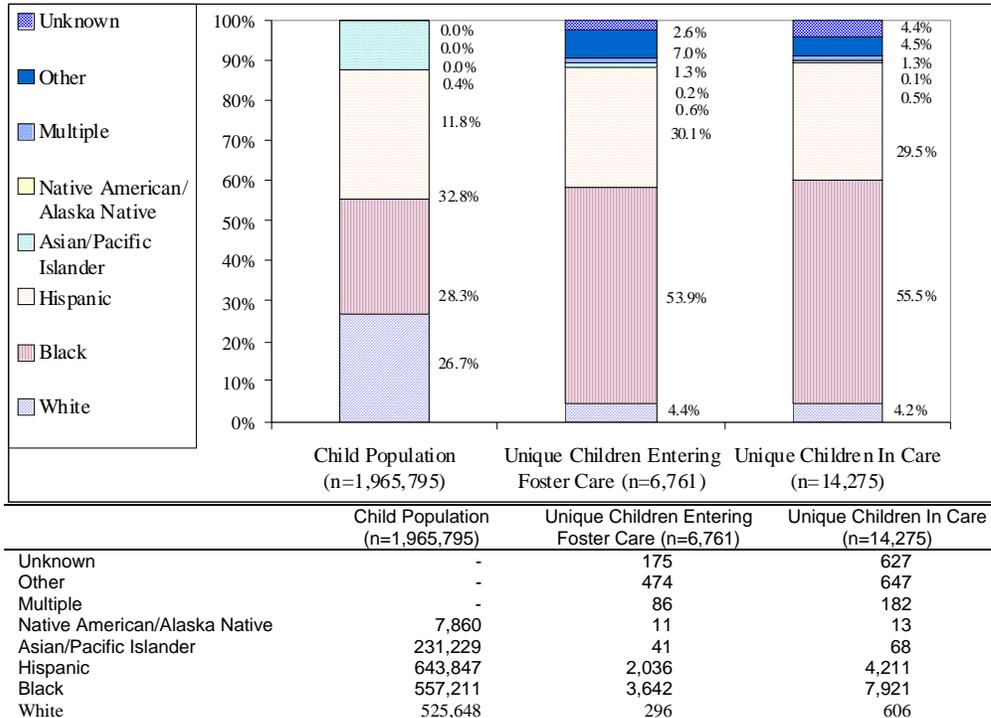


Figure 3: 2008 Rest of the State - Race/Ethnicity and Involvement in SCR Reports and Indicated Reports

