



Illinois Bias Free Child Removal Pilot Program Overview

Workshop Block I – 10:15 AM-
11:30 AM



Partnering to build brighter futures



Illinois
Collaboration
on Youth

Illinois Department of
DCFS
Children & Family Services

PRESENTERS:

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Practice, DCFS





Agenda

- History of Child Welfare Policy & Practices
- Why Race Matters in Child Welfare – National and State Data Points
- Review of IL Racial Disproportionality Data
- Overview of Nassau County, NY Blind Removal Pilot
- What is Public Act 102-1097 – IL Bias Free Child Removal Pilot
- Implementation of Bias Free Child Removal Pilot



History of Child Welfare Policy & Practices



Historically, black people were enslaved and the children of black parents were considered property of their enslavers

In the 1990's, the term “welfare queen” was a stereotype created to represent black mothers as only having children to exploit white taxpayers

Root causes of maltreatment have not been consistently addressed, perpetuating family separation & recapitulating structural racism and intergenerational trauma

Child welfare has been **reactive**—responding to allegations of maltreatment with investigations & foster care

Policy Milestones

Mother's Pensions

for poor single mothers recognized the importance of financial supports to address economic hardship & promote family stability. However, these supports were largely limited to white, widowed mothers.

Flemming Rule (FR)

implemented in response to states denying ADC benefits to families, mostly Black, because their homes were deemed "unsuitable." It required states to either 1) provide supports to these families OR 2) remove the children and place them in foster care.

CAPTA

requires state mandated reporting laws but does not include standard guidelines, training, or opportunities for reporters to explore alternative family support options. This has resulted in high reporting rates by teachers, the majority of which are unsubstantiated.

1935

1961

2018

Early 1900s

1960

1974

Social Security Act

bifurcates supports to families by nesting Aid to Dependent Children (ADC, later AFDC) under the Social Security Administration but social services under the Children's Bureau.

Social Security Act Amendments

establish AFDC-FC (later title IV-E) as an open-ended entitlement for foster care services (part 2 of FR) without analogous funding for family support services (part 1 of FR)

Family First Prevention Services Act

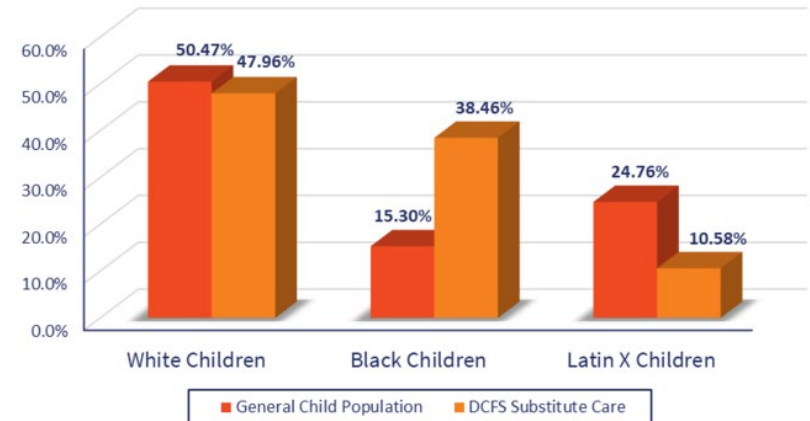
does not explicitly include economic & concrete supports and focuses on treating the parent or child rather than the context.



Why Race Matters in Child Welfare

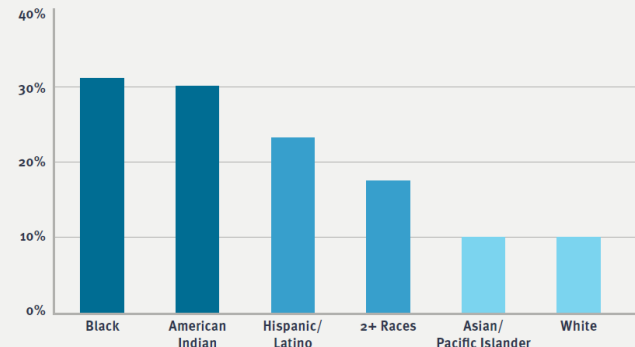
- Historically, child welfare has played an oppressive role in monitoring, regulating and punishing poor families and Black, brown and indigenous families.
- The mass removal of black children from their families has been and remains a concern.
- Children and families of color are disproportionately represented in child welfare systems across the United States.

