

Recent Works on Racial Disproportionality in the Child Welfare System May 2010

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<http://basis.caliber.com/cwig/ws/library/docs/gateway/SearchForm>

The Issue: Disproportionality of Children of Color in Youth Services

Children's Bureau, Inc., Indiana (2010)

This position paper provides background information on the disproportionate representation of children of color in human services systems. It lists recommended policy initiatives for addressing disproportionality, and shares statistics related to disproportionality in the child welfare system and the juvenile justice system. The lack of appropriate mental health and educational services for children from minority backgrounds is also discussed. 14 references.

www.childrens-bureau.org/corp/adv/sessiondocs/other/disprop.pdf (PDF - 59 KB)

Alaska Child Welfare Disproportionality Reduction Project Logic Model

Western and Pacific Child Welfare Implementation Center (2010)

This factsheet presents a logic model for addressing the disproportionate number of Alaskan Native children involved in the child welfare system. It outlines reasons for addressing the overrepresentation; system, program, policy, and practice level goals for reforming the child welfare system; specific strategies to implement; and projected and long-term outcomes.

<http://westpac.fmhi.usf.edu/docs/AlaskaLogicModel.pdf> (PDF - 194 KB)

Policy Actions to Reduce Racial Disproportionality and Disparities in Child Welfare: A Scan of Eleven States

Alliance for Racial Equity in Child Welfare (2009)

Eleven States have been identified as directly addressing disproportionality and disparities through public policy measures. To obtain a more indepth understanding of these activities, State officials in six of the States (California, Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Texas) were contacted and interviewed about their efforts in their child welfare systems. The focus of this analysis is on State-initiated legislative policy—reform efforts by local governments and court systems to reduce the disparities and disproportionate representation of children of color in foster care are not captured here. (Author abstract)

www.policyforresults.org/en/Topics/2008/Building-Strong-and-Stable-Families/Increase-Exits-from-Foster-Care-to-ADOPTION/Exits-to-ADOPTION/~media/Alliance%20Policy%20Scan.ashx

Model Courts National Agenda Implementation Guide

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges & Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2009)

This implementation guide is the first in a series that is designed to assist model court jurisdictions in implementing the National Agenda to Reduce Racial Disproportionality and Disparities in the Dependency Court System. It reviews components of the agenda and describes the following steps for implementation:

- Develop the collaboration
- Host an informational and information-sharing meeting
- Initiate a courageous conversation about institutional and structural racism
- Develop a strategic plan

- Follow up and follow through

Recommendations for successful implementation are listed, and model court reports are shared that highlight ways to begin implementing the national agenda.

www.ncjfcj.org/images/stories/dept/ppcd/CCC/cccglossyfinalweb.pdf (PDF - 515 KB)

Bias, Racism and Evidence-Based Practice: The Case for More Focused Development of the Child Welfare Evidence Base

Wells, Merritt, & Briggs

Children and Youth Services Review, 31(11), 2009

In spite of continuing concerns about a disproportionate representation of African-Americans, American Indians, and selected other groups in foster care, development of the practice and policy evidence base has paid scant attention to incorporating the specific concerns of these communities in intervention research. The authors review the current foundation of evidence-based practice and identify gaps in the knowledge base with specific reference to race/ethnicity/culture and class. They recognize the current concerns regarding disproportionality in child welfare services, and summarize the current research on bias and racism to establish potential mechanisms contributing to racially disproportionate outcomes.

Addressing these literatures in concert gives new meaning to the phrase "culturally competent, evidence-based practice." Culturally competent practice goes beyond admonishing practitioners and policymakers to be more sensitive or to undertake such training. It is a pathway to the development of a more targeted and relevant evidence base: rigorous intervention research with diverse populations could be more intentionally developed, and existing rigorous research on successfully addressing bias could be more broadly applied and tested in child welfare. A model for evaluating the validity of the evidence base with respect to diverse populations is proposed. (Author abstract)

Racial and Ethnic Disparity and Disproportionality in Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice: A Compendium

Center for Juvenile Justice Reform & Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago (2009)

A March 2008 symposium, titled "The Overrepresentation of Children of Color in America's Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Systems," was designed to illuminate the work of juvenile justice and child welfare systems in this area—and the degree to which the systems' efforts are or are not integrated—and to focus on how Federal, State, and local governments might support both systems in achieving better outcomes for children and youth and promote policies to better integrate their efforts. This collection presents the content of that symposium. (Author abstract)

http://cjjr.georgetown.edu/pdfs/cjir_ch_final.pdf (PDF - 412 KB)

