The Over Representation of Children of Color in the Child Welfare System

The Children's Bureau Definitions

Disproportionality **is the underrepresentation or overrepresentation of a racial or ethnic group compared to its percentage in the total population.**

Disparity **is the unequal outcomes of one racial or ethnic group as compared to outcomes for another racial/ethnic group.**

From Child Welfare Information Gateway at https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue-briefs/racial-disproportionality/

POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS:

- Referral Bias (Implicit and Explicit) by mandated & other reporters of child abuse
- Policy related issues in engaging relatives and kinship placements
- Higher poverty rates for children and families of color causing disproportionate and disparate needs. (Visibility/Exposure Bias)
- Racial Disparities in the Availability of Services;
- Lack of Awareness in the professionals working with the family on the influences of their own personal biases in making decisions.
- Structural, Institutional or System Bias
- Geographic context

How Race Impacts Children

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954)

The Clark and Clark Doll Study (1952) and the study was replicated 50 years later on Anderson Cooper 360-CNN

Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote in the *Brown v. Board of Education* opinion, "To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely to ever be undone."

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a7sX1cn5aO4

Mental Health

- ACES Study

- URBAN ACES + (Historical Trauma of a Group)
  - Witnessing Violence
  - Living in Unsafe Neighborhoods
  - Experiencing Racism
  - Living in Foster care

- Race-Based Psychological Experiences of Parents

Historical/Generational Trauma

Historical trauma is multigenerational trauma experienced by a specific cultural, racial or ethnic group. It is related to major events that oppressed a particular group of people because of their status as oppressed, such as slavery, the Holocaust, forced migration, and the violent colonization of Native Americans

10. Did a household member go to prison?

Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Questionnaire

Finding your ACE Score rv kbr 10 24 06

While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life:

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often** …
   Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you?
   or
   Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?
   Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

2. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often** …
   Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you?
   or
   Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?
   Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you **ever**…
   Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way?
   or
   Try to or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal sex with you?
   Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

4. Did you **often** feel that …
   No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special?
   or
   Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?
   Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

5. Did you **often** feel that …
   You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you?
   or
   Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?
   Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

6. Were your parents **ever** separated or divorced?
   Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

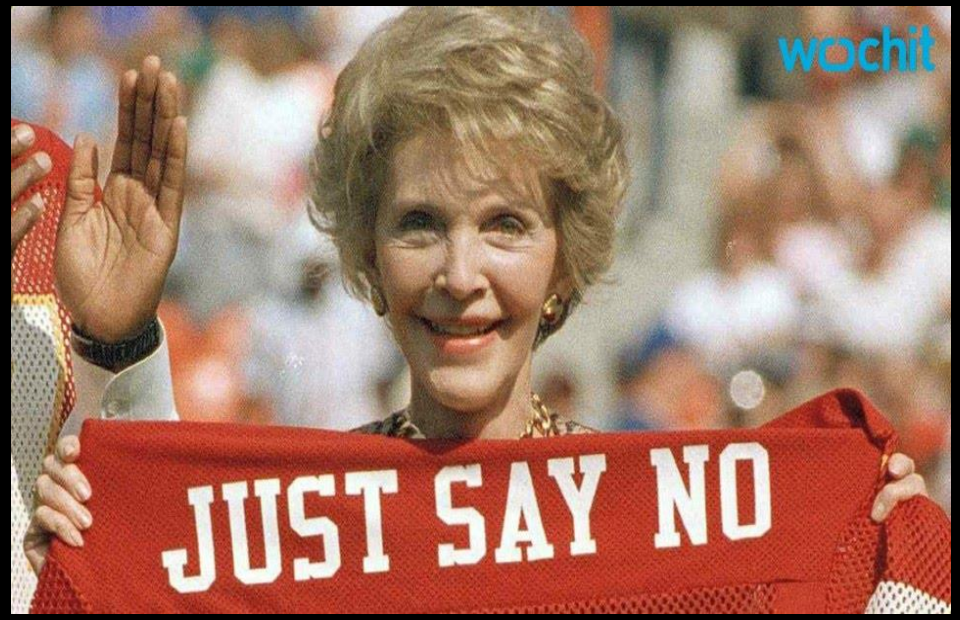
7. Was your mother or stepmother:
   Often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her?
   or
   Sometimes or often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard?
   or
   Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?
   Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

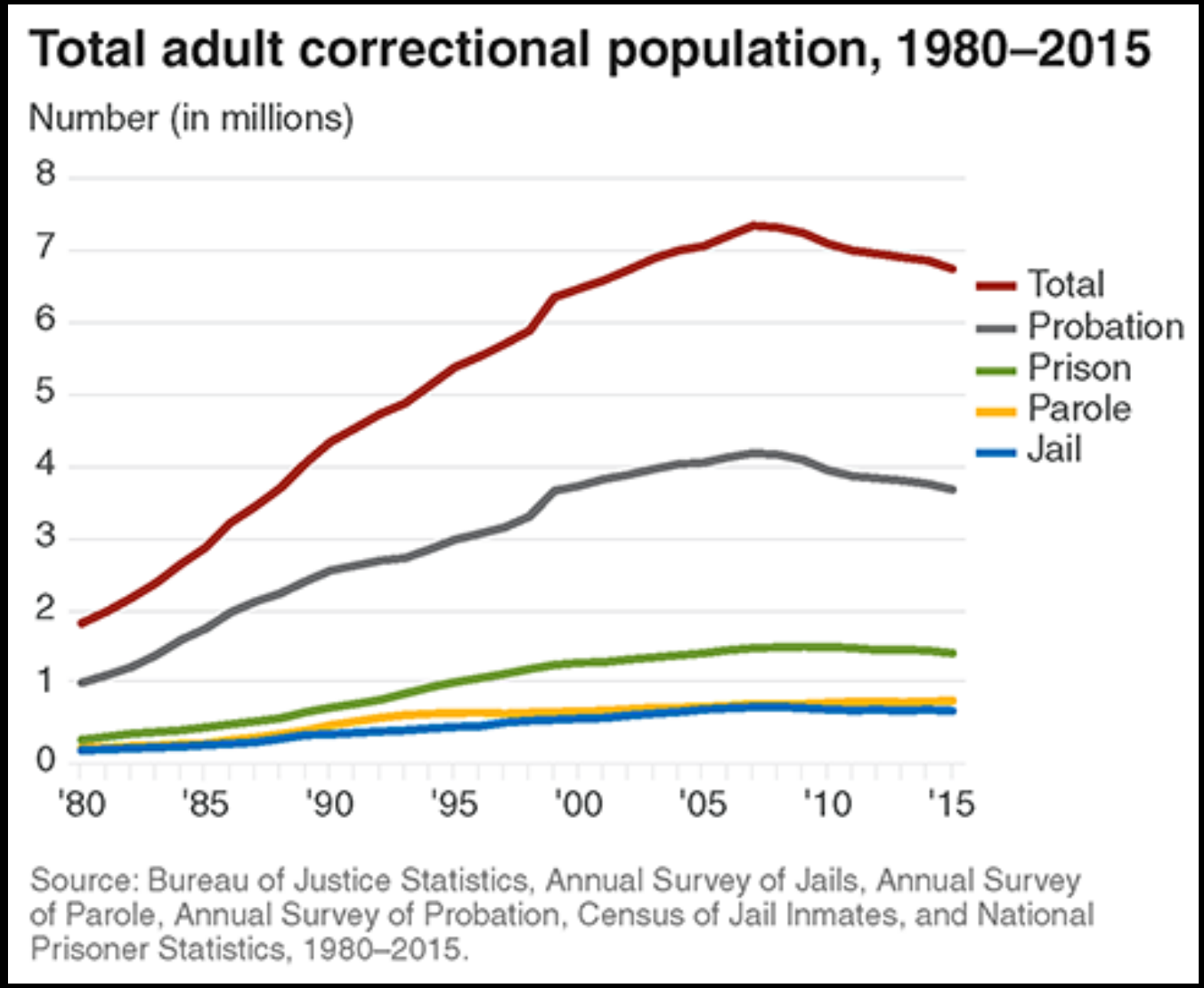
8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs?
   Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill or did a household member attempt suicide?
   Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