Racial Disproportionality - 2022 Data



US Children in Poverty by Racial Category

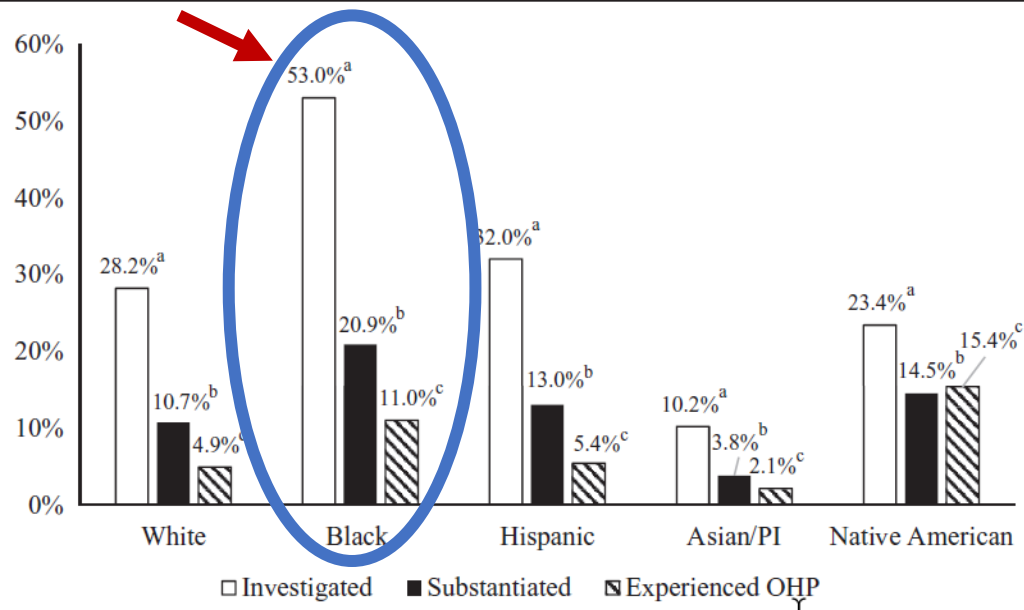
The 2019 share of children under age 18 who live in families with incomes below the federal poverty threshold (e.g., \$25,926 per year for a family of 4).



Source: KIDS COUNT Data Cent. 2020. Children in poverty by race and ethnicity in the United States. Data from U.S. Census Bureau, Am. Community Survey 2019, Annie E. Casey Found. KIDS COUNT Data Cent., Baltimore, MD.

CPS Interventions Are Pervasive: Over Half of All Black Children Experience an Investigation

Lifetime (Birth–18) Incidence of CPS Involvement in the United States by Race/Ethnicity



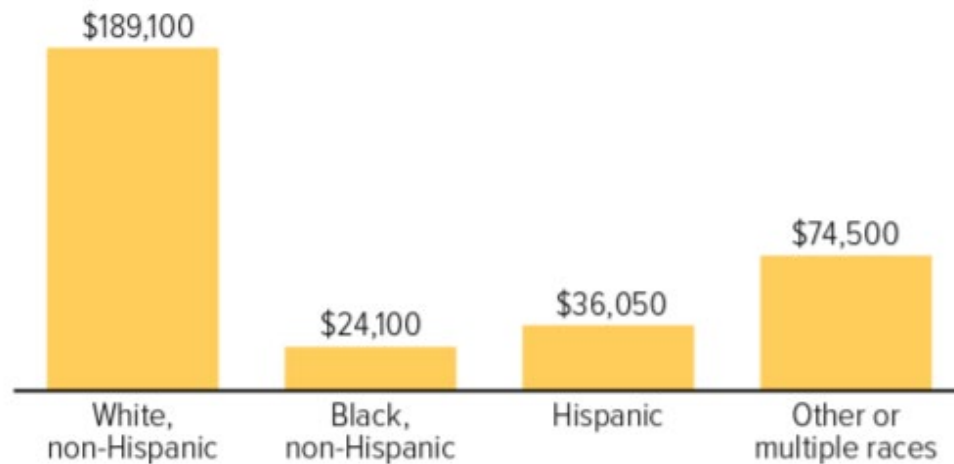
- **37% of all children** and 41% of children in the 20 most populous U.S. counties experience at least one CPS investigation by age 18
- **Almost 3.5 million children** subject to a CPS investigation each year (FFY 2019)
- **1 in every 100** children are estimated to experience a termination of parental rights

(Berger, 2020) (Kim, 2017)
(Edwards, 2021)
(Child Maltreatment 2019)
(Wildeman, 2020)

The Racial Wealth Gap Further Exacerbates the Consequences of Economic Insecurity for Families of Color

White Families Hold 8 Times More Wealth Than Black Families, 5 Times More Than Hispanic Families

Median net worth, in 2019 U.S. dollars



Note: "Other or multiple races" includes all respondents who identified as Asian, American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacifica Islander, other race, and those who reported more than one racial identification. Roughly 69 percent and 23 percent of respondents in this grouping reported more than one racial identification or identified as Asian, respectively.

- Black Americans represent **13%** of the U.S. population, but possess **only 4%** of the nation's household wealth
- The median wealth of young Black families is **\$600**
- Nearly **1 in 5** Black households has **zero or negative net worth**
- Native American households own **\$0.09** for every dollar of wealth held by white households (*as of 2000*)

(Federal Reserve, 2020) (Moss, 2020)
(Prosperity Now, 2020) (Chang, 2010)



Racial Disparities at Decision Points Across Child Welfare Continuum – National Data

Children in maltreatment investigations

- **28%** of all white children by age 18
- **53%** of all Black children by age 18

Children determined to be “victims” of maltreatment

- American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) and Black children are determined to be “victims” of maltreatment at **almost twice** the rate of white children



Racial Disparities at Decision Points Across Child Welfare Continuum – National Data

Children placed in foster care

- Black children: 14% of general child population but 23% of children in foster care
- AIAN children: 1% of general child population but 2% of children in foster care

Children who experience termination of parental rights

- Compared to white children, AIAN children are **2.7 times** more likely and Black children are **2.4 times** more likely to experience termination of both parents' rights



Racial Disproportionality Index (RDI)

What is RDI?