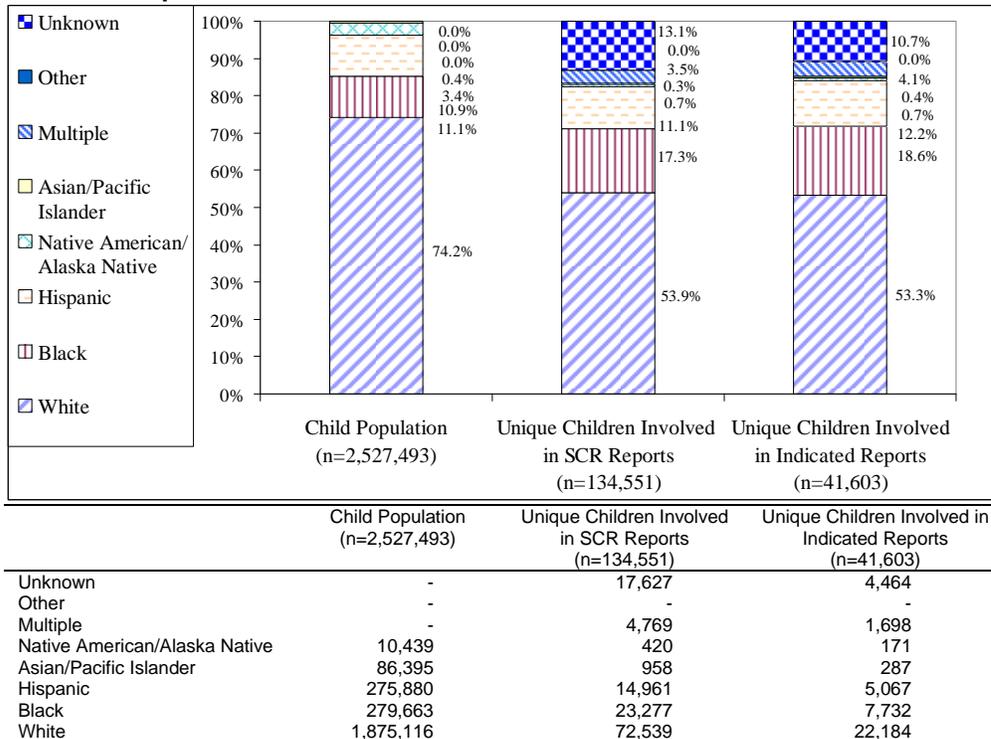
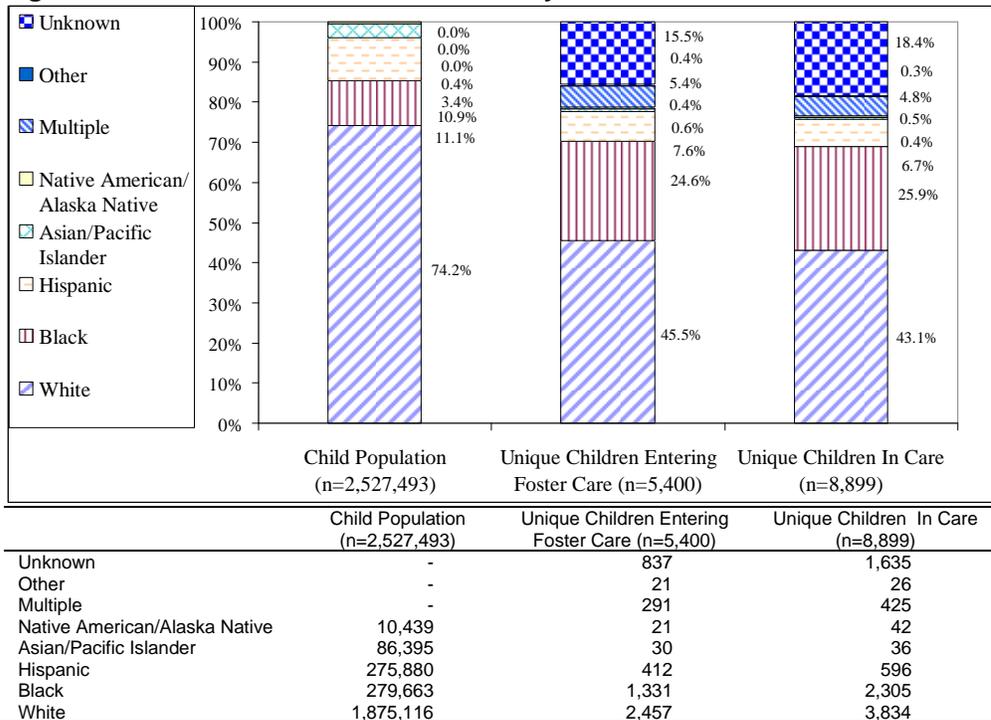


Figure 4: Rest of State 2008 - Race/Ethnicity and Involvement in Foster Care



Disparity Index

Disparity refers to lack of equality among racial/ethnic groups in the likelihood of being involved in an SCR report, involved in an indicated report, or admitted to or placed in foster care. The Disparity Index is the ratio of rate per 1,000 for black children (or Hispanic children) relative to the rate for white children (see example below). The estimates for NYC and ROS are presented separately.