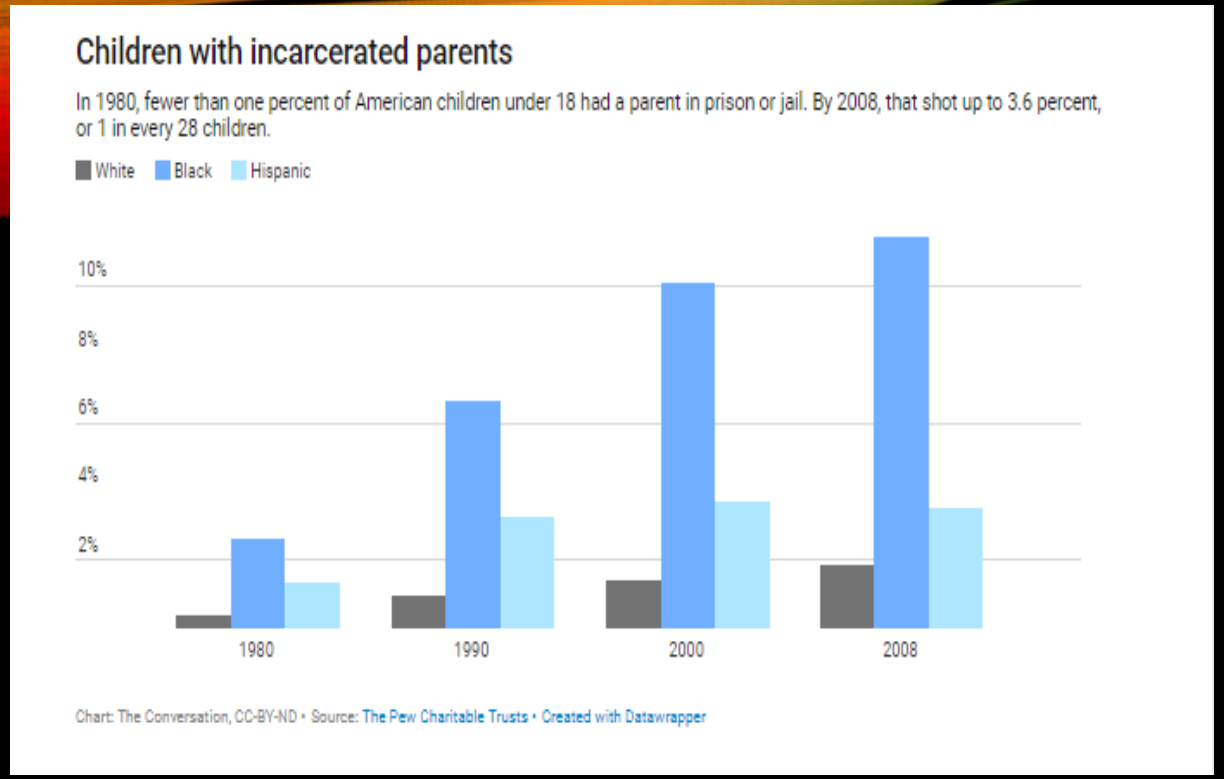
10. Did a household member go to prison?
    Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

Now add up your "Yes" answers: _____ This is your ACE Score



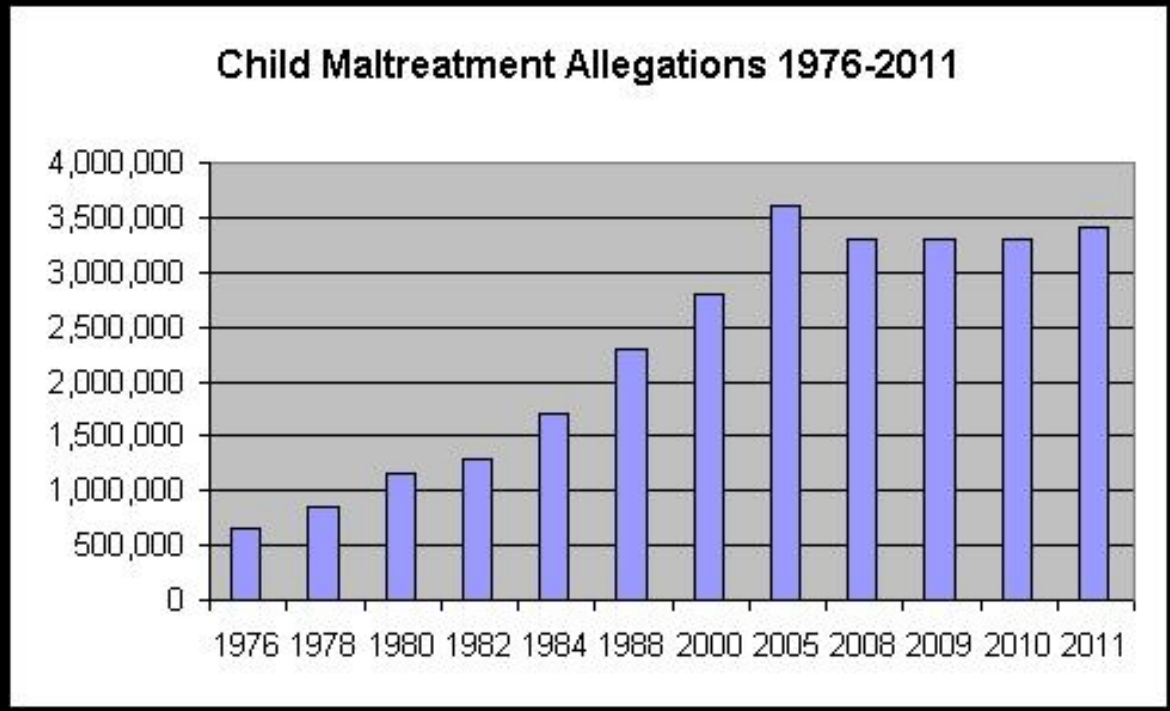


Bureau of Justice Statistics, Key Statistics, Total Adult Correctional Population, 1980-2015, on the Internet at www.bjs.gov (visited February 27, 2018).



