

University of Houston
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Annotated Bibliography

Disproportionality of Minorities in the Child Welfare System

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October 3, 2012

Ashton, V. (2004). The effect of personal characteristics on reporting child maltreatment. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 28(9), 985-997.

This study examined the relationship between personal characteristics of 276 potential entry-level social service workers and their decision to report child maltreatment to Child Protective Services (CPS). The personal characteristics of interest were: age, gender, parenthood, mother's education, father's education, college major, ethnicity and immigrant status. The study hypotheses were that personal characteristics would have: (1) an individual effect on reporting, (2) a combined effect on reporting, and (3) an effect on reporting beyond any effect mediated by approval of corporal punishment and perceptions of maltreatment. Method: Data were collected by a self-report survey employing vignettes in multi-item scales. Respondents rated (1) their approval of corporal punishment, (2) the seriousness of incidents of probable maltreatment, and (3) their likelihood of reporting incidents of probable maltreatment to CPS. Results: Of the eight personal characteristics, **only ethnicity and immigrant status had significant effects on reporting.** Together with approval of corporal punishment and perception of maltreatment, ethnicity and immigrant status accounted for 32% of the variance in reporting ($p < .001$). Conclusion: Independently and combined, **ethnicity and immigrant status have considerable effect on reporting behavior, Findings suggest that human service agencies should address issues of diversity and establish clear criteria for responding to child maltreatment.**

Ayon, C., & Lee, C. D. (2005). A comparative analysis of child welfare services through the eyes of African American, Caucasian, and Latino parents. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 15(4), 257-266.

The purpose of this study was to find if differences exist among 88 African American, Caucasian, and Latino families who received child welfare services. Method: A secondary data analysis of cross-sectional survey data employing standardized measures was used for this study. Family preservation (FP) services were received by 49 participants, and 39 participants were provided Family maintenance (FM) services. Results: Minority clients were likely to have more children, lower incomes, and receive public assistance, and 30% were monolingual Spanish speakers. African American and Latino parents reported more positive outcomes on children's academic adjustment and symptomatic behavior than Caucasian parents when receiving FP services. Conclusion: **When recommending child welfare services, workers need to take ethnicity into account as culturally sensitive and community-based programs, such as FP may be more effective when serving ethnic or racial minority groups.**

Barbee, A. P. (2010). A critique of measures that assess community efforts to reduce disproportionality and disparities in child welfare and juvenile justice agencies. *Journal of Health and Human Services Administration, 33*(3), 353-363.

The measurement of disproportionality and disparities in juvenile justice and child welfare systems, thus, needs to be more rigorous. Blind reviews of cases (removing any reference to race or social class of the family members) need to be conducted to determine if and when decisions are being made appropriately and if families are being treated fairly. Thus, child welfare agencies and juvenile justice staff need to conduct these types of reviews to determine when minority and/or poor children are being treated unfairly in their systems and determine the root cause of such discrimination so that specific interventions can be devised to change the thinking and behavior of decision makers in the systems. These case reviews need to be conducted regularly to show if discrimination persists or declines as a result of interventions. In addition, more razor sharp determinations of biases of staff and discrimination by staff need to be conducted in order to discern exactly where, when and how minority and/or poor children are being treated unfairly. This more precise measurement will both document the unfair treatment of minority and/or poor families and pinpoint the exact nature of the problem so that other innovative solutions can be implemented.

Becerra, R. M., Thomas, W., & Ong, P. M. (2001). Latino and African American non-custodial fathers: Perceptions of fatherhood and child support. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work, 10*(3), 3-30.

This study examines the perspectives of 30 Latino (n = 17) and African American (n = 13) low-income non-custodial fathers regarding their role as fathers and the child support system. Using an ethnographic approach, these non-custodial fathers (NCFs) were asked about their own childhood and background, their relationship with their own fathers, their relationship with their non-custodial child(ren), and their views of the child support system. The cultural portrait that emerges is a group of fathers who express a strong desire to be positive role models to their children and to play a significant role in their lives. Notwithstanding their negative feelings toward the child support enforcement system, they need to increase their knowledge regarding the process in order to clarify both their responsibilities and their rights. Implications for social work policy and research are included.

Bell, J. (2005). A solvable problem: Reducing the disproportionality of youths of color in juvenile detention facilities. *Corrections Today, 67*(5), 80-83.

Focuses on the reduction of the disproportionate number of youth of several races who are in juvenile detention in the U.S. Introduction of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act in 1988; Establishment of the Juvenile Detentions Alternative Initiative by the Annie E. Casey Foundation; Procedural steps in implementing the efforts of W. Haywood Burns Institute to reduce the overrepresentation of youths of colors in the juvenile justice system, including the community profile.

Bitonti, C., Albers, E., & Reilly T. (1996). Multicultural competence in Nevada human services: A statewide survey. *Journal of Multicultural Social Work, 4*(4), 67-83.

A survey of 300 Nevada mental health, child welfare, early childhood, and parole workers provided baseline information concerning multicultural competence for use in planning diversity programs. A modified version of the Multicultural Counseling Inventory yielded data on awareness, knowledge, skills, and relationship. Significant findings emerged for gender, educational level, practice field, and minority status. Women scored higher than men on the total and three subscales. Workers with graduate degrees scored higher than BA level workers on the total and two subscales. Early childhood workers scored highest on the total; youth parole scored lowest. **Minority workers scored higher than non-minority workers in awareness.**

Briggs, H. E., Briggs, A. D., & Leary, J. D. (2005). Promoting culturally competent systems of care through statewide family advocacy networks. *Best Practice in Mental Health: An International Journal, 1*(2), 77-99.

This article examines the extent to which statewide family organizations are committed to cultural competence through the involvement of culturally diverse families at all levels: as clients, volunteers, staff and board members. The data show that **families who participate in and govern statewide family organizations seek to enhance participation of culturally diverse families in all aspects of operational and governance activities.** Implications for future studies, which would measure the extent to which these organizations are achieving a balance between culturally diverse and white families, are highlighted.

Brown, Y. A. (2002). On the rights side. *Community Care, 1451, 22.*

Examines the effect of immigration on the values and behavior of immigrants in Great Britain. Problems caused by cultural differences in dealing with children; Concerns over the use of physical punishment to discipline children; Provisions of the Children Act of 1989.

Brownell, P., Berman, J., Nelson, A., & Fofana, R. C. (2003). Grandparents raising grandchildren: The risks of caregiving. *Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect, 15*(3-4), 5-31.

Findings from a study utilizing grandparent and **child welfare worker** locus groups demonstrate that professionals can learn about elder abuse from older people who may be experiencing abuse. This challenges the assumption that elder abuse is a social problem that must be defined by professionals because abuse victims are unable to speak for themselves. **Differences in perceptions between African American and Latina grandparents underscore the importance of incorporating of diversity into elder abuse research.** Examining elder abuse from the perspective of clients and professionals in service systems not traditionally associated with this social problem can promote case finding and prevention.

Busch, M., Remondet Wall, J., Koch, S. M., & Anderson, C. (2008). Addressing the disproportionate representation of children of color: A collaborative community approach. *Child Welfare, 87*(2), 255-278.

The state of Indiana recommended a committee be formed to address the disproportional representation of black youth in out-of-home placements. In response, the Indiana Disproportionality Committee (IDC) was established. This article presents the development, objectives and future of the IDC. One of the objectives, research, will be offered as an example of the committee's collaborative strategies. The IDC, in partnership with another organization, has begun exploring relationships between ethnicity, risk factors and treatment outcomes. The results of this research effort have examined disproportion and disparity, leading the IDC to identify needs for change within the state. Barriers and successes of the IDC will be shared, so that others can use these efforts to guide their own strategies to reduce disproportionality.