- RDI the percentage of children in a racial or ethnic group involved in some part of the child welfare system divided by the percentage of children in a relevant base population

% of children in a racial group ÷ relevant population

RDI Calculations

- Absolute RDI

% of children in a racial group ÷ general population

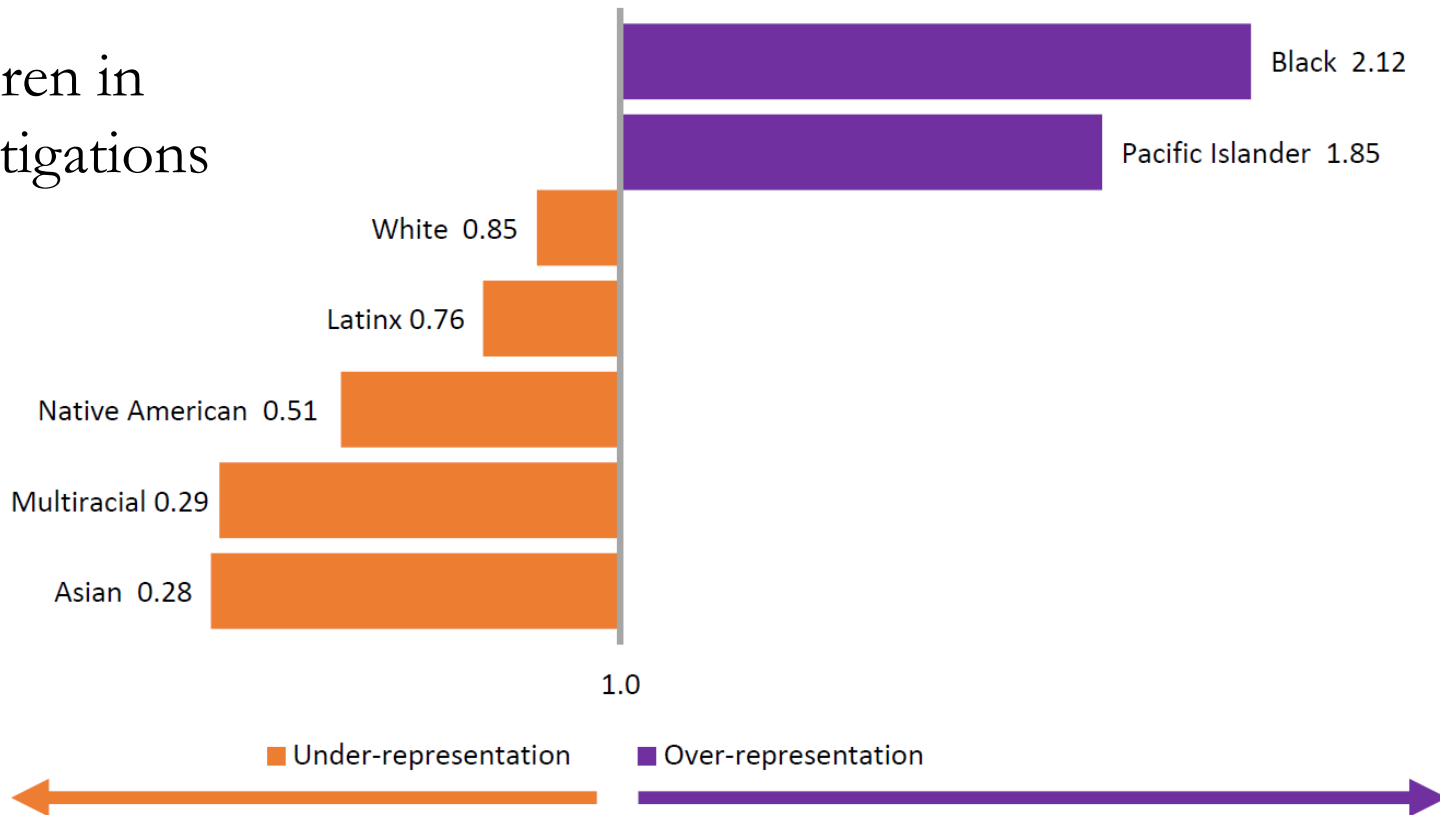
- Relative RDI

% of children in a racial group at PC ÷ all children investigated



Illinois Racial Disproportionality Data - 2022

Children in Investigations

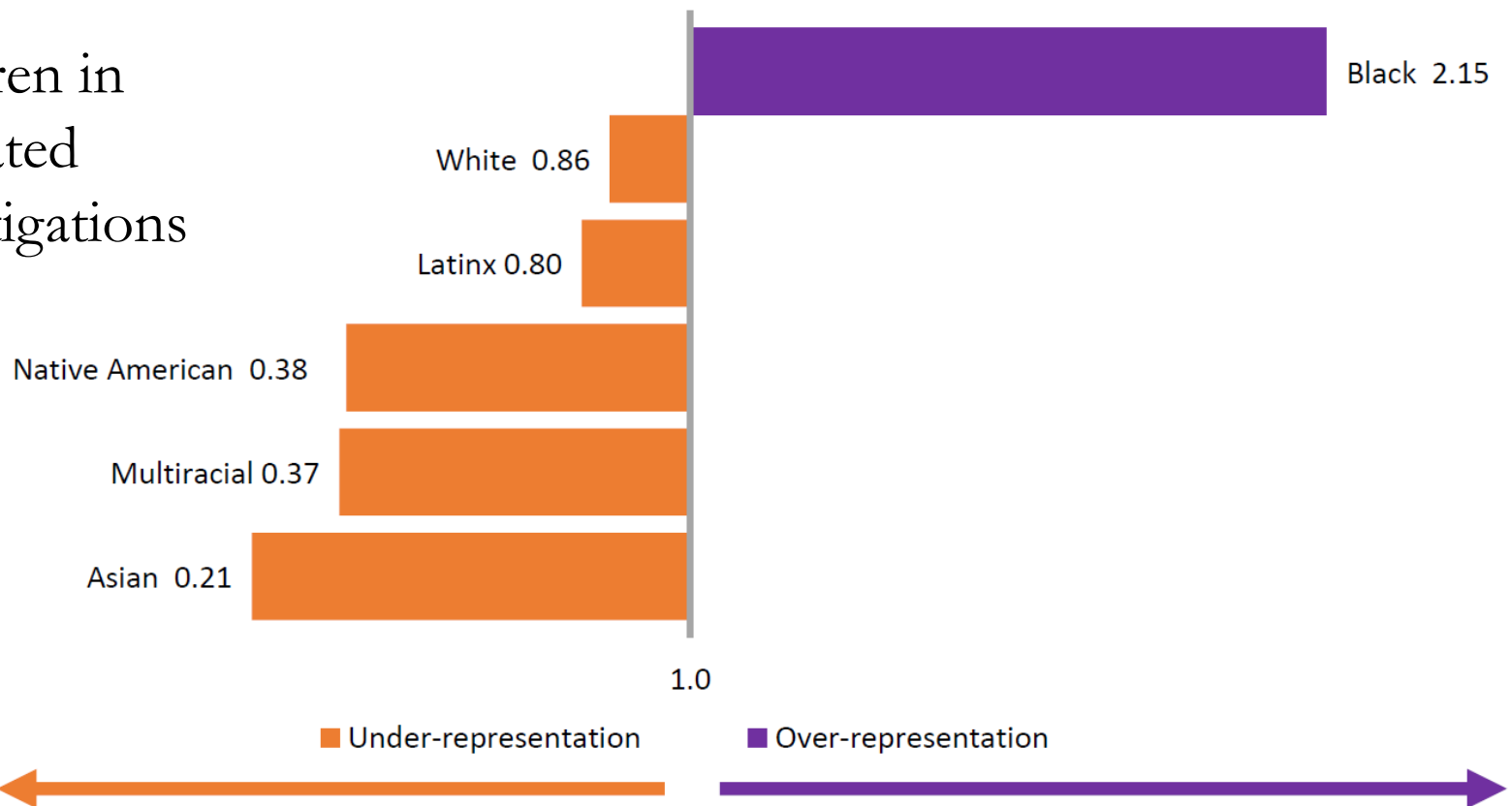


Fuller et. al., (2022)