1974-Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)

1980-Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act



1997- Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA)

Children With an Incarcerated Parent

2011-2012 United States Children	5,113,000
Percentage of Children	7%
2011-2012 Iowa Children	58,000
Percentage of Children	8%
2015-2016 United States Children	5,749,000
Percentage of Children	8%
2015-2016 Iowa Children	41,000
Percentage of Children	6%

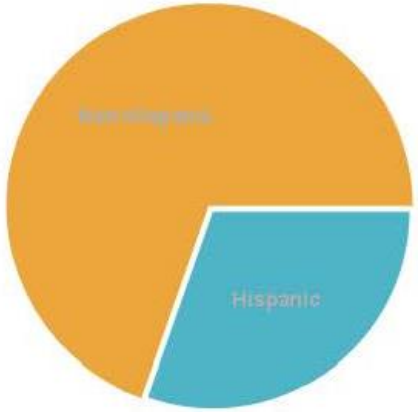
1. 2011-2012 data located at http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/8977-children-who-had-a-parent-who-was-ever-incarcerated?loc=1&loct=1#detailed/2/2-52/true/1539,1021/any/17928,17929 (visited February 27, 2018)

2. 2015-2016 data located at http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/9688-children-who-had-a-parent-who-was-ever-incarcerated?loc=1&loct=1#detailed/2/2-52/false/1539/any/18927,18928 (visited February 27, 2018)

Incarcerated US Mothers and Their Children
150,000
100,000
50,000
0
1991
1997
1999
2004
2007
Incarcerated mothers
Minor children of incarcerated mothers
Source: US Bureau of Justice Statistics

Inmate Ethnicity

Statistics based on prior month's data -- -- Last Updated: Saturday, 5 September 2020



	Ethnicity	# of Inmates	% of Inmates
☐	Hispanic	47,231	30.4%
☐	Non-Hispanic	107,933	69.6%

2018 US Population Data

Asian 6%

Black 12%

Native American/
Native Alaskan 1%

White 60%

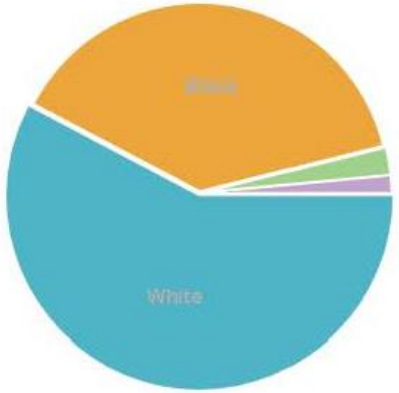
Hispanic 18%

Pacific Islander 1%

2+ Races 3%

Inmate Race

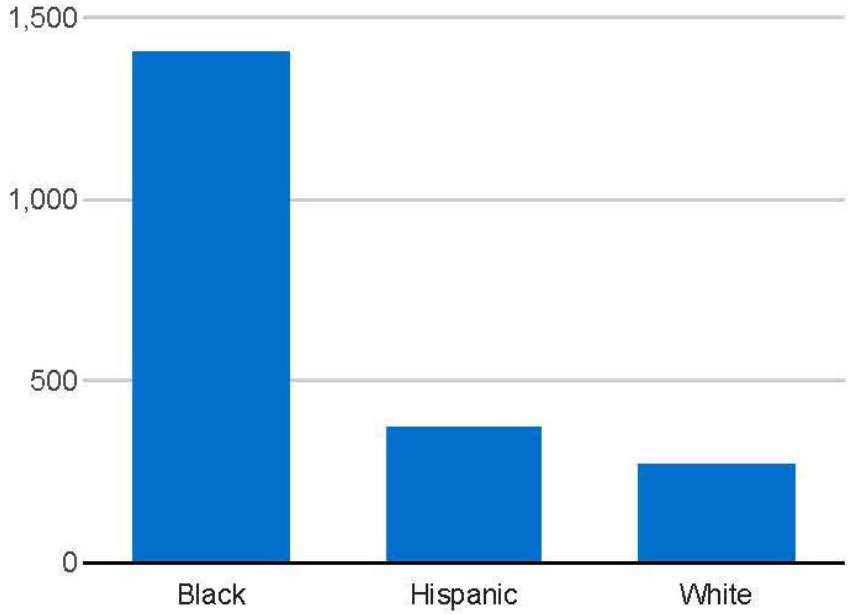
Statistics based on prior month's data -- -- Last Updated: Saturday, 5 September 2020



	Race	# of Inmates	% of Inmates
☐	Asian	2,341	1.5%
☐	Black	59,583	38.4%
☐	Native American	3,652	2.4%
☐	White	89,588	57.7%

https://www.bop.gov/about/statistics/statistics_inmate_race.jsp;
https://www.bop.gov/about/statistics/statistics_inmate_ethnicity.jsp
https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/distribution-by-raceethnicity/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D

Figure 1. Average rate of incarceration by race and ethnicity, per 100,000 population



Data source: United States Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. Bureau of Justice Statistics. National Prisoner Statistics, 1978-2014. Bibliographic Citation: ICPSR36281-v1. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2015-10-09; U.S. Census Bureau (2013). 2013 Population Estimates. Annual estimates of resident population by sex, race, and Hispanic origin for the United States, states and counties: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2013. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.

https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/color-of-justice-racial-and-ethnic-disparity-in-state-prisons/

MEDICAL RISKS

Preterm birth is when a baby is born too early, before 37 weeks of pregnancy have been completed. In 2018, preterm birth affected 1 of every 10 infants born in the United States.

Additionally, racial and ethnic differences in preterm birth rates remain. For example, in 2018, the rate of preterm birth among African-American women (14%) was about 50 percent higher than the rate of preterm birth among white women (9%).

https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternalinfanthealth/pretermbirth.htm#:~:text=Additionally%2C%20racial%20and%20ethnic%20differences,among%20white%20women%20(9%25).