Cardoso, J. B., Gomez, R. J., & Padilla, Y. C. (2009). What happens when family resources are across international boundaries? An exploratory study on kinship placement in Mexican immigrant families. *Child Welfare, 88*(6), 65-80.

Children in Latino immigrant families are significantly less likely to be placed in kinship care than other children are. Using grounded theory, the researchers conducted focus groups and individual interviews with child welfare workers working with Mexican origin families in south Texas to study the extent to which they use international kin placement resources. Key barriers to international kinship placement include lack of accurate information concerning international placements and conflicting agency mandates. Lack of child protective services policy enforcement also plays a role. Recommendations for practice and agency policy are discussed.

Carter, V. B. (2009). Prediction of placement into out-of-home care for American Indian/Alaskan Natives compared to non-Indians. *Children and Youth Services Review, 31*(8), 840-846.

Nationally representative child welfare data collected between October 1999 and December 2000 were utilized to explore those variables that would predict the likelihood of American Indian/Alaskan Native children being placed into out-of-home care compared to non-Indian families. In comparison to non-Indian children, American Indian/Alaskan Native children came from poorer homes, and had caregivers with greater mental health and alcohol abuse service needs compared to non-Indian caregivers. Possible bias by child protective service workers may have affected decision-making that led to the removal of American Indian/Alaskan Native children from their homes.

Acknowledgement of past and present instances of racism in the child welfare system can lead to a decrease of American Indian/Alaskan Native children being placed into out-of-home care.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau & Administration for Children and Families. (2003). *Children of color in the child welfare system*:

Perspectives from the child welfare community. Retrieved from <http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/otherpubs/children/children.pdf>

Responding to concerns about the overrepresentation of minority children in the child welfare system, particularly African-American children, the Children's Bureau sponsored an exploratory qualitative study of the child welfare system's response to children of color. The project was intended to meet the following goals: 1) To gain insight into the issue of overrepresentation (or racial disproportionality) from the perspective of the child welfare community, including agency administrators, supervisors, and direct service workers. 2) To describe the strategies child welfare and child-welfare serving agencies use to meet the needs of children and families of color in the child welfare system. The findings from the study are important for several reasons. First, very few studies have considered the child welfare community's perception on overrepresentation. Second, few studies have looked at the manner in which agencies are responding to over-representation. As such, this study provides a unique perspective on the issue and potential solutions to it. Third, the information presented here can be used to inform policy makers about over-representation and potentially promising practices, strategies, and programs that are being implemented to reduce it. Finally, the information can educate and inform the child welfare community, by increasing awareness of overrepresentation, and providing examples of programs, practices, and strategies that they can implement in their own agencies to better serve children and families of color. <http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/otherpubs/children/children.pdf>

Chipungu, S. S., & Bent-Goodley, T. B. (2004). Meeting the challenges of contemporary foster care. *The Future of Children*, 14(1), 75-93.

Over the past two decades, the foster care system experienced an unprecedented rise in the number of children in out-of-home care, significant changes in the policy framework guiding foster care practice, and ongoing organizational impediments that complicate efforts to serve the children in foster care. This article discusses the current status of the foster care system and finds: Agencies often have difficulty providing adequate, accessible, and appropriate services for the families in their care. **Children of color, particularly African-American children, are disproportionately represented** in foster care, a situation which raises questions about the equity of the foster care system and threatens the developmental progress of children of color. Foster families can find the experience overwhelming and frustrating, causing many to leave foster parenting **within their first year**. Organizational problems such as large caseloads, high staff turnover, and data limitations compromise efforts to adequately serve and monitor families. The challenges before the foster care system are numerous; however, the authors believe promising policies and practices aimed at **strengthening families, supporting case workers, providing timely and adequate data, and infusing cultural competency throughout the system**, can move the foster care system forward in the coming years.

Church, W., Gross, E., & Baldwin, J. (2005). Maybe ignorance is not always bliss: The disparate treatment of Hispanics within the child welfare system. *Children & Youth Services Review, 27*(12), 1279-1292.

Previous studies indicate that the proportion of culturally diverse children to White children is increasing in public social service agencies. In addition, culturally diverse children are more likely to receive more intensive and punitive services, are more likely to stay within the system for longer periods of time and are reported more often to Child Protective Services. The purpose of the study was to explore how child welfare practices with Hispanic children are different from those applied with White non-Hispanic children. This study was a retrospective, two year, longitudinal, survival analysis of differential child welfare placement outcomes of White non-Hispanic and Hispanic children/families which had substantiated cases of abuse/neglect (n=1001). Findings demonstrate that although cases reported for abuse/neglect are relatively proportionate between Hispanic and White non-Hispanic children, **substantiated cases are more likely to occur with Hispanic children**. These children are **more likely to be placed out of the home more quickly and for longer periods of time** than their White non-Hispanic counterparts. The current study demonstrates the need for increased cultural awareness among Child Welfare professionals, especially in terms of assessment and case decision making, and the need for the development of culturally sensitive training modules for CPS and case management personnel.

Clark, P., Buchanan, J., & Legters, L. (2008). Taking action on racial disproportionality in the child welfare system. *Child Welfare, 87*(2), 319-334.

Mirroring national trends, children of color in Washington state's King County are overrepresented at every point in the child welfare system and fare worse by most measures than are Caucasian children. The King County Coalition on Racial Disproportionality was formed to reduce and ultimately eliminate racial disproportionality in the county's child welfare system. The research-based strategies implemented to address the issue focused on children in care longer than two years. They included participation in the Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Racial Disproportionality, implementation of benchmark hearings, and development of Champions for Permanence. Now in the beginning stages, perhaps the most significant success is heightened awareness within the community of the disparate outcomes for children of color in the child welfare system.

Coakley, T. M. (2008). Examining African American fathers' involvement in permanency planning: An effort to reduce racial disproportionality in the child welfare system. *Children & Youth Services Review, 30*(4), 407-417.

Abstract: Children of color are disproportionately represented in the child welfare system. In 2005 they comprised **53% of the 513,000 children in out-of-home placements** in the United States [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau (2006). Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS). Retrieved on June 12, 2007 from

[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/afcars/tar/report 13.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/afcars/tar/report%2013.htm)]. On average, they stay in foster care longer than Caucasian children [Hill, R.B. (2006). Synthesis of research on disproportionality in child welfare: An update. Washington, D.C.: Casey—CSSP Alliance for Racial Equity in the Child Welfare System. Retrieved April 11, 2007, from http://www.caseyfamilyservices.org/pdfs/0226_CC_BobHillPaper_FINAL.pdf]. There is virtually no empirical research on African American fathers' involvement in permanency planning, which makes it difficult either to understand the relationships among fathers' involvement, agency practices, and children's permanency outcomes or to identify which types of efforts are most effective to involve African American fathers. This study examines the extent to which African American fathers' involvement in permanency planning influences children's placement outcomes using a secondary data analysis of 88 children's child welfare case records. Findings show that children were reunited with birth families more often and had shorter stays in foster care when their fathers were involved. This study contributes to the emerging research on fathers' involvement and explores agency practices that account for extended lengths of stay in foster care for children of color. Recommendations are provided for child welfare policy, practice, and research.

Coleman, H., Unrau, Y. A., & Manyfingers, B. (2001). Revamping family preservation services for native families. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 10(1), 49-68.

Family Preservation Services (FPS) have become widespread among child protection agencies to prevent the unnecessary removal of children from their families and family homes. **Native children, who are over-represented in public care systems, are largely absent from reports evaluating the effectiveness of FPS.** This paper examines the FPS philosophy and program structures in the context of Native culture. The authors provide practical suggestions for changing FPS in hopes that such programs will improve success in serving and preserving Native families with child protection concerns.

Crampton, D., & Jackson, W. (2007). Family group decision making and disproportionality in foster care: A case study. *Child Welfare*, 86(3), 51-69.