Illinois Racial Disproportionality Data - 2022

Children in
Indicated
Investigations

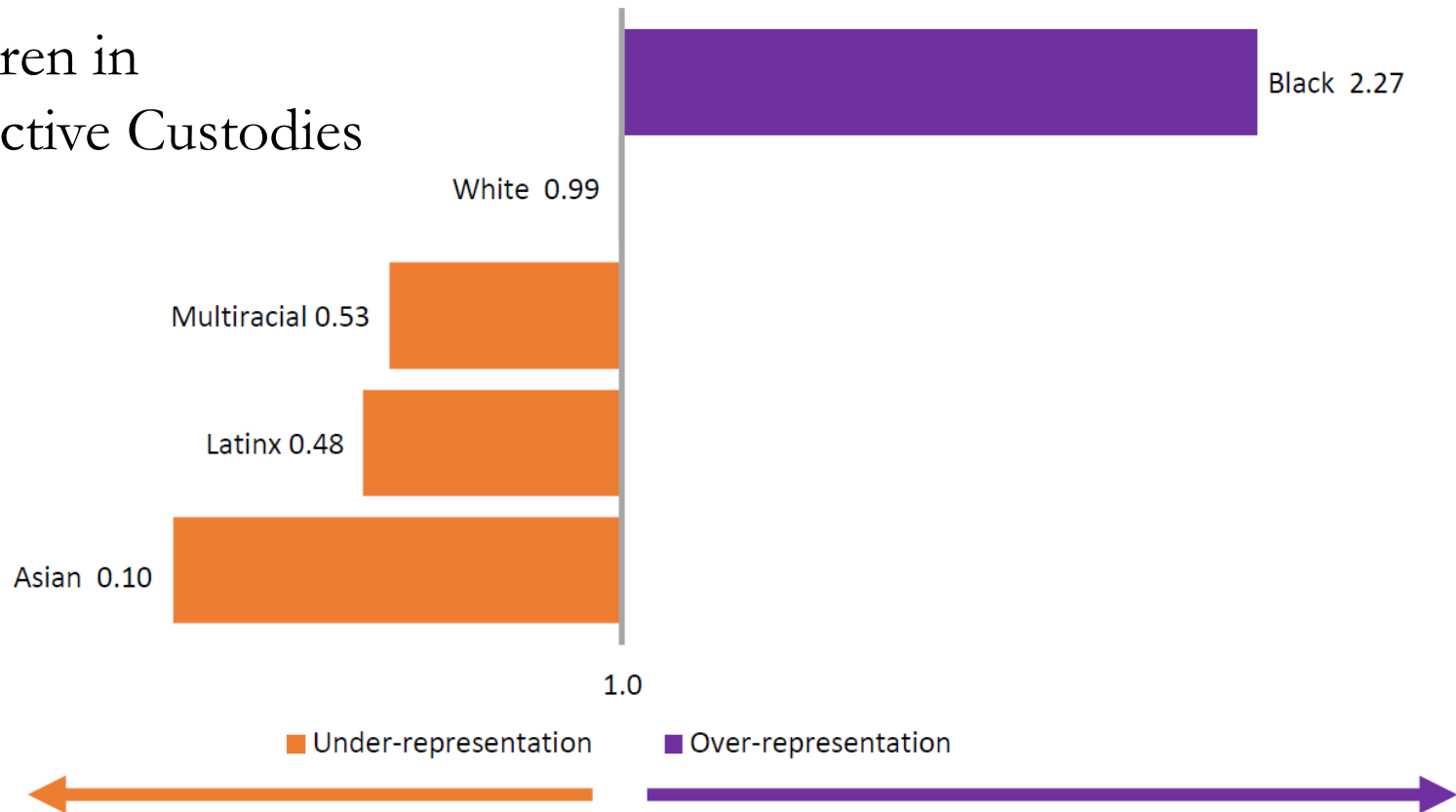


Fuller et. al., (2022)



Illinois Racial Disproportionality Data - 2022

Children in Protective Custodies

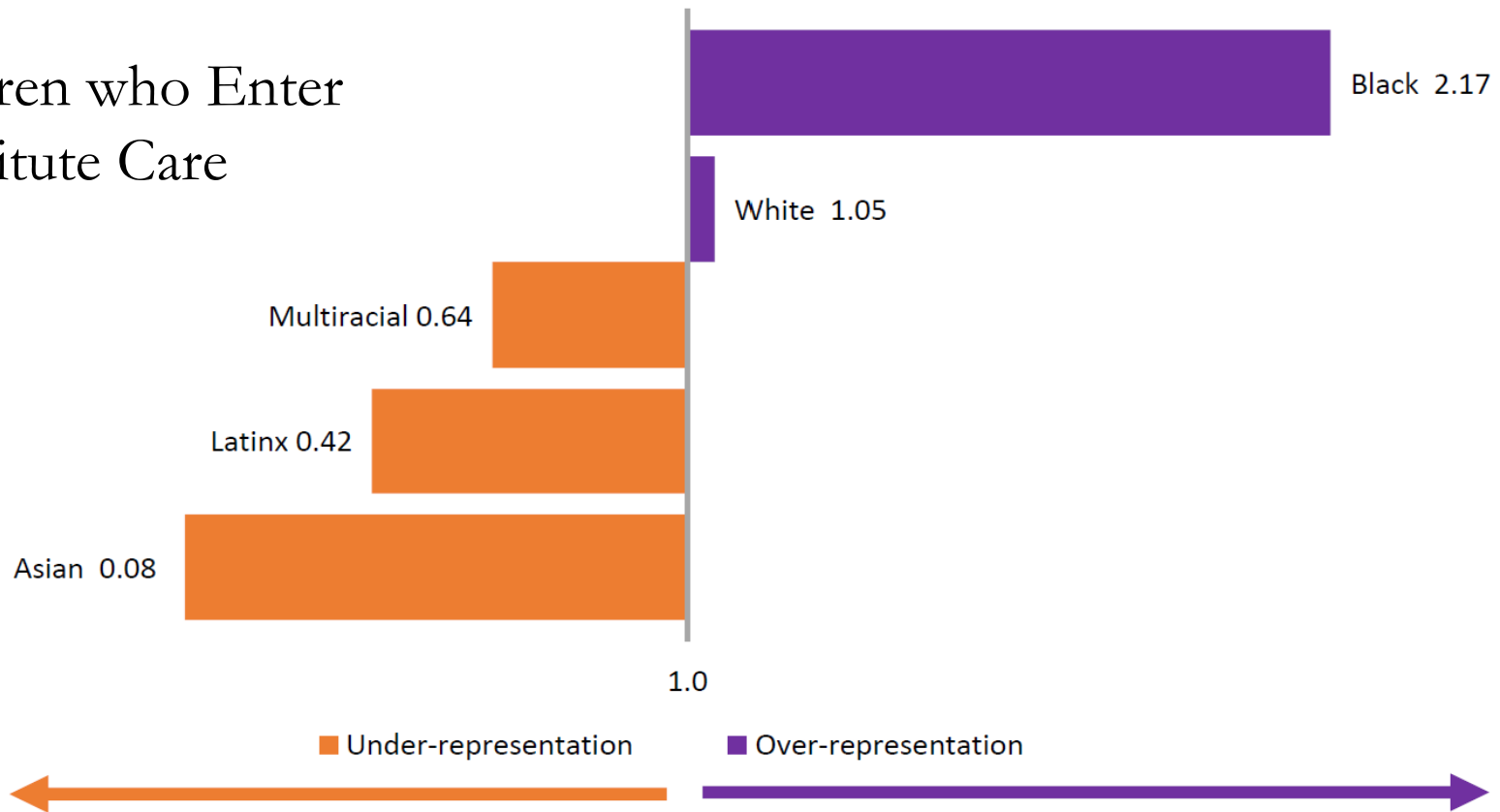


Fuller et. al., (2022)