Race/Ethnicity	Foster Care Admission Rate per 1,000 Children in NYC
Black	6.536
White	0.563

Black Disparity Index

$$\frac{6.536}{0.563} = 11.6$$

	Child Population < 16 (n=918,621)	Arrests < 16	Unique Youth in Detention Admissions (n=5,196)	Unique Youth in OCFS Facility Admissions (n=497)	Unique Youth in OCFS Vol. Agency Admissions (n=295)	Unique Youth in OCFS Facility In Care Population (n=851)	Unique Youth in OCFS Vol. Agency In Care Population (n=366)
Other	30,945	-	527	10	8	16	9
White	702,549	-	1,543	151	78	240	133
Hispanic	84,945	-	866	88	54	143	59
Black	100,181	-	2,260	248	155	452	165
Total	918,620		5,196	497	295	851	366

Disproportionate Minority Representation (DMR) Resources

Please visit the following websites if you are interested in learning more about the issues related to disproportionality, overrepresentation and disparity. Please note that this is a partial list, but a good starting point for research, promising programs and state efforts.

Casey Family Programs

<http://www.casey.org>

Annie E. Casey Foundation

Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative

www.aecf.org

The Race Matters Consortium

www.racemattersconsortium.org

Race Matters Toolkit

Annie E. Casey Foundation

Designed to help advocates mobilize resources for vulnerable populations of color in order to reduce racial disparities/disproportionality and promote racial equity.

www.kidscount.org/kcnetwork/resources/RaceMattersToolkit.htm

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

The Disproportionate Representation of Ethnic or Racial Groups in the CPS System
(Disproportionality)

<http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/about/>

A Practice Guide for Working with African American Families in the Child Welfare System: *The Role of the Caseworker in Identifying, Developing and Supporting Strengths in African American Families Involved in Child Protection Services*

February 2008 Author, Maxie Rockymore, MSW

<http://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfservlet/Legacy/DHS-4702-ENG>

Juvenile Justice Evaluation Center

Justice Research and Statistics Association

7 Steps to Develop & Evaluate Strategies to Reduce Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC)

www.jrsa.org

National Center for Juvenile Justice

www.ncjj.org

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

DMC Initiative

www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/dmc/index.html

**National Innovations to Reduce DMC
OJJDP**
askjj@ncjrs.org

The Sentencing Project
www.sentencingproject.org

Youth Law Center
www.youthlawcenter.com

The W. Haywood Burns Institute for Juvenile Fairness & Equity
www.burnsinstitute.org

Multnomah County
Rick Jensen, Detention Reform Initiative Coordinator
rick.k.jensen@co.multnomah.or.us

Coalition for Juvenile Justice
info@juvjustic.org

Juvenile Law Center
info@jlc.org
Juvenile Justice Policy Institute

The Multnomah County, Oregon Success Story and its Implications
www.cjcj.org

Child Welfare League of America
National Center for Program Leadership
Juvenile Justice Division
www.cwla.org

National Data Analysis System (January 2004)
Children of Color in the Child Welfare System
<http://ndas.cwla.org/Include/text/Children%20of%20color.pdf>

Building Blocks for Youth
www.buildingblocksforyouth.org/issues/dmc/addressingdmc.html

Introduction to Cultural Competence: A Training Tool
FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention
Explains strategies for assessing cultural competency and improving the ethnic and linguistic responsiveness of family support programs.
<www.friendsnrc.org/resources/culture.htm>

Culturally Competent Strategies for Strengthening Families

FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention
(2006)

Offers links to audio files and materials from a teleconference that featured presentations on culturally competent practice within the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention program. <www.friendsnrc.org/resources/teleconference.htm#cc>

Evidence-Based Practice in Child Welfare in the Context of Cultural Competence

University of Minnesota School of Social Work (2008)

Offers six online training modules addressing issues related to cultural competence, child welfare, and evidence-based practice. <http://cehd.umn.edu/ssw/G-S/EBP-CC_Modules/index.html>

Racial Disparity in the Child Welfare System

Urban Institute (2008)

Panelists in this audio presentation consider how child welfare system administrators are leading initiatives to address racial disparity.

<<http://www.urban.org/Pressroom/thursdayschild/january2008.cfm>>