Research on the disproportionate number of children of color in the child welfare system suggests that we should focus on key decision points such as investigations, substantiations, and placements to understand how experiences of children vary by race and ethnicity. This article describes one community's efforts to use Family Group Decision Making in placement decisions to reduce disproportionality in foster care by diverting children from regular foster care services and keeping them within their extended families.

Cross, T. L. (2008). Disproportionality in child welfare. *Child Welfare*, 87(2), 11-20.

The article reports on disproportionate placement of children of color. This issue has come about due to the difficulty in identifying the causal factors of disproportion in child placement as little has been done to fix it. There are various

schools of thought as to why there is disproportion including there being a greater number of children of color entering the welfare system because of poverty and family troubles being abundant in communities of color. If 100 white children are taken into Child Protective Services (CPS) 25 of them will be substantiated and only 8 placed in substitute care. However, if the same number of colored children enters CPS then 50 are substantiated with 25 being placed.

Davis, T. S. (2009). Diversity practice in social work: Examining theory in practice. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work, 18*(1-2), 40-69.

Individualized care in children's services requires practitioners to move beyond individual worldviews to gain a cultural context for service planning and delivery to an increasingly diversifying U.S. population. As such, research is needed to empirically support diversity practice models used to prepare practitioners for cross-cultural work. This qualitative study compares family and professional perceptions of cultural competence in children's mental health systems of care to four diversity practice models advanced in social work education. While substantial overlap is identified between practice models and participant conceptualizations, comparative analysis indicates that no one model of practice wholly accounts for all concepts generated by systems of care communities. In contrast, a number of practice model emphases are not identified in community conceptualizations. Discrepancies are discussed in relation to implications for social work that may inform further development of diversity practice models for culturally responsive practice and education.

Denby, R. W., Curtis, C. M., & Alford, K. A. (1998). Family preservation services and special populations: The invisible target. *Families in Society, 79*(1), 3-14.

Children of color are especially vulnerable for a devastating outcome as a result of their living environment and are disproportionately represented within the child welfare system. Social workers, who are trained to mitigate the effects of social injustice and societal inconsistencies, particularly among minorities and oppressed populations, perpetuate the injustices associated with the child welfare system by ignoring the special needs of children of color when administering family preservation services. The authors present results from a national study that examined the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of family preservation workers regarding the service criterion based on whether a family is part of a special population. Results indicate a **significant bias** against targeting family preservation services to children of color.

Derezotes, D., Richardson, B., King, C., Kleinschmit-Rembert, J., & Pratt, B. (2008). Evaluating multisystemic efforts to impact disproportionality through key decision points. *Child Welfare, 87*(2), 241-254.

Working in four communities, Casey Foundation/Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) Alliance on Racial Equity (the Alliance) have developed a Racial Equity Scorecard for measuring disproportionality at key decision points for use

in impacting disproportionality in the child welfare system. The four communities include King County, Washington; Guilford County, North Carolina; Ramsey County, Minnesota; and Woodbury County, Iowa. Data from one site--Woodbury County, Iowa--are used as an example. This article provides the background and method for identification and measurement of key decision points in the *child* welfare system to track change effected by multisystemic approaches to reduce disproportionality. Interpretation of the results in the scorecard is provided and recommendations for future interventions based on the data are discussed.

Dettlaff, A. J., & Rycraft, J. R. (2008). Deconstructing disproportionality: Views from multiple community stakeholders. *Child Welfare, 87*(2), 37-58.

While the existence of racial disproportionality has been well documented, the causes of disproportionality are less clear. Studies identifying contributing factors have relied largely on analyses of state and national data sets, which may lack the robust data necessary to fully explain the factors related to this issue. Further, a limitation of existing research is the lack of data from the voice of those in communities affected by disproportionality. This study was designed to develop a deeper understanding of disproportionality from the views of multiple community stakeholders. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected to provide a greater depth of information that can be used alongside existing studies toward developing an enhanced understanding of disproportionality in child welfare.

Dettlaff, A. J., & Rycraft, J. R. (2009). Hurdling the artificial fence between child welfare and the community: Engaging community partners to address disproportionality. *Journal of Community Practice, 17*(4), 464-482.

As with many national and state social service systems, child welfare agencies have traditionally functioned in isolation. A multitude of federal and state laws and policies direct the functions and practices of child welfare systems, setting up an artificial fence around the agency that has created a culture lacking in interprofessional collaborations. However, 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 impacting 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.

Dettlaff, A. J., & Rycraft, J. R. (2010). Factors contributing to disproportionality in the child welfare system: Views from the legal community. *Social Work, 55*(3), 213-224.

A critical shortcoming in the existing body of research addressing racial disproportionality in the child welfare system is the lack of inclusion of external stakeholders in attempts to understand and address this issue. This article reports the results of a study designed to develop a deeper understanding of disproportionality from the views of the legal community, a critical stakeholder in child welfare. Using a qualitative approach, with focus groups as the method of data collection, data were collected to provide a greater depth of information that could be used alongside existing studies to develop an enhanced understanding of disproportionality in the child welfare system. Factors contributing to disproportionality include cultural bias, a fearful agency climate, communication barriers, ineffective service delivery, and workforce issues. Recommendations from focus group participants and implications are presented.

Weaver, J. (2008). The African-American child welfare act: A legal redress for African-American disproportionality in child protection cases. *Berkeley Journal of African American Law & Policy*, 10(2), 109-145.

Disproportionality in this article refers to the representation of a particular racial or ethnic group of children in the system at a higher or lower percentage than their representation in the general population. Although African-American children make up 15% of the children in this country, they comprise 37% of the children in the child welfare system. There is a widespread agreement that compared to white children and families in the child welfare system, children of color and their families have less access to services and their outcomes are poorer. When a child is placed outside the home in foster care, it is the result of many previous decisions by social workers, their supervisors, agency admin, legal professionals, and policy makers. Decisions continue to be made regarding a child once he enters state care. Recent research shows that race impacts professionals' decision making at almost every stage of the process. Race does matter, as evidenced by the disproportionate statistics in reports, investigations, substantiation, placement in foster care, and exits from foster care.

Dougherty, S. (2003). *Practices that mitigate the effects of racial/ethnic disproportionality in the child welfare system*. Casey Family Programs.

This paper will focus on practices that might mitigate the effects of disproportionality on the children and families who are already involved with the out-of-home care system by leading to improved outcomes in permanency and well-being. It will not look at practices that might reduce the disproportionate number of children of color who are the subjects of child abuse/neglect reports or who then enter the system.² It will also look at ways other systems – education, health care and juvenile justice – are seeking to mitigate disproportionate representation of children of color. We can not only take lessons for our own practice from related systems, but can examine the work of those systems as it impacts the children in out-of-home care who attend school, are served by the health care system, and who unfortunately often have interaction with the juvenile justice system.

http://www.casey.org/NR/rdonlyres/F2CF350A-1A46-4E02-80EA-3746F2A70F20/132/casey_mitigating_disproportionality.pdf

Drake, B., Lee, S. M., & Jonson, Reid M. (2009). Race and child maltreatment reporting: Are blacks overrepresented?. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 31(3), 309-316.

This study uses Census and child welfare report data from Missouri (1999, 2000 & 2001) to determine if Whites and Blacks are reported for child maltreatment at similar or different rates while controlling for poverty and racial homogeneity. We do 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. We found some evidence of differential sensitivity, with the relationship between poverty and report rate being somewhat stronger for Whites than for Blacks.

Michigan Department of Human Services. (2006). *Equity: Moving toward better outcomes for all of Michigan's children*. Retrieved from

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/DHS-Child-Equity-Report_153952_7.pdf

This report discusses the overrepresentation of children of color in the child welfare system in Michigan and presents recommendations for addressing this issue.

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/DHS-Child-Equity-Report_153952_7.pdf

Freudenburg, W. R. (2005). Privileged access, privileged accounts: Toward a socially structured theory of resources and discourses. *Social Forces*, 84(1), 89-114.