Racial/ethnic minorities are 1.5 to 2.0 times more likely than whites to have most of the major chronic diseases. Chronic diseases are also more common in the poor than the nonpoor and this association is frequently mediated by race/ethnicity

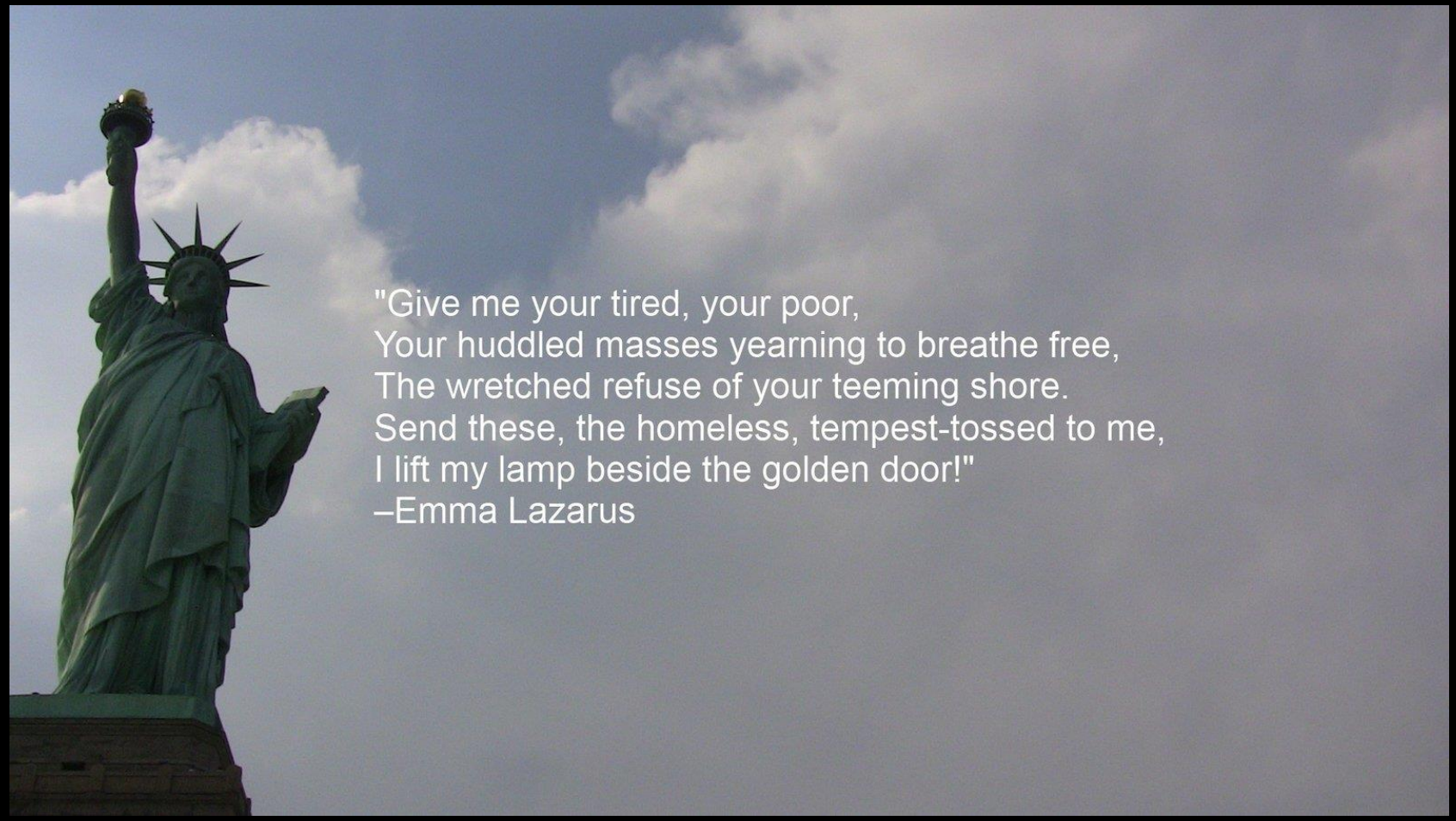
The most common major chronic diseases of youths in the US are asthma, diabetes mellitus, obesity, hypertension, dental disease, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), mental illness, cancers, sickle-cell anemia, cystic fibrosis, and a variety of genetic and other birth defects.

https://www.hindawi.com/journals/bmri/2013/787616/

MEDICALLY RELEVANT TESTS-IMMUNE FROM LIABILITY-Iowa Code Section 232.73

1. A person who is required to report suspected child abuse may take or cause to be taken, at public expense, photographs, X rays, or other physical examinations or tests of a child which would provide medical indication of allegations arising from an assessment. A health practitioner may, if medically indicated, cause to be performed radiological examination, physical examination, or other medical tests of the child. A person who takes any photographs or X rays or performs physical examinations or other tests pursuant to this section shall notify the department that the photographs or X rays have been taken or the examinations or other tests have been performed. The person who made notification shall retain the photographs or X rays or examination or test findings for a reasonable time following the notification. Whenever the person is required to report under section 232.69, in that person's capacity as a member of the staff of a medical or other private or public institution, agency or facility, that person shall immediately notify the person in charge of the institution, agency, or facility or that person's designated delegate of the need for photographs or X rays or examinations or other tests.

The Impact of the Child Welfare System on Transnational Families



KEY DECISION POINTS

Key Decision Points are identifiable points in the child welfare process where decisions affecting the child are made and can assist child welfare administrators, program manager and policymakers to track outcomes for children, in this context, to identify and address disproportionality.

The key/specific decision points are usually include points such as: percentage of reports of abuse, percentage of children identified as victims, percentage of children entering foster care/group care, percentage of children waiting to be adopted, percentage of children adopted, number of months the child's case remained open.

INHERENT DIFFICULTIES COLLECTING AND ANALYZING THE DATA

- Race and ethnicity do not have quantifiable definitions in the US Census (2013). People may identify their race or ethnicity based upon a number of different factors.
- The definitions of a particular race or ethnicity may change from study to study
- How people define their own race or ethnicity can change over time.
- Race or Ethnicity may be incorrectly assumed by whomever is recording the data.
- Data recorders may over use “unknown” as a way to identify a child’s race or ethnicity on their case loads.
- Current Birth Rates indicate mixed race/ethnicity as the largest growing population and may require additional categories in future data collection/research

RACIAL DISPROPORTIONALITY INDEX (RDI)

Is the percentage of children in a racial group involved in some part of the child welfare system which is divided by the percentage of that group in the base population and measures the under and over representation of a racial group.

RDI Values <1 = Under Representation
RDI Values >1= Over Representation

Table 1. Disproportionality Compared to Total Population, 2014*

Race (Non-Hispanic)/ Ethnicity	% of Total Child Population	% of Children Identified by CPS as Victims	RDI	% of Children in Foster Care	RDI	% of Children Entering Foster Care	RDI	% of Children Exiting Foster Care	RDI	% of Children Waiting to Be Adopted	RDI	% of Children Adopted With Public Agency Involvement	RDI
American Indian/ Alaska Native	0.9%	**1.3%**	**1.5**	2.4%	2.8	**2.3%**	**2.7**	2.1%	2.4	**1.9%**	**2.2**	1.5%	1.7
Asian	4.8%	**0.9%**	**0.2**	0.5%	0.1	**0.6%**	**0.1**	0.7%	0.1	**0.4%**	**0.1**	0.4%	0.1
Black or African-American	13.8%	**22.6%**	**1.6**	24.3%	1.8	**22.4%**	**1.6**	23.2%	1.7	**23.1%**	**1.7**	19.4%	1.4
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	0.2%	**0.2%**	**1.0**	0.2%	0.9	**0.2%**	**1.1**	0.2%	1.2	**0.1%**	**0.6**	0.2%	0.9
Hispanic (of Any Race)	24.4%	**24.0%**	**1.0**	22.5%	0.9	**21.9%**	**0.9**	21.8%	0.9	**23.6%**	**1.0**	22.1%	0.9
White	51.9%	**46.4%**	**0.9**	43.4%	0.8	**46.1%**	**0.9**	45.6%	0.9	**43.2%**	**0.8**	48.5%	0.9
Two or More Races	4.1%	**4.7%**	**1.1**	6.8%	1.7	**6.4%**	**1.6**	6.5%	1.6	**7.7%**	**1.9**	8.0%	2.0

From Child Welfare Information Gateway at https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue-briefs/racial-disproportionality/

Decision Point Comparison

A method for measuring disproportionality by comparing a particular racial or ethnic populations representation in the child welfare system to its representation at the prior decision point.