Illinois Racial Disproportionality Data - 2022

Children who Enter Substitute Care

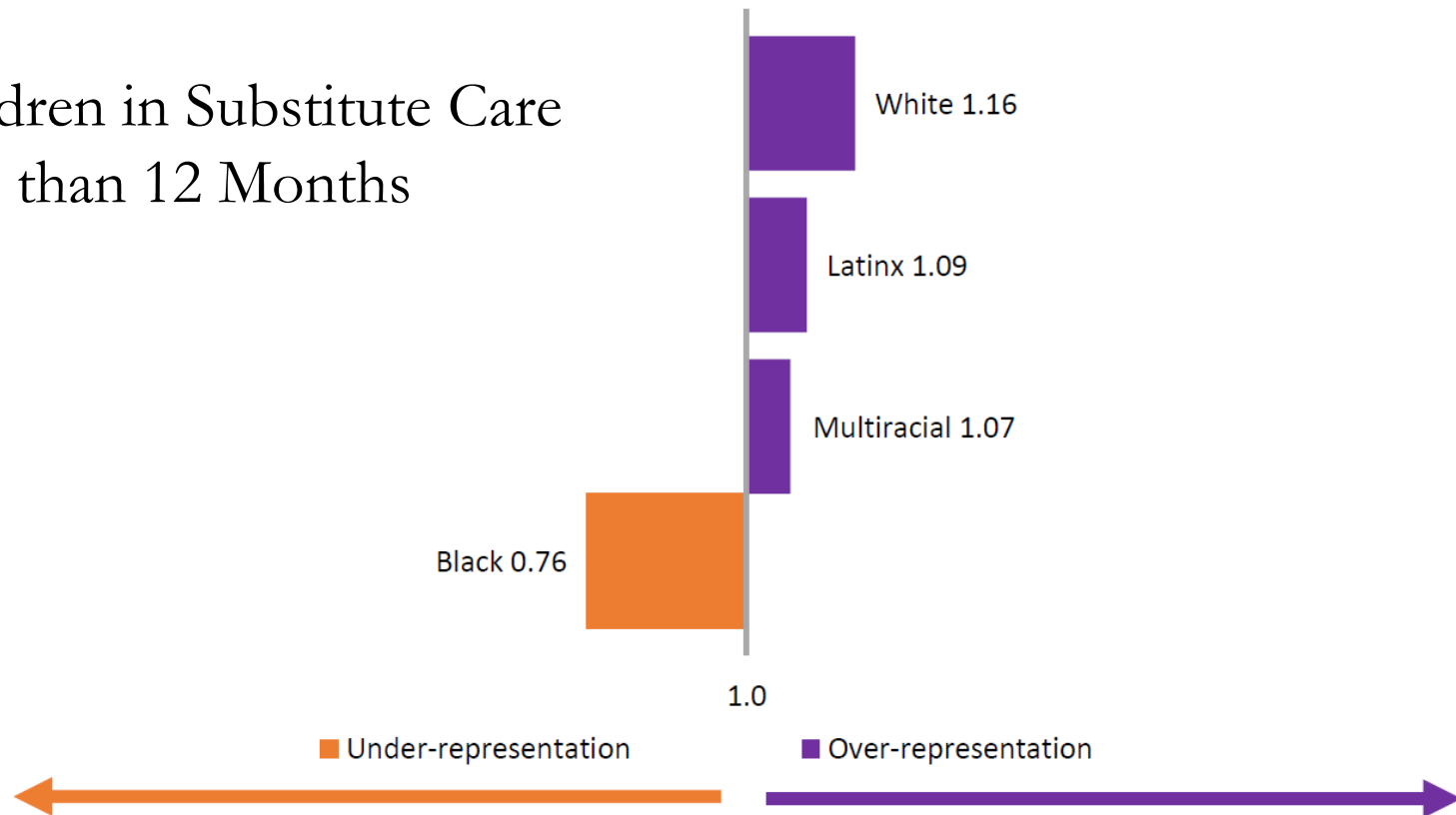


Fuller et. al., (2022)



Illinois Racial Disproportionality Data - 2022

Children in Substitute Care Less than 12 Months

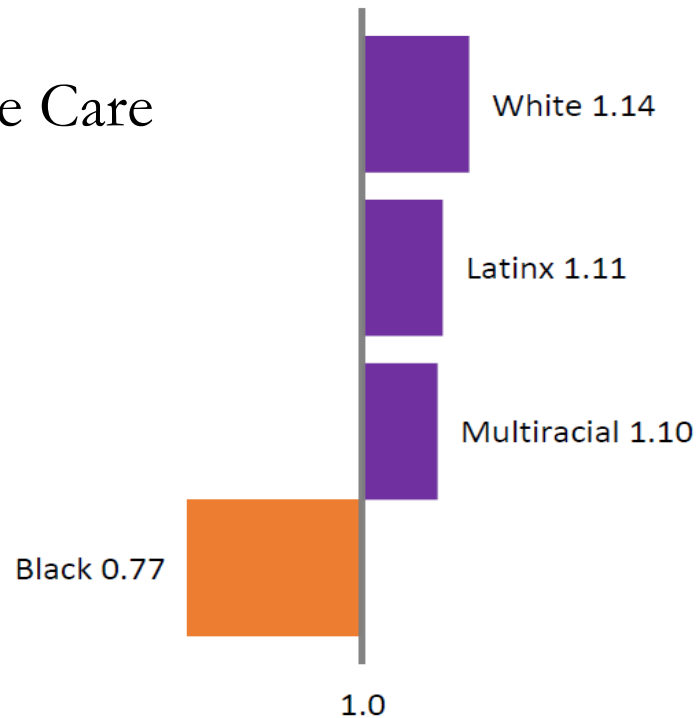


Fuller et. al., (2022)