Environmental harms involve a "double diversion" - two forms of privilege that deserve greater attention. The first involves disproportionality, or the privileged diversion of rights/resources: Contrary to common assumptions, much environmental damage is not economically "necessary" - instead, it represents privileged access to the environment. It is made possible in part by the second diversion - the diversion of attention, or distraction - largely through taken-for-granted or privileged accounts, which are rarely questioned, even in leftist critiques. Data show that, rather than producing advanced materials, major polluters tend to be inefficient producers of low-value commodities, and rather than being major employers, they can have emissions-to-jobs ratios a thousand times worse than the economy as a whole. Instead of simply focusing on overall/average levels of environmental problems, sociologists also need to examine disproportionalities, analyzing the socially structured nature of environmental and discursive privileges. Doing so can offer important opportunities for insights, not just about nature, but also about the nature of power, and about the power of the naturalized.

Fulcher, L. C. (2002). Cultural safety and the duty of care. *Child Welfare*, 81(5), 689-708.

Examines the notion of **cultural safety** in relation to the duty of care mandate assigned to child welfare workers when the state intervenes in family life, focusing on the vulnerabilities of rural and indigenous youth in New Zealand to cultural racism. Asserts that child welfare professionals have a professional

obligation to enhance their cultural competencies, including those related to effective work with rural families and children.

Fusco, R. A., Rauktis, M. E., McCrae, J. S., Cunningham, M. A., & Bradley-King, C. K. (2010). Aren't they just black kids? Biracial children in the child welfare system. *Child & Family Social Work, 15*(4), 441-451.

In the USA, African-American children are overrepresented in the child welfare system. However, little is known about the child welfare system experiences of biracial children, who are predominately both White and African-American. To better understand this population, data from public child welfare in a US county were used to examine biracial children in the child welfare system. Results showed significant racial differences between children in the child welfare system. Despite the common belief that biracial children will have experiences similar to African-American children, the child welfare system seems to view them differently. Biracial children are more likely to be referred, rated as high risk and investigated compared with White or African-American children. Their mothers were younger, and were more often assessed as having physical, intellectual or emotional problems. These caregivers were also considered to have lower parenting skills and knowledge compared with White or African-American caregivers. Although the disproportionate representation of African-American children in the system has been well documented, this study provides evidence that biracial children are also overrepresented. Despite the fact that this is a rapidly growing population in the USA, there is little research available about biracial children and their families.

Godinet, M. T., Arnsberger, P., Li, F., & Kreif, T. (2010). Disproportionality, Ohana conferencing, and the Hawaii child welfare system. *Journal of Public Child Welfare, 4*(4), 387-405.

This study examined factors related to the overrepresentation of Native Hawai'ian and Pacific Islander families in Hawai'i's child welfare system and the role of Ohana conferencing in mitigating negative outcomes once a child is in the system. Findings of this study showed that the child welfare system in Hawai'i seems to respond differentially based to some degree on the ethnicity of the family. Furthermore, Ohana conferencing was found to have potential as an intervention. Future research on this intervention with larger sample sizes is needed.

Green, M. Y. (2002). Minorities as majority: Disproportionality in child welfare and juvenile justice. *Children's Voice Article*. Retrieved on March 26, 2008 at <http://www.cwla.org/articles/cv0211minorities.htm>.

In 1992, Congress amended the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act to make it a "core requirement" for states to demonstrate efforts they're taking to reduce disproportionate minority confinement. A decade of data gathering, many lament, has produced considerable head scratching, shoulder shrugging, and finger-pointing, but little in the way of reversing this phenomenon. Statistics confirmed what child welfare professionals suspected all along: Far too many

children of color pass from protection to punishment. With no such mandate to collect data in child welfare, disproportionality - its causes and cures - is just now coming to light. In this two-part series, Children's Voice examines this seemingly intractable problem. The first article tries to define the scope and nature of the problem, looks at emerging research, and explores a variety of perspectives from all sides of the table. The second article, which will appear in the next issue, will focus on several local jurisdictions that are meeting these challenges head-on with promising programs and practices.

Green, M. Y. (2002). Balancing the scales: Targeting disproportionality in child welfare & juvenile justice. *Children's Voice Article*. Retrieved on March 26, 2008 at <http://www.cwla.org/articles/cv0301balancing.htm>.

Juvenile crime is decreasing significantly, but the number of juveniles in confinement continues to climb. The juvenile justice system confines far more minority youth than can be justified by their offense rates. And African American children show up more often and languish far longer in child welfare systems than do white children, despite lower incidences of abuse and neglect by race. Communities nationwide are grappling with these stark facts, but several are addressing the problems of disproportionality with promising results. Three different communities show what is possible using a mix of strategies that includes interagency collaboration, systems rethinking, accurate data collection and analysis, cultural competency, and community involvement.

Hancock, T. U. (2005). Cultural competence in the assessment of poor Mexican families in the rural southeastern United States. *Child Welfare*, 84(5), 689-711.

Increasing numbers of poor Mexican immigrant families are settling in the rural southeastern United States. Most of these families are from isolated agrarian communities in Mexico and are headed by unskilled laborers or displaced farm workers with little education. Child welfare workers and other service providers in rural communities may be **poorly prepared** to address the needs of this population. This article provides an overview of the cultural, social, and family dynamics of first generation, working class Mexicans to promote cultural competency among helping professionals. An ecological perspective is used to examine the strengths that poor Mexicans bring from their culture of origin, stresses of the migratory experience and ongoing adaptation, shifts that may occur in family structure and functioning, disruptions in the family life cycle, the role of social supports in family adaptation, and effect of institutional discrimination on family well-being. Suggestions also are made for essential components of adequate in-service education.

Harris, M. S., & Hackett, W. (2008). Decision points in child welfare: An action research model to address disproportionality. *Children & Youth Services Review*, 30(2), 199-215.

Researchers conduct secondary analysis of data collected in community-based focus groups convened to analyze key decision points where racial disproportionality grew wider in child welfare. Analysis confirms findings of

other research pointing to referral bias, unclear or problematic policies related to engaging kin, the confounding role of poverty, and racial disparities in the availability of services to ameliorate family problems. A new finding suggested by this work was that lack of professional awareness of the influence of bias is in and of itself a barrier. Authors assert that professionals who believe the court system is fair and rational will not be vigilant in seeking out checks and balances to racial bias and may also be less likely to seek training or consciousness-raising experiences to address their own bias. The research methodology used serves as an example of ways university-based researchers can team with community-based action planning coalitions to stimulate systems change.

Hill, R. B. (2006). *Synthesis of research on disproportionality in child welfare: An update*. Casey Family Programs. Retrieved from http://www.racemattersconsortium.org/docs/BobHillPaper_FINAL.pdf

This research paper focuses on information about black children and families because most of the research that has been done so far on this topic has been done on those children and families and because there are more black children in the child welfare system than any other racial group. This paper looks at the following questions: 1) Does a child's or family's race influence the decisions that child welfare professionals make about that child or family? If so, how? 2) Are white and black children in the child welfare system treated differently? If so, how and how often? 3) What other research is needed to help us understand why there is disproportionality and disparity in the child welfare system, how it happens, and what happens as a result?

Hogan, P. T., & Siu, S. F. (1988). Minority children and the child welfare system: An historical perspective. *Social Work*, 33(6), 493-498.