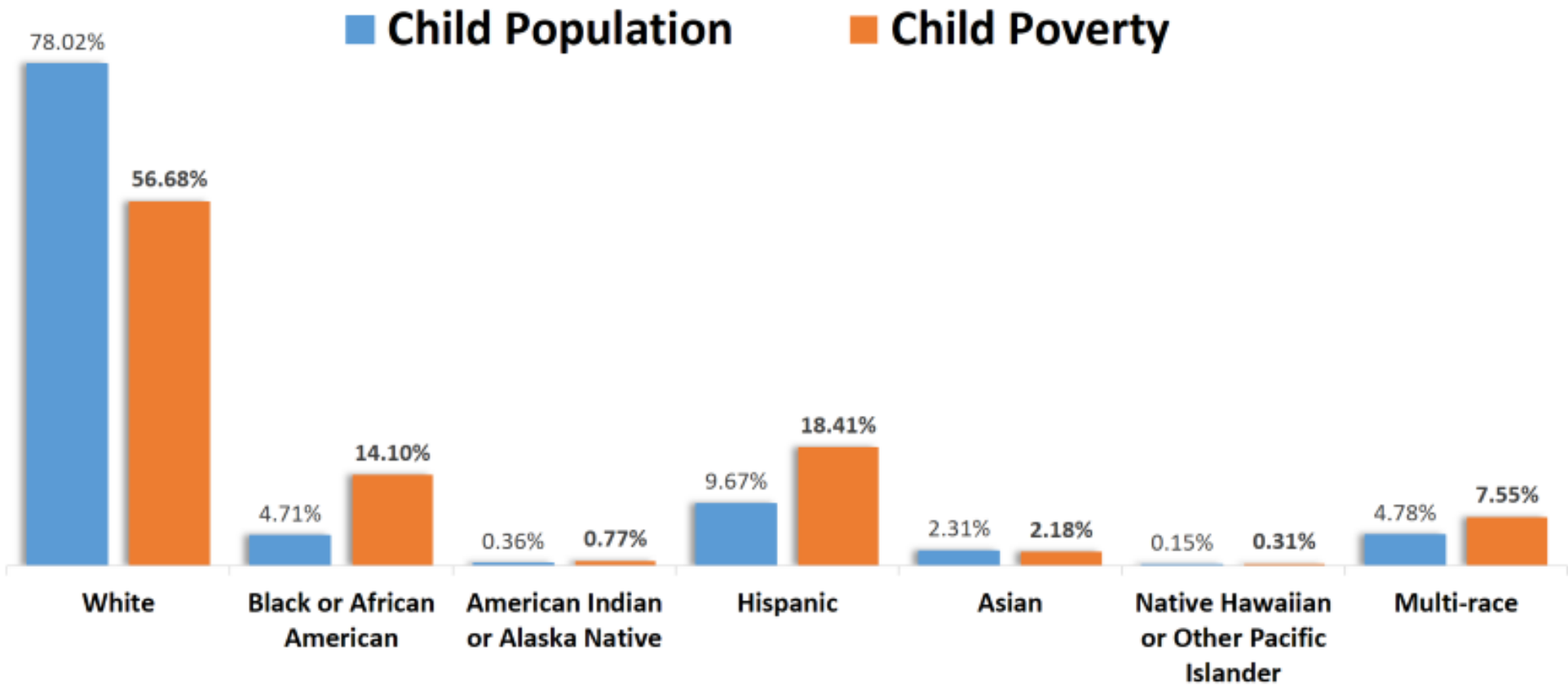
Table 2. Disproportionality Compared to Prior Decision Point, 2014*

Race (Non-Hispanic) /Ethnicity	% of Total Child Population	% of Children Identified by CPS as Victims	Disp. Rate	% of Children in Foster Care	Disp. Rate	% of Children Entering Foster Care	Disp. Rate	% of Children Exiting Foster Care	Disp. Rate	% of Children Waiting to Be Adopted	Disp. Rate	% of Children Adopted With Public Agency Involvement	Disp. Rate
American Indian/ Alaska Native	0.9%	**1.3%**	**1.5**	2.4%	1.8	**2.3%**	**1.0**	2.1%	0.9	**1.9%**	**0.9**	1.5%	0.8
Asian	4.8%	**0.9%**	**0.2**	0.5%	0.6	**0.6%**	**1.2**	0.7%	1.0	**0.4%**	**0.6**	0.4%	1.0
Black or African-American	13.8%	**22.6%**	**1.6**	24.3%	1.1	**22.4%**	**0.9**	23.2%	1.0	**23.1%**	**1.0**	19.4%	0.8
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	0.2%	**0.2%**	**1.0**	0.2%	0.9	**0.2%**	**1.3**	0.2%	1.0	**0.1%**	**0.5**	0.2%	1.4
Hispanic (of Any Race)	24.4%	**24.0%**	**1.0**	22.5%	0.9	**21.9%**	**1.0**	21.8%	1.0	**23.6%**	**1.1**	22.1%	0.9
White	51.9%	**46.4%**	**0.9**	43.4%	0.9	**46.1%**	**1.1**	45.6%	1.0	**43.2%**	**0.9**	48.5%	1.1
Two or More Races	4.1%	**4.7%**	**1.1**	6.8%	1.5	**6.4%**	**0.9**	6.5%	1.0	**7.7%**	**1.2**	8.0%	1.0

From Child Welfare Information Gateway at https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue-briefs/racial-disproportionality/

Iowa's Data

Iowa – Child Population & Poverty by Race



The Rise & Fall of Foster Care

1986-1999: Foster care population more than DOUBLED to 567,000

Attributed to:

- **Urban crack cocaine epidemic; Increased methamphetamine use**
- **Disparate federal drug sentencing guidelines**

1999-2012: foster care population declined by 443,000

Attributed to:

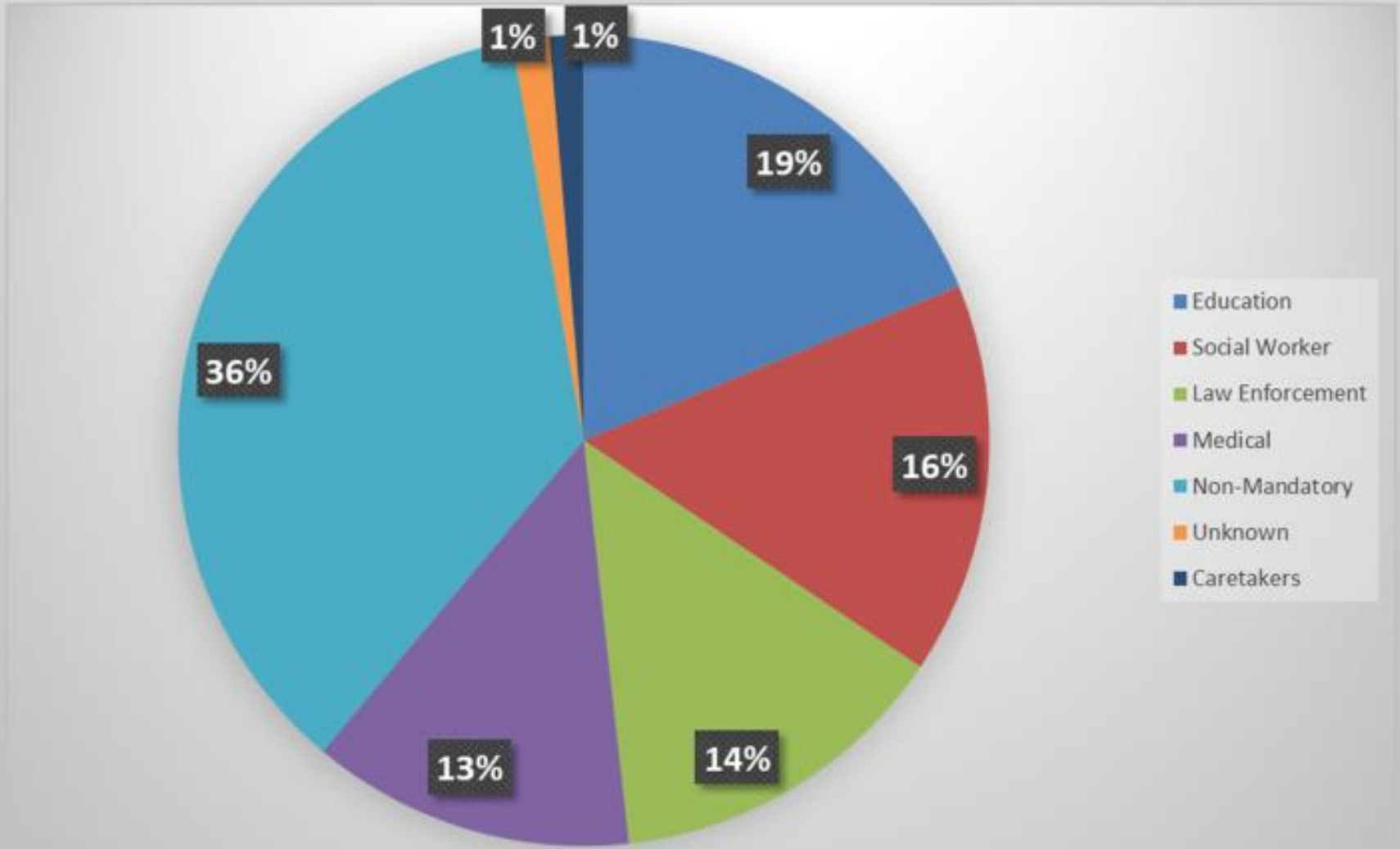
- **Numerous states making reduction a policy goal;**
- **Federal policy support for achieving timely permanency**

2012-2018: Since the low in 2012 of 397,000 the number has increased, to 437,000 in 2018

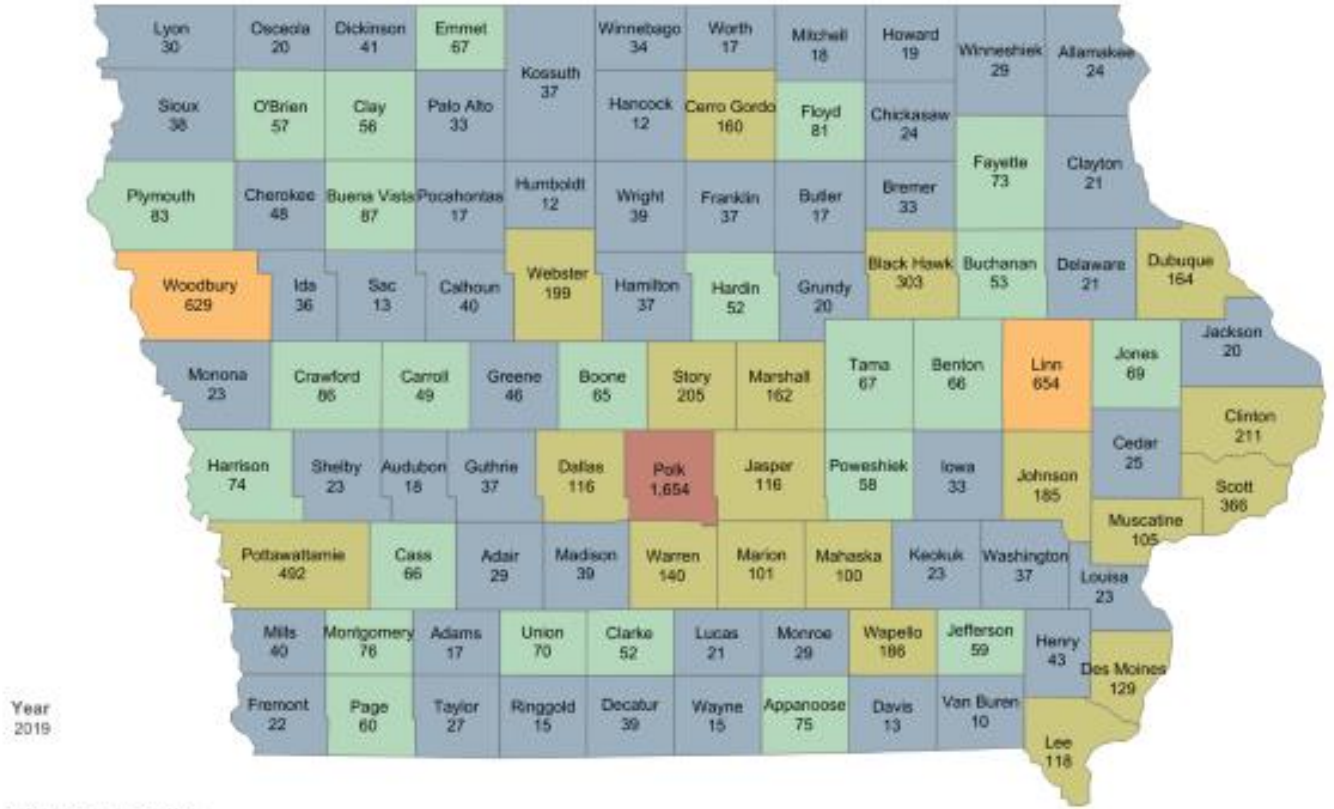
Attributed to:

- **more parents are struggling with opioids and other drugs;**
- **more judges have reservations about juvenile justice facilities and make referrals to child welfare instead; and**
- **many child welfare agencies are grappling with inadequate decision-making practices.**