Illinois Racial Disproportionality Data - 2022

Children in Substitute Care 12 – 23 Months



Under-representation

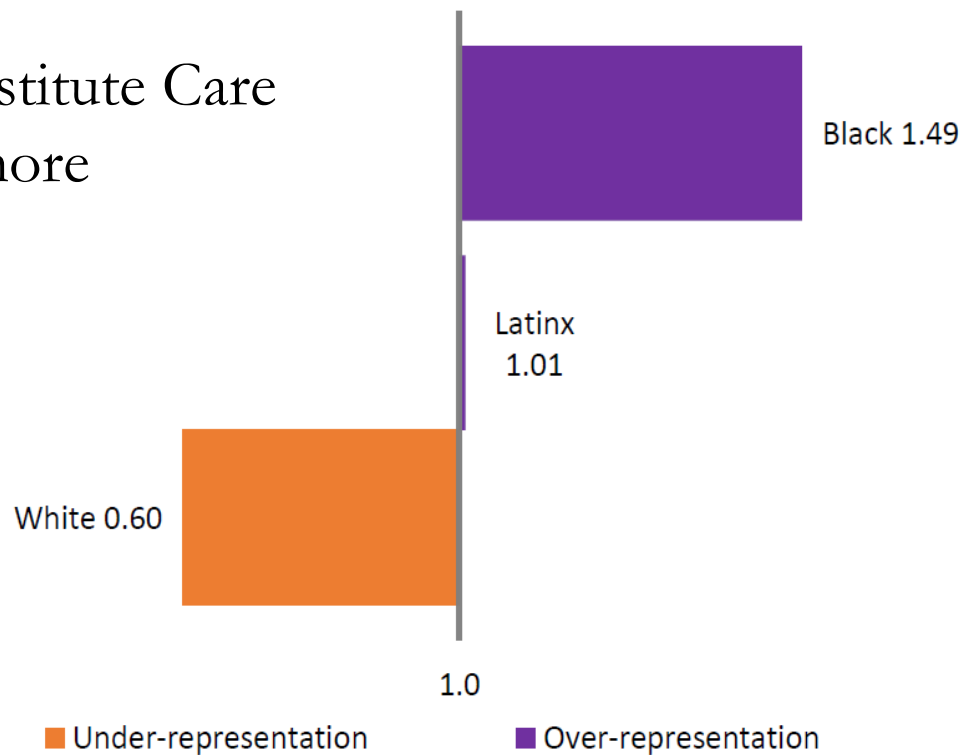
Over-representation

Fuller et. al., (2022)



Illinois Racial Disproportionality Data - 2022

Children in Substitute Care
60 Months or more



Fuller et. al., (2022)



Illinois Racial Disproportionality Data - 2022

Children in Transracial Traditional Foster Care Homes

Race	Children in Foster Homes	Placements with Caregiver Race Known	Children in Same Race Foster Homes	Children in Transracial Foster Homes ¹
Asian	15	14	0 (0%)	14 (100%)
Black/ African American	2,841	2,755	1,558 (56.6%)	1,170 (42.5%)
Native American/ Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	24	20	6 (30.0%)	14 (70%)
White	3,398	3,251	2,788 (85.8%)	463 (14.1%)
Unknown	21	18	-	-
Total	6,299	6,042	4,352 (72.0%)	1,661 (27.5%)
1. Cases, where the caregivers' or children's race were unknown, were excluded from the definition of transracial foster homes for this table and associated analysis.			Fox & LaSota, (2023)	



DCFS Racial Equity Efforts

Internal

- All Staff Implicit Bias Training
- Race Equity Agency Assessment
- Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)
- Bias Free Removal Pilot

External

- University Partnerships
- Community Action Teams
- Implicit Bias Module in Mandated Reporter Training
- Collaboration with Sister State Agencies



Nassau County Blind Removal Pilot

Nassau County (N.Y.) Child and Family Services introduced a blinding practice into its child welfare removal meetings and, **within five years, the number of Black children removed from their families was reduced considerably**, representing the most significant decrease in racial disproportionality within the county system ever.



Nassau County Blind Removal Pilot

- In response to troubling data, child welfare staff in Nassau County decided to focus on the removal of children decision point.
- Staff recognized that removal committee meetings — where decisions are made about whether to remove a child from his/her home — offered a key opportunity to address the impact of bias not just in regard to race and ethnicity, but also against families that had frequent or multigenerational involvement in the child welfare system.



Nassau County Blind Removal Pilot

- In Nassau County, investigative staff traditionally present case details to a committee made up of supervisors, managers, and an attorney before the decision is made to remove a child from his or her home. After hearing the details, participating staff evaluate the facts of the case, including whether there is evidence of high risk to determine if safety is an imminent concern. The committee then makes a recommendation about whether the child should be removed from the home.