This article presents information about the historical and current situation of minority children in the child welfare system in the U.S. The important issues that relate to the treatment of minority children in the U.S. child welfare system continue to be countering prevention of entry into the system; ensuring equal access, appropriateness of services, and equal treatment; and protecting civil rights. Based on the historical and current data, the authors project an increased emphasis on civil rights issues, further controversy over the issue of trans-racial adoptions, and a need to develop delivery systems to address the needs of new minority populations. To address the numerous issues, a concentrated focus on the needs of minority children is necessary, and the social work profession has a responsibility to sponsor such an effort. Improvement in the treatment of minority children in the child welfare system could result from the support of certain actions by the social work profession: **the training of culturally sensitive workers, the inclusion of child welfare knowledge into social work education along with a renewed emphasis on practice in the public sector, centralized data collection to document access and service appropriateness, advocacy to halt declassification of child welfare workers in the public sector, and advocacy for private and public service initiatives.**

Irfan, S., & Cowburn, M. (2004). Disciplining, chastisement and physical child abuse: Perceptions and attitudes of the British Pakistani community. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 24(1), 89-98.

There are cross-cultural differences in people's perspectives of what constitutes physical abuse of children. The focus of the present study was to explore the British Pakistani community's perception about physical child abuse and to understand more about the values held by them in relation to child protection. The study aimed to discover issues that are important to protect the children from harm, and to describe the possibilities these issues present. The study used a questionnaire survey that focused on 16-25-year-old British Pakistani's, exploring their experiences of childhood, of physical punishment and physical child abuse. The findings indicated that although serious child abuse was not experienced by most of the respondents, 75% of respondents experienced some kind of physical punishment as part of their childhood experience. However, **72% of respondents who received such punishment in childhood accepted it as an appropriate disciplining method**. The future research and policy implications with prevention in mind are discussed.

Jenkins, S., & Morrison, B. (1979). Ethnicity and service delivery. *Annual Progress in Psychiatry & Child Development*, 612-619.

Five minority groups were included in this study of the ethnic commitment of workers. The study tested the hypothesis that there would be significant differences between attitudes on ethnic issues in service delivery between workers in traditional and innovative agencies. An ethnic commitment continuum study instrument was developed to assess cultural content in programs; mixing vs. matching along ethnic lines; and issues on decision making or power in formulating policies. The research sought the responses of workers from two distinct populations; trained social workers from traditional child welfare settings and minority workers in innovative settings. The results of the study indicated that the two groups of child care workers differed in their attitudes on service delivery issues. In addition, results were found for other items on the Jenkins scale. The entire **Jenkins Ethnic Commitment scale** is included in the report along with a discussion of its development and a description of the statistical analysis for the study.

Johansson, I. (2011). The multicultural paradox: The challenge of accommodating both power and trust in child protection. *International Social Work*, 54(4), 535-549.

This research investigates whether ethnic background is under-communicated in child welfare services in the multicultural welfare state of Sweden, and if so how that affects the wellbeing of marginalized migrant families. It was found that a reciprocal and trustful relationship in combination with attention to the special needs of migrant families is a powerful vehicle for inclusion.

Johnson, L. M., Antle, B. F., & Barbee, A. P. (2009). Addressing disproportionality and disparity in child welfare: Evaluation of an anti-racism training for community service providers. *Children and Youth Services*, 31(6), 688-696.

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 anti-racism training designed to address disproportionality and disparity by educating members of the child welfare community about issues of race, power, and oppression. Pre- and post-training 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.

James, J., Green, D., Rodriguez, C., & Fong, R. (2008). Addressing disproportionality through undoing racism, leadership development, and community engagement. *Child Welfare, 87*(2), 279-296.

In 2005 the Texas 79th legislature passed Senate Bill 6, which included mandates to address disproportionality. This article will describe how the Texas Department of Family Protective Services in collaboration with Casey Family Programs' Texas State Strategy systems improvement initiative is addressing disproportionality statewide through promising practices and innovations in undoing racism trainings, values-based leadership development, and community engagement strategies.

Kirk, R. S., & Griffith, D. P. (2008). Impact of intensive family preservation services on disproportionality of out-of-home placement of children of color in one state's child welfare system. *Child Welfare, 87*(5), 87-105.

This study examines the impact of intensive family preservation services (IFPS) on racial disproportionality of placement into out-of-home care. A large sample (N 30,060) was partitioned on the basis of race, risk, and services received. The probability of placement is examined as a function of these variables. High-risk minority children receiving traditional services are at higher risk of placement than white children are, but minority children receiving IFPS are less likely to be placed than white children are. When only minority children are examined, those receiving IFPS are less likely to be placed than those receiving traditional services are. IFPS is associated with a reduction in racial disproportionality of out-of-home placement among high-risk families. Within-race analysis suggests that IFPS may mitigate racial disparity in out-of-home placement existing in the remainder of the child welfare population that receives traditional services.

Klingner, J. K., Harry, B., & Felton, R. K. (2003). Understanding factors that contribute to disproportionality: Administrative hiring decisions. *Journal of Special Education Leadership, 16*(1), 23-33.

A study involving 12 elementary schools investigated hiring and placement decisions of school district-level personnel and principals. Findings indicate inequities in the quality of leadership and instruction in the inner-city schools exacerbate **efforts to reduce disproportionate placements of culturally and linguistically diverse children into special education.**

Knott, T., & Donovan, K. (2010). Disproportionate representation of African-American children in foster care: Secondary analysis of the national child abuse and neglect data system, 2005. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 32(5), 679-684.

Few studies utilize large national data sets to provide statistical estimates of the degree of disproportionate representation of African-American children placed in CPS foster care. The current study examined the association of African-American racial identity with foster care placement while controlling for child caregiver, household and abuse characteristics. We conducted secondary analyses of the 2005 National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) on investigated reports of child abuse and neglect that received a maltreatment disposition in the reporting year, 2005. NCANDS 2005 Child File reflects case-level data based on the submissions of 48 states and the District of Columbia resulting in 3,461,872 investigations. Our unweighted study sample was restricted to 71,802 investigations of primary substantiated maltreatment in the reporting year 2005. A logit model was used to examine the association between foster care placement and racial identity. After controlling for child caregiver, household and abuse characteristics African-American children had 44% higher odds of foster care placement when compared with Caucasian children. This study supports the cumulative evidence that African-American racial identity is a significant predictor of foster care services. Continued examination of the factors associated with foster placement is warranted to unravel the complex circumstances facing this vulnerable segment of children.

Križ, K., & Skivenes, M. (2010). 'Knowing our society' and 'fighting against prejudices': How child welfare workers in Norway and England perceive the challenges of minority parents. *British Journal of Social Work*, 40(8), 2634-2651.

This article compares child welfare workers' perspectives on Black and Minority Ethnic parents in England and Norway. It is based on in-depth semi-structured interviews with forty-seven front line child welfare workers conducted in 2008. We found that Norwegian and English child welfare workers' perspectives of minority parents significantly differ along two dimensions: workers' expectations about the role that minority parents should play in the lives of their children, and their assumptions about parents' relationship with the child welfare system. Norwegian workers embrace a racism-blind, individualistic, change-oriented perspective that views minority parents as responsible service users. Workers conceive of parents and children as individuals with different struggles and needs and classify minority parents primarily as service users with responsibilities towards their children. They expect parents to become bi-lingual and bi-cultural to facilitate their children's access to the opportunities provided by the Norwegian education and child welfare systems. English workers demonstrate an anti-racist

and culturally sensitive, holistic and defensive perspective that categorises minority parents and children as clients. They think of minority children and parents as families (as opposed to individuals) of colour who encounter racism and prejudice. English workers do not expect bi-cultural competency from immigrant parents.

Lemon, K., D'Andrade, A., & Austin, M. J. (2005). *Understanding and addressing disproportionality in the front end of the child welfare system*. Bay Area Social Services Consortium.

Racial/ethnic disproportionality in the child welfare system is a complicated social problem that is receiving increasing amounts of attention from researchers and practitioners. This structured review of the literature, commissioned by the Bay Area Social Services Consortium, examines the nature of disproportionality in the front-end of the child welfare system. The first section outlines the problem, and describes several theories about its cause. The second section describes interventions that have been developed based upon those theories, and assesses the effectiveness of the interventions. The report concludes with a section on the implications of the study's findings for research and practice.

http://cssr.berkeley.edu/bassc/public/DISPRO_PDF.pdf.