Child Abuse Intake Calls by Reporter Type

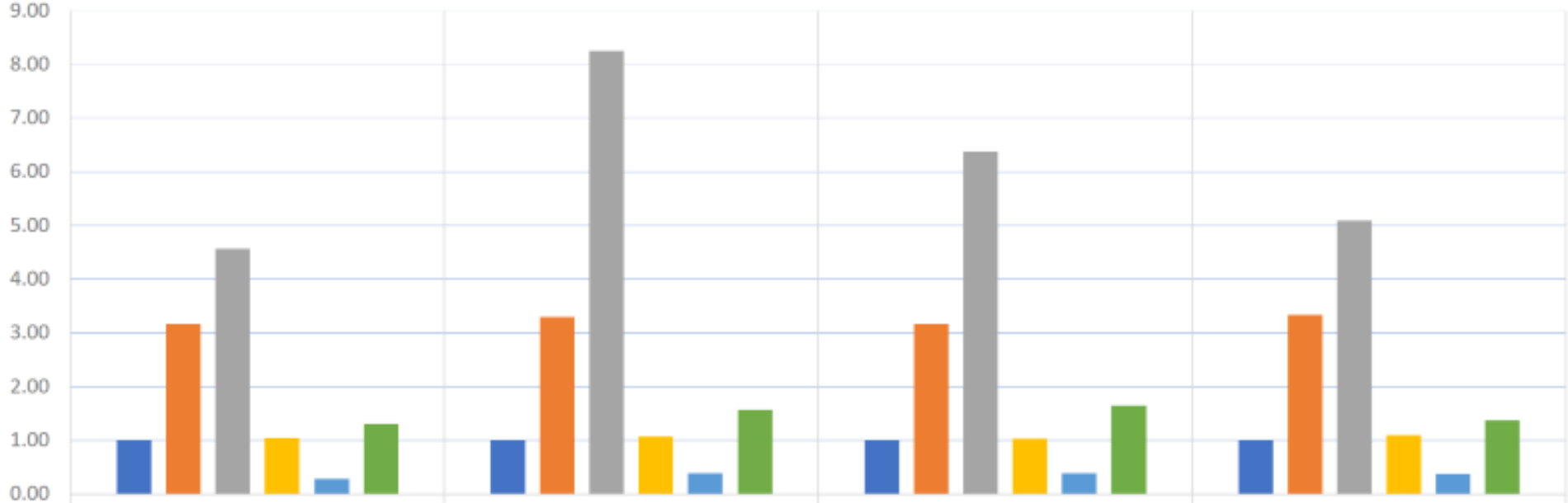


Children in Foster Care by County: 2019



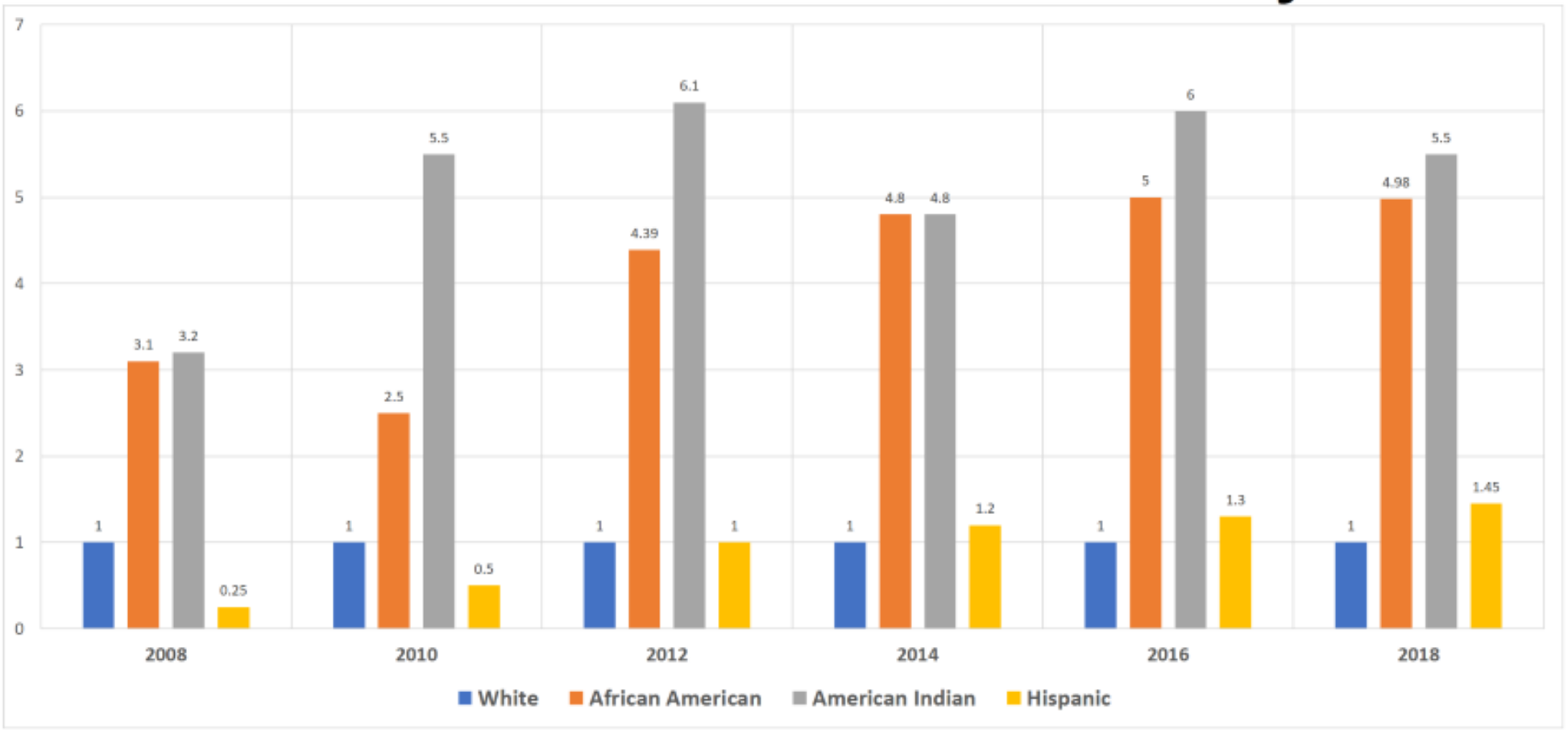
Source agency name: Iowa Department of Human Services, Division of Results Based Accountability
Source agency program: Bureau of Research and Statistics
Source agency contact: (515) 281-5232
Source agency release date: April, 2020
Date added to State Data Center Web site: April 15, 2020
State Data Center contact information: State Library of Iowa, State Data Center Program, http://www.iowadatacenter.org 800-248-4483, census@iowa.gov

2019 Disparity Ratio by DHS Decision Points



	Victims of Substantiated Maltreatment	Children Entering Care	Children in Care	Children Exiting Care
White	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
African American	3.16	3.30	3.17	3.33
American Indian	4.57	8.25	6.37	5.09
Hispanic	1.04	1.07	1.03	1.09
Asian	0.28	0.38	0.39	0.37
Multirace	1.31	1.56	1.64	1.37