Using Racial Disproportionality and Disparity Indicators to Measure Child Welfare Outcomes

Tilbury & Thoburn

Children and Youth Services Review, 31(10), 2009

This article examines the use of racial disproportionality and disparity data to measure the performance and outcomes of child welfare systems. Given the differential patterns of entry, exit, and service responses for Black, indigenous, and ethnic minority children in many child welfare systems around the world, the conceptualization of both quality and outcomes should take account of their needs. Clarity is required about which dimensions of effectiveness are measured by racial disparity indicators in order to design strategies to address its causes and consequences. The article discusses how data on racial disproportionality and disparity can be

used, as part of a suite of performance indicators, to highlight issues regarding the quality, equity, and accessibility of child welfare services. (Author abstract)

Race and Child Maltreatment Reporting: Are Blacks Overrepresented?

Drake, Lee, & Jonson-Reid

Children and Youth Services Review, 31(3), 2009

This paper uses Census Bureau and child welfare report data from Missouri (1999, 2000, and 2001) to determine if Whites and Blacks are reported for child maltreatment at similar or different rates while controlling for poverty and racial homogeneity. It does not find evidence for high levels of racial disproportionality once poverty is controlled. Poverty is generally associated with higher rates of reporting for both races. The report cites some evidence of differential sensitivity, with the relationship between poverty and report rate being somewhat stronger for Whites than for Blacks. (Author abstract)

Addressing Disproportionality and Disparity in Child Welfare: Iowa's Response to Disproportionality

Wessel-Kroeschell

"Changing the Outcome: Achieving and Sustaining a Safe Reduction in Foster Care," National Conference of State Legislatures, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, & Casey Family Programs (2009)

This report highlights the disproportionate number of African-American and Native American children in the foster care system in Iowa. It provides statistics on children from racial minorities in the foster care system, and explains strategies that Iowa is implementing to address racial disparity. Strategies include the formation of Community Initiative for Native Children and Families, collaboration with Native American Tribes in Sioux City, and State legislative initiatives to address racial disproportionality.

Results from the initiatives are presented and indicate a 28 percent reduction in the foster care disproportionality rate. Polk County participation in the national Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) and the development of a statewide BSC to build capacity and momentum for statewide system change are also highlighted, as well as related State-level work.

www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?TabId=19198

www.ncsl.org/documents/cyf/Disproportionality_Wessel.pdf (PDF - 777 KB)

Disproportionality in Education and Employment Outcomes of Adult Foster Care Alumni

Harris, Jackson, O'Brien, & Pecora

Children and Youth Services Review, 31(11), 2009

Racial similarities and disparities were examined in the education and employment of 134 African-American and 574 White adults placed in foster care as children. Logistic regression was used to compare differences among these young adult alumni who were served by a voluntary foster care agency in 23 U.S. communities. When controlling for demographic background, risk factors, and foster care experiences, race/ethnicity was a significant factor only in the increased odds of White alumni having income at or above poverty level, three times poverty level, and home/apartment ownership compared to African-Americans. (Author abstract)

Hurdling the Artificial Fence Between Child Welfare and the Community: Engaging Community Partners to Address Disproportionality

Rycraft & Dettlaff

University of Texas at Arlington

Journal of Community Practice, 17(4), 2009

Recent reform efforts have emphasized the importance of engaging the community in discussions and decisions regarding child welfare practice. Child welfare agencies are now expected to work with community leaders, key stakeholders, affiliated service providers, and families to address issues affecting children and families. A major obstacle is determining where to begin, how to proceed, and what is needed to develop those partnerships. This article reports the efforts of one State agency in hurdling that artificial fence to address the overrepresentation of minority children in the system. Through focus group interviews with community members, child welfare staff, and legal professionals, barriers to community engagement are identified, and recommendations are provided for facilitating meaningful relationships and partnerships between child welfare agencies and the communities they serve. (Author abstract)

**"My Race Is My Community:" Peer Discourse Sessions on Racial Disparities: A
FrameWorks Research Report**

O'Neil

FrameWorks Institute (2009)