Leung, P., & Cheung, K., & Stevenson, K. M. (1994). A strengths approach to ethnically sensitive practice for child protective service workers. *Child Welfare*, 73(6), 707-721.

The article suggests that a strengths approach, with guiding principles of family preservation, be used to empower child protective service (CPS) caseworkers and to enhance their cultural competence. A three-dimensional training model for planning and evaluating CPS cases has been developed to encourage workers to examine their attitudes, knowledge, and skills in working with ethnically different clients through various phases of intervention. Questions related to case planning, intervention, evaluation, and termination are presented for self-monitoring and training purposes, and practice implications are discussed. The **cultural and ethnic diversity inherent in child protection casework necessitates a framework for practice that incorporates many variables**. For intervention to be effective, cultural competence must be demonstrated not only in the attitudes of caseworkers toward cultural and ethnic diversity, but also in their knowledge about a family's cultural and ethnic context, and in their skills in communicating respect and empowerment to people of varying backgrounds and experiences.

Magruder, J., & Shaw, T. V. (2008). Children ever in care: An examination of cumulative disproportionality. *Child Welfare*, 87(2), 169-188.

Most studies of ethnic disproportionality in child welfare examine data in one of two ways: a point in time approach or an entry cohort approach. While each provides insight into disproportionality, neither gives a full picture of the differences among ethnic groups in the experience of the child welfare system over time. This study uses longitudinal administrative child welfare data to

examine ethnic disproportionality in involvement with the child welfare system during the first seven years of life at three levels of contact: (1) initial referrals, (2) substantiated referrals, and (3) first entries. Findings suggest the experience of African American families, and probably Native American families, with the child welfare system is much different from other families.

Marts, E. J., Othelia Lee, E., McRoy, R., & McCroskey, J. (2008). Point of engagement: Reducing disproportionality and improving child and family outcomes. *Child Welfare, 87*(2), 335-358.

This paper describes an innovative service delivery model to reduce the number of children entering the child welfare system. Point of Engagement (POE) is a collaborative family- and community-centered approach initiated in Compton, a regional office in Los Angeles County that serves south Los Angeles, a predominantly African American and Hispanic/Latino area. Over the past two years, the POE has been implemented in the Compton area by providing more thorough investigations, engaging families, and delivering needed services to children and families within their homes and communities. POE has demonstrated a reduction in the number of children removed from their families, an increase in the number of children returned to their families within one year, and an increase in the number of children finding legal permanency.

Miller, O. A., & Ward, K. J. (2008). Emerging strategies for reducing racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes in child welfare: The results of a national breakthrough series collaborative. *Child Welfare, 87*(2), 211-240.

Racial disproportionality in child welfare has been discussed as a seemingly intractable challenge with complex contributing factors. Some argue that these dynamics are far too difficult to be significantly impacted by public child welfare systems alone. The Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) methodology, incorporating an analysis of structural racism and potential system bias, was proffered as a tool for engaging public child welfare agencies in a rapid, action-oriented process for identifying innovative strategies and practices to reduce racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes. This article describes the Disproportionality BSC process, as well as the work of participating jurisdictions with respect to transforming organizational culture and testing/implementing child welfare practice improvements. A theory of change is presented and critical lessons learned are shared in the form of collaborative reflections.

Murphy, S. M., & Bryant, D. (2002). The effect of cross-cultural dialogue as child welfare parenting classes: Anecdotal evidence in Black and White. *Child Welfare, 81*(2), 385-405.

The child welfare system indicates that evidence of successful completion of parenting classes is instrumental in determining whether parents are actively engaged in the process of permanency planning. Such classes vary in length and intensity with topics ranging from "How to Raise Healthy Families" to "How to Discipline Your Child." Two social workers (one white and one black), who initially disagreed about the format of a parenting class, chronicle their efforts to

collaborate and create a class format that recognizes the psychosocial and, more specifically, the cultural influences inherent in facilitating these classes. The juxtaposition of the clinical concepts of projection and projective identification are evaluated against the backdrop of the **social concepts of empowerment and diversity**.

Ondersma, S. J., Malcoe, L. H., & Simpson, S. M. (2001). Child Protective Services' response to prenatal drug exposure: Results from a nationwide survey. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 25*(5), 657-668.

This survey was conducted to: (1) document child protective services (CPS) agencies' actual practices regarding prenatal drug exposure; (2) examine urban and rural differences in CPS responses; (3) explore whether CPS practices varied as a function of county median income, birth rate, population size, or percent minority births; and (4) assess respondent satisfaction with their county's current responses. Method: Data were collected via a nationwide telephone survey of child welfare supervisors from two urban and two rural counties in every state (N = 200). Results: Ninety percent of counties (100% of urban and 80% of rural) reported receiving referrals of infants with prenatal drug exposure. Among those receiving referrals, extreme variations in practice were found; all possible response options (from very inactive to very aggressive) were equally represented on key questions (e.g., filing court petitions, taking custody). Rural counties tended to have stronger responses than urban counties ($t[175] = -2.26, p = .024$). County response did not vary with county-level median family income, percent minority births, or birth rate. Despite wide variations in practice, the majority of respondents (69%) felt their county's response was appropriate. Of respondents who did indicate that their county's response was inappropriate, most (85%) felt that the county needed to do more to protect children. Conclusions: There is currently tremendous variation across US counties in CPS responses to, and beliefs regarding, the issue of prenatal drug exposure. Some of this variation is due to differences between urban and rural counties, **with little variation explained by differences in median income or percent minority births** at the county level. There is a need for research-based guidance and consensus building in CPS practice in this area.

Onunaku, N. (2008). Disproportionality in child welfare. *Policy & Practice, 66*(4), 37.

The article discusses the issue on disproportionality of caring the children in the U.S. It states that disproportionality is observed in child welfare that results from social disparities. Moreover, the observed differences in treatment affects child and family outcomes. However, the Disproportionality Diagnostic Tool is developed that is followed by written guidance to help users understand the assessment results and to consider the possible root causes for disparities.

Osterling, K. L., D'Andrade, A., & Austin, M. J. (2008). Understanding and addressing racial/ethnic disproportionality in the front end of the child welfare system. *Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work, 5*(1/2), 9-30.

Racial/ethnic disproportionality in the child welfare system is a complicated social problem that is receiving increasing amounts of attention from researchers and practitioners. This review of the literature examines disproportionality in the front-end of the child welfare system and interventions that may address it. While none of the interventions had evidence suggesting that they reduced disproportionality in child welfare front-end processes, some of the interventions may improve child welfare case processes related to disproportionality and outcomes for families of color.

Painter, K., & Scannapieco, M. (2009). Part II: Multisystemic therapy: Addressing racial disparity and its effectiveness with Families from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. *Journal of Family Social Work, 12*(3), 197-210.

One key step in the evidence-based practice process directs practitioners to pose client-oriented, practical, evidence-search questions (COPES), seeking the truth about what will help their client (Gibbs, 2003) and inform policy (Gambrill, 2006) and not to take a “one method fits all” position. Literature focusing on providing services to minority children and families in the child welfare system strongly supports this approach (Cohen, 2000; Lum, 2004; Samantrai, 2004). This article poses an effectiveness question, locates and evaluates existing evidence, and then presents implications for working with families and children from diverse backgrounds. The effectiveness question posed is, “If families and children from diverse populations experiencing mental health problems receive Multisystemic Therapy, will they have similar outcomes across race and ethnicity?”

Park, M. S. (2001). The factors of child physical abuse in Korean immigrant families. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 25*(7), 945-958.