Disparity Ratios of Children Transitioning Out of Foster Care without Permanency

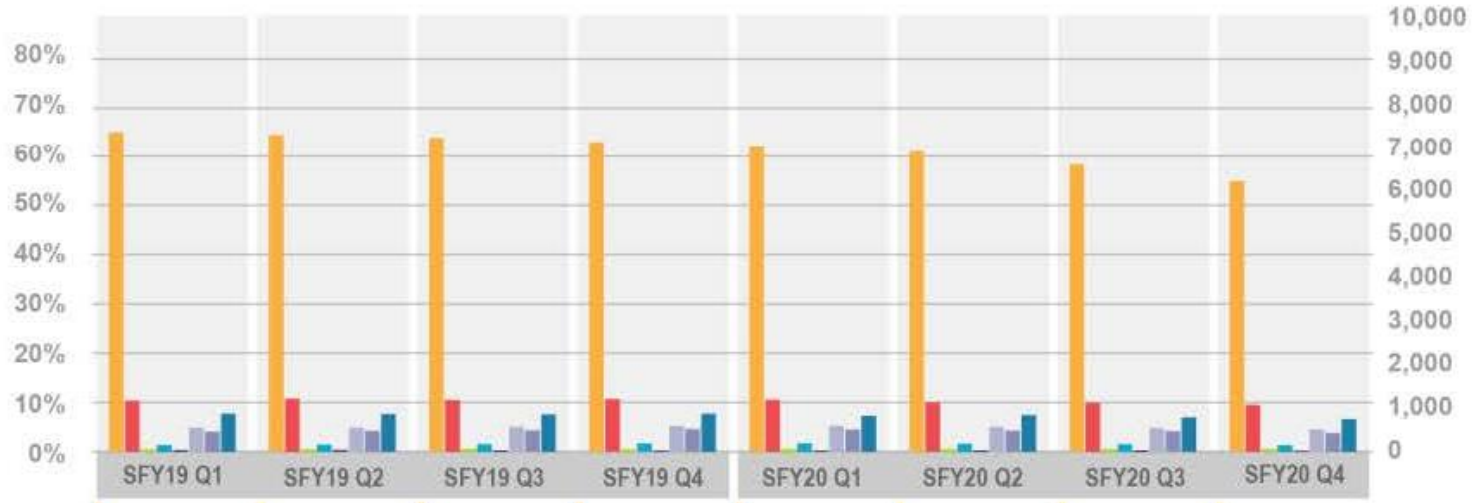


FAMILES FIRST LEGISLATION

Race

Source: Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)

**Race and Ethnicity are counted differently where children reporting as Hispanic/Latinx are included under Race as "White" but categorized under Ethnicity as "Hispanic or Latinx". DHS has separated the ethnic category below the "State" data in the table.*

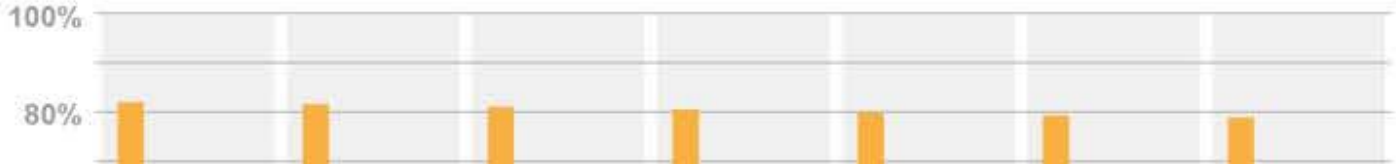


	SFY19 Q1	SFY19 Q2	SFY19 Q3	SFY19 Q4	SFY20 Q1	SFY20 Q2	SFY20 Q3	SFY20 Q4
White	6,510 (75%)	6,453 (74%)	6,395 (74%)	6,309 (73%)	6,211 (73%)	6,098 (74%)	5,833 (73%)	5,490 (74%)
Black or African-American	1,035 (12%)	1,073 (12%)	1,050 (12%)	1,065 (12%)	1,052 (12%)	1,004 (12%)	990 (12%)	950 (13%)
Asian	48 (1%)	51 (1%)	52 (1%)	51 (1%)	52 (1%)	53 (1%)	51 (1%)	52 (1%)
Native Ameican & Alaska Native	133 (2%)	142 (2%)	151 (2%)	168 (2%)	168 (2%)	160 (2%)	150 (2%)	129 (2%)
Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander	34 (0%)	38 (0%)	26 (0%)	24 (0%)	25 (0%)	30 (0%)	26 (0%)	21 (0%)
Two or more races	488 (6%)	489 (6%)	505 (6%)	521 (6%)	527 (6%)	502 (6%)	481 (6%)	452 (6%)
Unknown	407 (5%)	424 (5%)	434 (5%)	457 (5%)	451 (5%)	429 (5%)	417 (5%)	375 (5%)
State	8,655	8,670	8,613	8,601	8,486	8,276	7,948	7,469
Hispanic	774 (9%)	763 (9%)	754 (9%)	772 (8%)	726 (9%)	743 (9%)	696 (9%)	662 (9%)

FAMILES FIRST LEGISLATION

Iowa Population by Ethnicity Age 0-17

Source: Woods and Poole



	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
White	81.94%	81.56%	81.02%	80.52%	79.89%	79.25%	78.85%
Black or African-American	5.84%	5.95%	6.17%	6.36%	6.68%	6.98%	7.19%
Native Ameican	.42%	.41%	.41%	.41%	.41%	.41%	.42%
Asian	2.23%	2.45%	2.64%	2.78%	2.97%	3.04%	3.10%
Hispanic or Latinx	9.57%	9.64%	9.75%	9.93%	10.04%	10.32%	10.43%

What the System Can Do?

- Recruit Foster and Adoptive Parents reflected in the racial and ethnic diversity of the children who need out of home placement
- Evidenced Based Prevention and Early Intervention
- In-Home Based Service Programs for parents or expectant parents in certain risk categories to provide support, education and resources for families who may be struggling.
- Utilize a Family Preservation Model that combines both direct practice and system change interventions with trauma-informed and family focused case management, culturally competent assessments, team decision making and other early intervention meetings, referrals and supports.
- Ensure the availability and accessibility to Culturally Competent Services

What can you do?

- Acknowledge to clients of color that you understand that race is a factor in the child welfare system, that you are aware to that fact, know how to handle disparity issues and be appreciative of the client being honest with you regarding their feelings.
- Focus on the importance of placing children of color with relatives and kin whenever possible.
- If not possible and a cross-placement occurs, be knowledgeable about the factors that come into play.
- When possible have a cultural liaison assigned to assist the cross-racial placement.
- Ensure DHS provides your client with culturally competent services, including Family Team Meeting facilitators
- Be respectful of your client's culture and when possible, advocate for their customs, rituals and celebrations to be honored together as a family.