This report shares the results of nine peer discourse sessions conducted in four cities with diverse groups of politically engaged people around the United States. This research shows that Americans have difficulty thinking about the structural nature of racism. Frame elements intended to create different types of group conversation, however, showed the potential to foster greater understanding of systemic racial inequalities and garner support for social policies designed to address such inequities. (Author abstract)

http://frameworksinstitute.org/assets/files/PDF_race/My_Race_is_My_Community.pdf

Racial and Ethnic Equity in Child Welfare Practice: Implications for Latino Children and Youth

Lewis

Casey Family Services

Connections (Connecticut Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers) (2009)

Documentation abounds for the high numbers of children of color in the child welfare system when compared to their numbers in the general population. Studies have found that African American, Latino, and Native American children have historically been subjects of child protective investigations, substantiations of abuse and neglect, placement into foster care, and slower rates of reunification at a higher rate than their Caucasian counterparts. This article aims to shed light on the implications of racial and ethnic disproportionality and disparities in the child welfare system for all children of color, with an emphasis on Latino/Hispanic children. Further, practice guidelines, materials, and resources that may be useful in the field are shared. (Author abstract)

www.caseyfamilyservices.org/userfiles/pdf/art-2009-racial-ethnic-equity.pdf (PDF - 1771 KB)

Reducing Racial Disproportionality and Disparate Outcomes for Children and Families of Color in the Child Welfare System

Breakthrough Series Collaborative No. 004

Miller

Casey Family Programs (2009)

This report describes the methodology and the experiences of the jurisdictions that participated in the Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) on disproportionality. A practice framework was created and used by public child welfare teams representing States, counties, and Tribes to test ideas aimed at reducing racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes through the development

of small-scale strategies and interventions that could be tested, implemented, and measured in rapid cycles. The report discusses the challenges associated with addressing racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes, key aspects of the methodology, developing the framework for change and key components of the framework, and team selection and support. It discusses how agencies prepared for the work of the BSC and agency self-assessments. The report then presents the major strategies developed by participating jurisdictions with the goal of reducing and ultimately eliminating racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes for children and families of color in the child welfare system.

Strategies are presented for the following:

- Building awareness and understanding
- Community and stakeholder engagement
- Agency policies and procedures
- Child welfare practice and decision-making
- Workforce development
- Judicial system involvement

The report concludes with a summary of overarching themes from the projects. 11 references.

www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/BreakthroughSeries_ReducingDisproportionality_process.htm

www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/pdf/BreakthroughSeries_ReducingDisproportionality_process.pdf (PDF - 702 KB)

Alaska Child Welfare Disproportionality Reduction Project Western and Pacific Child Welfare Implementation Center Implementation Project Plan

Western and Pacific Child Welfare Implementation Center (2009)

This plan describes a 4-year project designed to reduce the overrepresentation of Native American children involved in the child welfare system in Alaska. The project is a collaboration of Alaska Title IV-B Tribal partners supported by the Office of Children's Services (OCS) and the Court Improvement Project (CIP), and will allow Tribal partners to develop and implement changes in child welfare practice for Native American children, youth, and families that focus on key changes in initial safety assessments and placement decisions. The project will promote the use of a family-centered, State-Tribal bilateral, collaborative approach in which the State OCS will rely more heavily on Tribes to participate in the initial decision-making and service delivery. The project is also designed to build the capacity of the Tribes to conduct services needed by identified families to prevent out-of-home placement whenever possible and to promote community-based services when placements are necessary. Information is provided on the context for the project, underlying values, project partners, and stakeholders; the activities of the Western and Pacific Implementation Center; and key components of system, program and policy, practice implementation, and technical assistance plans. The process that will be used to evaluate the project is also explained.

<http://westpac.fmhi.usf.edu/docs/AlaskaProjectPlan.pdf> (PDF - 264 KB)

Race Equity Review: Findings from a Qualitative Analysis of Racial Disproportionality and Disparity for African-American Children and Families in Michigan's Child Welfare System

Center for the Study of Social Policy (2009)

In a bold step to examine racial disproportionality and disparity, the State of Michigan's Department of Human Services initiated an intensive review of their policies, procedures, and case practice with a team of national experts, local leaders, and stakeholders. The team, led by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, designed and implemented a qualitative Race Equity

Review to examine the research question: Why, after substantiation of child abuse or neglect, are African-American children likely to be removed from their homes?