This study explores Korean immigrant mothers' attitudes toward child physical abuse based on an ecological perspective. Method: One hundred and forty-four Korean immigrant mothers who came to the US after age 16 and have at least one child under 18 years old participated in this study. Data were collected using instruments translated in Korean that measure mothers' attitudes toward child physical abuse in four areas: degree of agreement with physical abuse, conflict tactics, belief in the use of physical punishment, and perceptions regarding physical abuse. Results: This study found that the following variables affect Korean immigrant mothers' attitudes toward child physical abuse at ecological levels of the environment: amount of time spent with children, experience of corporal punishment as a child, children's gender and age, family acculturation conflicts, mothers' age, and length of time in US at the micro level; involvement in their children's school and involvement in social organizations at the meso level; level of education and reported stress of immigrant life at the exo level; value of children in Korean culture, familiarity with Child Protective Services (CPS), perceived discrimination, and value of corporal punishment at the macro level. Conclusions: This study suggests the importance of cultural sensitivity in social work practice when working with Korean immigrants. It also implies that

intervention and prevention efforts of child abuse should be targeted at more than one level of the environment.

Park, R. P. (2003). Child abuse report decision-making: The role of ethnicity and other factors in a psychologist's decision to report physical abuse. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The sciences and Engineering*, 64(5-B), 2397.

Although previous studies have addressed factors involved in the decision-making process to report child abuse, there is a noticeable lack of data regarding the role that a psychologist's own personal and professional characteristics play in this decision. The goal of this study was to explore the relationship such characteristics, in particular psychologists' ethnicity, have with their decisions to report physical child abuse. Surveys containing a short questionnaire and a hypothetical vignette were mailed to 800 psychologists, 200 in each of four ethnic groups: African American, Asian American, Latino, and Caucasian. A total of 376 respondents completed the study, for a 47.5% response rate. After the surveys were returned, a fifth "Multiracial" ethnic group was created to include psychologists who identified themselves as biracial or multiracial. Respondents were asked to decide whether they would make a report to Children's Protective Services (CPS), and what their level of certainty was that abuse was occurring. In addition, respondents were asked to rate their attitudes toward corporal punishment, as well as their attitude towards CPS. Results indicated that there were **no significant mean differences in psychologists' decisions to report based on the five ethnic group categories**. However, when comparing Caucasian psychologists and all other ethnic minority group psychologists combined, Caucasian psychologists were slightly but significantly more likely to report. There were no significant differences in reporting rates based on attitudes toward corporal punishment, attitudes toward CPS, amount of professional experience, amount of child abuse training, or whether the psychologist was male or female. A factor that was significantly related to the decision to report was the level of certainty that abuse was occurring. Further analyses comparing ethnic groups and attitudes towards corporal punishment and towards CPS revealed no significant mean differences in attitudes toward CPS, but there were significant mean differences in attitudes towards corporal punishment. Results indicated that African American respondents had significantly more favorable beliefs about corporal punishment than did the Caucasian and "Multiracial" respondents. Results of the study and the implications to child abuse reporting and to the CPS system are discussed.

Pittman, B. L. (2005). Offender and community reintegration: An exploratory and descriptive study of cultural competency within treatment and correctional reentry programs. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences*, 66(3-A), 1177.

Using qualitative and quantitative measures, this study examines the value of infusing the concept of cultural competency within community treatment and correctional reentry programs that serve African-American ex-offenders residing in Portland, Oregon, and then identifies indicators and measures of cultural

competency within those programs. This researcher purports that if demographic, environmental, and cultural information about ex-offenders is taken into account by community treatment and correctional reentry programs, ex-offenders would experience more success in their reintegration. A literature review reveals that declining resources devoted to post-prison release supervision leave ex-offenders with little to aid their reentry process. **No group is more associated with America's criminal justice system than the African-American male.** It is estimated that one in three African-American males between the ages of 20 and 29 is in prison or jail or on probation or parole. Many return to high-crime neighborhoods often in concentrated areas of poverty. For the reentry transition of these ex-offenders to be successful, their ongoing influx into the neighborhoods must be met by a collaborative array of services from a variety of correctional and social service organizations. Researchers have examined the role of cultural competency within other disciplines (e.g., juvenile justice, health services, mental health, child welfare, education), but this researcher was unable to locate any studies that examined the concept of cultural competency within correctional or community treatment re-entry programs specifically related to African-American ex-offenders. This document includes an overview of the U.S. incarceration and recidivism rate data, and reviews the literature on culture, cultural competency and theories addressing the causation of crime. Quantitatively, cultural competency levels are examined by mean scores on the following subscales in the Cultural Competency Self-Assessment Questionnaire: knowledge of communities; personal involvement; resources and linkages; staffing; service delivery and practices; organizational policies and procedures; and reaching out to communities. Using chi-square, cross-tabulations, and cluster analysis statistical measures, characteristics associated with identifying cultural competency levels are also analyzed. This study will contribute to correctional administrative practices by emphasizing the need to develop and increase cultural competency strategic plans and policies within correctional organizations and community treatment agencies.

Clegg & Associates, Inc. (2004). *Racial disproportionality in child welfare system in King County, Washington*. Retrieved from <http://www.catalystforkids.org/KingCountyReportonRacialDisproportionality.pdf>

Discusses factors that contribute to disproportionality at different points in the child protective services process and proposes action steps to address them. <http://www.catalystforkids.org/KingCountyReportonRacialDisproportionality.pdf>

Minnesota Department of Human Services. (2002). *Report to the 2002 Minnesota legislature on the study of outcomes for African American children in Minnesota's child protection system*. Retrieved from <http://archive.leg.state.mn.us/docs/pre2003/mandated/020299.pdf>

This report complies with the legislative mandate in the 2001 Minnesota Session Laws, which instructed the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Services in consultation with local social services agencies, councils of color,

representatives of communities of color and others to study why African American children in Minnesota are disproportionately represented in out-of-home placements. In addition the mandate instructed the commissioner to study the decision-making points in the child welfare system that lead to different outcomes for children. The Legislature also requested that the department produce a report on its findings along with corresponding recommendations. In response to this mandate, the department invited and then convened a committee that consisted of African American community members, leaders, representatives of Anoka, Hennepin, Olmsted and Ramsey counties, and others. The committee used the experience of child welfare experts and academicians, along with the department's child welfare data system, and national research literature to gather child welfare and child demographical information to develop an understanding of the over representation of African American children in Minnesota's child welfare system. While there was concurrence about the definition and existence of disproportionality of African American children in Minnesota's out-of-home placement system, there were multiple and varying opinions about the causes of the racial disproportionality. Research and anecdotal experiences point to several causes which include racism; practices of child welfare professionals; reporting patterns of mandated reporters and others; and socio-economic factors of the African American families in the system. This report provides a review of the data, an abbreviated look at child welfare decision points, local and national research about racial disparities of African American children and their families in the out-of-home placement system and finally the full recommendations of the committee.

<http://archive.leg.state.mn.us/docs/pre2003/mandated/020299.pdf>

Richardson, B. (2008). Comparative analysis of two community-based efforts designed to impact disproportionality. *Child Welfare: Journal of Policy, Practice and Program*, 87(2), 297-317.

Children of color are overrepresented in child welfare in Iowa at a rate double their percentage of the population. In 2005 the Iowa Department of Human Services implemented two pilot demonstration projects to address overrepresentation of Native American and African American children in the child welfare system. The projects, called the Minority Youth and Families Initiative (MYFI), included ongoing evaluation. Results obtained over two years indicate improved worker and participant alliance, family functioning, and outcomes for children. Findings are discussed and recommendations are provided for further improvements in practice, research, and evaluation to reduce racial disparities the child welfare system.

Roberts, D. E. (2008). The racial geography of child welfare: Toward a new research paradigm. *Child Welfare: Journal of Policy, Practice and Program*, 87(2), 125-150.

This article examines the community-level impact of concentrated child welfare agency involvement in African American neighborhoods. Based on interviews of

25 African American women in a Chicago neighborhood, the study found that residents were aware of intense agency involvement in their neighborhood and identified profound effects on social relationships including interference with parental authority, damage to children's ability to form social relationships, and distrust among neighbors. The study also discovered a tension between respondents' identification of adverse consequences of concentrated state supervision for family and community relationships and neighborhood reliance on agency involvement for needed financial support. The author discusses the implications of these findings for a new research paradigm aimed at understanding the community-level effects of racial disproportionality.

Salend, S. J., & Garrick, D. L. (2002). A comprehensive approach to identity and addressing issues of disproportionate representation. *Remedial & Special Education*, 23(5), 289.

Reasons for the disproportionate representation of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in special education are multifaceted and shaped by the cultural experiences of students and professionals. With this perspective in mind, this article presents a comprehensive approach to identifying and addressing issues of disproportionate representation. Specifically, a list of questions that can be used to examine the extent to which issues and factors of disproportionality exist in schools is presented as well as strategies to address the needs of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Shaw, T. V., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Magruder, J., & Needell, B. (2008). Measuring racial disparity in child welfare. *Child welfare: Journal of Policy, Practice and Program*, 87(2), 23-36.

Overrepresentation of certain racial/ethnic groups in the foster care system is one of the most troubling and challenging issues in child welfare today. In response, many states have started reporting outcomes by race and ethnicity to identify disproportionately high rates of system contact. The identification of disproportional representation is the first step in developing targeted strategies to address disproportionality--highlighting where resources should be directed and guiding future research. However, present and future efforts to address disproportionality must be accompanied by statistically sound and meaningful methods of measurement. In this article, we argue for the adoption of a relative rate measure of representation--a "Disparity Index"--as the primary instrument for assessing racial disparity in child welfare.

Siegel, L. (1994). Cultural differences and their impact on practice in child welfare. *Journal of Multicultural Social Work*, 3(3), 87-96.

This article examines selected aspects of family structure, child-rearing practices and help-seeking behavior in the black culture. The popular view of black family life as disorganized by slavery overlooks the historical facts. While the black community may suffer from many environmental problems, two inherent areas of health which are often misinterpreted by the white community emerge. They are

the tendency to adopt children informally and the ability to incorporate non-kin into the family household. Black families participate in extended family networks which pool resources and provide economic and emotional security. These interdependent relationships form a system of mutual aid in such areas as finances, housing and child reading. In disciplining children, black parents may use physical measures but this is done with love and care. While a black father's involvement with his children generally is hindered by economic restrictions, a black mother is generally recognized for her love and devotion. Sibling relationships within the black family are very important. Patterns of help-seeking within the black culture are generally focused on utilizing the extended family network and church organizations. **The underutilization of psychological help and family therapy in the black community is also related to their general mistrust of the therapist, especially the white therapist.**

Texas Health and Human Services Commission/Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. (2006). *Disproportionality in Child Protective Services: Statewide reform effort begins with examination of the problem*. Retrieved from http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Documents/about/pdf/2006-01-02_Disproportionality.pdf

Senate Bill 6 (SB 6), passed by the 79th Texas Legislature and signed by Governor Rick Perry, requires comprehensive reform of the Child Protective Services (CPS) system in Texas. One aspect of that reform is to address issues of disproportionality or overrepresentation of a particular race or ethnic group in a program or system. This report is prepared in response to Section 1.54 of SB 6, which requires the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to “analyze data regarding child removals and other enforcement actions taken by the department [DFPS] during state fiscal years 2004 and 2005” and “determine whether enforcement actions were disproportionately initiated against any racial or ethnic group, in any area of the state, taking into account other relevant factors, including poverty, single parent families, young parent families and any additional factor determined by other research to be statistically correlated with child abuse or child neglect.”

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Documents/about/pdf/2006-01-02_Disproportionality.pdf

Texas Migrant Council National Resource Center. (1979). *A manual for understanding child abuse and neglect among Mexican migrants*. Washington, DC: ERIC.

Prepared as a tool for those who work with **Mexican American migrants**, this manual is based upon documents and verbal narrations provided by persons involved in the Texas Migrant Council's Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Project (*caseworkers* and employers of migrants in Texas and in northern "user" states, Mexican American migrants, child neglectors, and child abusers). Included are an index, 12 figures, 7 sections, a summary by professional consultants, reference material, recommended readings, and 4 detailed appendices. The first section briefly describes the project and the changes in its emphasis over the three-year period. The second section deals with demographic and cultural

characteristics of Mexican Americans in the project (10 counties in south Texas). Following a description of Maslow's need hierarchy as a framework, each remaining section gives information about child abuse-neglect among the migrants in relation to five categories of need: (1) physiological; (2) safety; (3) social; (4) personal esteem; and (5) self-actualization. Major components in each category address situational and cultural aspects, the relevance of these aspects among the migrants, and some implications for assessment and assistance.

Minnesota Department of Human Services. (2008). *The role of the caseworker in identifying, developing and supporting strengths in African American families involved in Child Protective Services: A practice guide*. Retrieved from http://www.d.umn.edu/sw/snydersfiles/AdvCW/week8/practice_guide_working_with_African_American_families.pdf

This practice guide was developed as a tool for social workers to help them address the systemic issue of the overrepresentation and racial disparity of African American children and their families involved in child protective services. It is anticipated that this guide will serve as a resource and reference manual for caseworkers (the person working in the practice of social work) as they engage African American families in effective service delivery.

Tilbury, C., & Thoburn, J. (2009). Using racial disproportionality and disparity indicators to measure child welfare outcomes. *Children and Youth Services Review, 31*(10), 1101-1106.

This article examines the utility 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 conceptualisation 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.

Too many children of color in foster care? (2004). *Policy & Practice, 62*(1), 7.

There have been countless debates surrounding the overrepresentation of children of color in the foster care system. In response to the widespread concern to the problem, "Mitigating the Effects of Racial Disproportionality," a paper published by Casey Family Programs, looks at practices that may alleviate this Disproportionality. The practices in the paper include, family group conferencing, placement with relatives, diligent recruitment and maintaining family connections. Strategies for recruiting foster and adoptive families include identifying the right communities to target, using child-specific recruitment efforts and team decision-making.

Lincroft, Y. & Resner, J. (2006). Undercounted, underserved, immigrant refugee families in the child welfare system. *The Annie E. Casey Foundation*.

Retrieved on March 26, 2008 at

<http://www.aecf.org/upload/PublicationFiles/IR3622.pdf>.

This report focuses on the needs of immigrant and refugee children in the child welfare system. It is a result of extensive research, including a literature review; interviews with child welfare workers, immigration attorneys, adoptive parents, foster youth, advocates, staff of community-based agencies, researchers, and policymakers; and the recommendations from a consultative session with national experts and child welfare practitioners.

Walker, S. (2002). Culturally competent protection of children's mental health. *Child Abuse Review*, 11(6), 380-393.

The protection of the mental health of black and other ethnic minority children and young people has not received adequate attention in the literature. This paper considers, describes and discusses the **concept of culturally competent practice**. Ways in which practitioners can better understand the needs of children in a multicultural, diverse society and intervene in more effective ways are assessed. Finally, the components of a culturally competent practice to support families in the protection of children's mental health are summarized, together with the implications for practice.

Wells, S. J., Merritt, L. M., & Briggs, H. E. (2009). Bias, racism & evidence-based practice: The case for more focused development of the child welfare evidence. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 31(11), 1160-1171.

In spite of continuing concerns about 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 with one another gives new meaning to the phrase, culturally competent evidence-based practice. Culturally competent practice goes beyond admonishing practitioners and policy makers to be more sensitive or to undertake such training. It is a pathway to the development of a more targeted and relevant evidence base: 1) rigorous intervention research with diverse populations could be more intentionally developed and 2) 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.