The findings of the review and this report identify specific policies and practices that directly, negatively, affect African-American children and families. In addition, institutional features of Michigan's child welfare system negatively affect all families but have more severe consequences for African-American families.

Broad themes identified include the following:

- A lack of belief in the ability of African-American families and communities to care for children
- Limited case and community advocacy for African-American families
- The failure to build an infrastructure of policy, practice, and resources that contributes to an environment that supports fair outcomes for African-American children and families
- A lack of accountability for results

The report presents the review methodology, findings of institutional features that contribute to racial disproportionality and disparity, and recommendations for change. (Author abstract)

www.cssp.org/uploadFiles/michigan%20report%201%2014%2009%20FINAL.pdf (PDF - 1096 KB)

Addressing Disproportionality and Disparity in Child Welfare: Evaluation of an Anti-Racism Training for Community Service Providers

Johnson, Antle, & Barbee

Children and Youth Services Review, 31(6), 2009

Concerns persist about the overrepresentation and differential treatment of children and families of color within the child welfare system. Although many researchers and practitioners have considered ways to combat these problems, there continues to be a shortage of empirical support for proposed interventions. This article describes the evaluation of an antiracism training designed to address disproportionality and disparity by educating members of the child welfare community about issues of race, power, and oppression.

Pre- and posttraining evaluation questionnaires were completed by 462 training participants between June 2007 and June 2008. Questionnaires measured changes in participants' attitudes toward race and knowledge of key concepts regarding race and racism, as well as their satisfaction with the training, and expected practice changes. Preliminary findings indicate that participants were very satisfied with the training, increased their knowledge of issues pertaining to race and racism, and became more aware of racial dynamics. (Author abstract)

Disparity and Disproportionality Guidance

American Public Human Services Association & Positioning Public Child Welfare Guidance (2009)

This guidance defines racial and ethnic disparities and disproportionality, and discusses the relationship between the two within the field of public child welfare. (Author abstract)

www.ppcwg.org/disparity-disproportionality-overview.html

www.ppcwg.org/images/files/Disparity%20and%20Disproportionality%20Guidance.pdf (PDF - 115 KB)

The Disproportionate Representation of Children of Color in Dependency Court Proceedings

National CASA Association & National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ)

Judges' Page Newsletter, 2009

This newsletter discusses the overrepresentation of children of color in the dependency court system and the role judges can and should play in convening the community to address this

disparity and respond effectively. Questions courts and communities should address relating to overrepresentation are listed, and articles are provided that address:

- The policy and practice of each organization in responding to overrepresentation
- The Courts Catalyzing Change initiative to counteract disproportionate overrepresentation of minorities in the foster care system
- The implementation of best practices in NCJFCJ model courts to identify and reduce disproportionality and disparate treatment in the dependency courts
- How judges can work collaboratively with child-serving agencies and governing bodies to reduce overrepresentation of children of color in the court
- Training initiatives for court-appointed special advocates (CASAs) and guardians *ad litem* (GALs) for advocating for children of color
- The impact of disproportionality and disparity on Native American children and families in the dependency court
- Initiatives in Brighton, CO, that have led to partnerships to reduce disproportionality
- An analysis of racial/ethnic disproportionality and disparity at national, State, and county levels
- The outcomes of the Overrepresentation of Children of Color in America's Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Systems symposium, including participants' barriers and successes in reducing disproportionality and disparity
- The disparities faced by youth involved in the juvenile justice system based on their race and ethnicity.

A list of web resources on the overrepresentation of children of color in the foster care system is included.

<http://nc.casaforchildren.org/files/public/community/judges/0907-DisproportionateRepresentationofChildrenofColorinDependencyCourtProceedings-0019.pdf> (PDF - 346 KB)

The Racial Disproportionality Movement in Child Welfare: False Facts and Dangerous Directions

Harvard Law School Faculty Scholarship Series, Paper 26
Bartholet

Harvard Law School (2009)

This article analyzes the racial disproportionality movement in child welfare and its underlying issues. It explores whether Black children are disproportionately victimized by maltreatment and in need of child protective services and are, therefore, removed at rates proportionate to their maltreatment rates. Evidence is discussed that indicates Black children are indeed disproportionately victimized by maltreatment, and the need for society to prevent the maltreatment is stressed.

http://lsr.nellco.org/harvard_faculty/26/#

Disproportionality and Disparities in Oregon's Child Welfare System: County Level Analysis of Administrative Data: Multnomah County. A Report to the Oregon Child Welfare Equity Task Force

Oregon Child Welfare Equity Task Force, Multnomah County (2009)

An analysis was conducted to investigate disproportionality and racial disparities in the child welfare system in Multnomah County, OR, over a 6-month period. Practices were analyzed at key decision points, including intake and reports to the Child Protective Services (CPS), screening, disposition, removal or hold, foster care entry, type of placement, length of stay in foster care, plan for permanence, and exit pathways. Findings indicate the following:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native families were nearly three times more likely to be reported to the CPS hotline/intake than they were represented in Multnomah County's general population, and Black families were more than twice as likely.
- White, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Black families were referred for assessments at similar rates and at a lower rate than all families.
- The greatest apparent disparity for founded disposition decisions was between American Indian/Alaskan Native and Hispanic families.
- American Indian/Alaskan Native and Pacific Islander children are removed from their parents at a higher rate than White children.
- Black children are twice as likely and American Indian/Alaskan Native were 16.5 times more likely to be represented in foster care than they were represented in the Multnomah County child population.

Additional findings are discussed. 10 tables.

www2.co.multnomah.or.us/ChildrenFamily/pdf/Foster%20Care/Materials_Presentations/FinalMultnomahCountyReport.pdf (PDF - 87 KB)

Information Packet: Racial Disproportionality in Child Welfare

Sudol

National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections (2009)

This information packet provides data and statistics on the disproportionate number of children from minority backgrounds in the child welfare system and the disparate outcomes experienced by children of color in care. Research findings are cited that indicate the following:

- Of the 510,000 children in foster care in 2006, nearly 60 percent were children and youth of color.
- Black and Native American children/youth are three times more likely to be in foster care than White children/youth.
- African-American children who are removed from their homes stay in care 9 months longer than White children.

Legislation and policies affecting racial and ethnic disproportionality are reviewed, as well as recommendations for reform, best practices, and model programs, examples of State and local approaches for addressing racial disproportionality, and recommended online resources. 25 references.

www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/Sudol_Info%20pack_Disproportionality_July%202009.pdf (PDF - 89 KB)

Addressing Disproportionality of Minorities in the Iowa Child Welfare System: Executive Summary

Iowa Department of Human Services (2009)

Minority children in Iowa have a significantly higher chance of being placed in foster care, and for longer periods of time, than nonminority children with similar factors. While some county level efforts have produced promising results, it is now time to expand to a statewide approach.

On May 7, 2009, a group of community stakeholders, youth, parents, court representatives, and leaders from the Iowa Department of Human Services met to identify issues and an approach to this systemic problem. The group was facilitated by Casey Family Programs staff using a methodology to advance from dialogue to action. From that meeting a report was created, "Developing a Statewide Framework to Address Disproportionality." While more information can be found in the report, this Executive Summary provides an introduction to the issues, data, and

next steps. (Author abstract)

www.dhs.iowa.gov/docs/6.22_Disproportionality.pdf (PDF - 21 KB)

**Racial Disproportionality and Disparities in Our Nation's Child Welfare System:
Congressional Briefing, June 23, 2009**

Alliance for Racial Equity in Child Welfare, Congressional Black Caucus, & Congressional Hispanic Caucus

The Alliance for Racial Equity in Child Welfare brought together a panel of experts for a Congressional briefing on June 23, 2009, to discuss the history of racial disparities in the child welfare system and lessons learned from States that have made tackling such disparities a priority. This document is a summary of the briefing. (Author abstract)

www.gcyf.org/usr_doc/Racial_Disproportionality_and_Disparities_in_Our_Nation_summary_final.pdf (PDF - 86 KB)

**Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Initial Child Welfare Experience: Exploring Areas of
Convergence and Divergence**

Ortega, Grogan-Kaylor, Ruffolo, & Clarke (2009)

In *Child Welfare and Child Well-Being: New Perspectives from the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being*

Drawing on data from the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being, this study explored the sociodemographic characteristics of children of color on entry into the child welfare system, case characteristics, and risk factors. Findings indicate African-American children are the most overrepresented and disproportionate racial group in foster care, are more likely to be placed into kinship foster care, are at greater risk of living with a caregiver's drug or alcohol dependence, and have longer stays in out-of-home care. Characteristics of other racial groups in foster care are also discussed. 1 figure, 9 tables, and numerous references.