Nassau County Blind Removal Pilot

- Blind removal meetings follow the same practice but with a key difference:
 - Staff de-identify the case file and present details without any mention of demographic information that may illicit implicit bias, including removing names, races, ethnicities, and addresses.
 - In addition to investigative staff, home-finding staff also are made aware of the family's demographics and neighborhood information so they can immediately begin locating a kinship or community-based placement if a decision to remove is made.



Nassau County Blind Removal Pilot Outcomes

- According to lead researcher, Jessica Pryce Director of the Florida Institute for Child Welfare, the implementation of the Nassau County Blind removal pilot led to a decrease in the percentage of Black children removed from their homes – From 57% to 21%
- Data from the Nassau County pilot has been variable over the years. Sometimes bouncing from 62% removal in 2014 to 35% in 2016. Despite this inconsistency, the pilot has shown some success in impacting disproportionality.
- In 2020, New York officials expanded a version of this model statewide.
 - Counties in Michigan and California are also piloting blind removals
 - Outcomes are mixed and there is not enough sufficient evidence to suggest this will have an overall impact on disproportionality



What is Public Act 102-1097 – IL Bias Free Child Removal Pilot

- Public Act 102-1097 requires IL DCFS to develop and implement a three-year bias-free child removal pilot no later than January 1, 2024.
- The pilot will be in three DCFS Field Offices located in Champaign County, DuPage County and Williamson County.



What is Public Act 102-1097 – IL Bias Free Child Removal Pilot

- The law establishes a steering committee who has the responsibility to:
 - a. Create a timeline for when the Bias-Free Case Review Team shall convene to include holidays, weekends and after normal business hours.
 - b. Establish decision-making protocols for the following:
 - i. The criteria of the investigation to be presented before the Review Team - What constitutes a child protection investigation meeting or not meeting the criteria to be presented?
 - ii. Who decides to bring the investigation to the Review Team?
 - c. How and when the child protection investigator or supervisor shall present the investigation to the Bias-Free Case Review Team which is required to be redacted of all demographic and identifiable information from the case notes, intake summary and investigatory notes and this process must not be completed by the child protection investigator or supervisor
 - i. Information that must be redacted – names, political affiliation, marital status, income level, education level all references to the neighborhood or county of the parent's address, as well as race & ethnicity, sexual orientation/gender identity of child and parents, religious affiliations or beliefs of child and parents, disability status of parent, (except when the allegations require thoughtful consideration pertaining to the family's culture, ethnicity or religion, disability status or LGBTQ statue or gender identity of the child),
 - d. Develop a tool or rubric for the Review Team to fully document the decision-making process and what led to the final decision



What is Public Act 102-1097 – IL Bias Free Child Removal Pilot

- Additionally, the steering committee must:
 - Appoint Members for the Bias-Free Child Removal Advisory Board
 - Develop a written plan for the pilot program that is adopted by a unanimous vote.
 - Shall have the authority to include additional parameters in developing the pilot as necessary



What is Public Act 102-1097 – IL Bias Free Child Removal Pilot

- Bias-Free Case Review Team – consisting of a Child Protection Supervisor, an Area Administrator and a Regional Administrator from an area outside the pilot areas to serve as permanent members for each pilot county. Must also include 4 alternate Review Team Members to fill in if a permanent Review Team member is unable to attend meetings.
 - Will review removal decisions absent specific demographic and identifiable information determine whether removal of the child is necessary to avoid imminent risk to the child's safety, health and well-being.
 - Shall decide on whether the child's removal from the home should be upheld or if the child should be returned home with the final decision to be submitted in writing
 - If the removal is identified as unwarranted the Review Team will make appropriate recommendations to ensure the child safety and well-being including but not limited to voluntary or court-ordered Intact Family Services



What is Public Act 102-1097 – IL Bias Free Child Removal Pilot

- Bias-Free Child Removal Advisory Board to include up to 2 of the following per pilot area and possess the knowledge and understanding of the Dept's policies, rules and procedures:
 - Community-based partners from domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health and housing fields
 - Public or private university partners
 - Organization that advocates on behalf of parents and families
 - Organization that legally represents children involved in Foster Care during the court process
 - Statewide organization that advocates on behalf of community-based services for children and families
 - Parent with lived expertise in the child welfare system
 - Former Youth-in-care with lived expertise in the child welfare system
 - Organization that represents children in legal abuse & neglect proceedings
 - Will monitor and oversee the Bias-Free Case Review Team
 - Will be present with the Bias-Free Review Team for all case reviews
 - Will not be responsible for any decision making
- Training Committee



What is Public Act 102-1097 – Cases not included in the pilot

Cases where PC was taken by law enforcement or a medical professional

Cases that involve a forensic interview by CPD or law enforcement

Cases that include photos of injuries

Any case where the court has decided on the issue of custody



Report to the General Assembly

- First evaluation report due on January 1, 2025, and subsequently each year following for 3 years ending January 1, 2027. The report should detail the implementation and providing an analysis of the pilot's effect and impact on removal rates of BIPOC children.



Implementation of Bias-Free Child Removal Pilot



**January 2024 –
Pilot
Implementation**



**October 31, 2023
– Pre-
Implementation**

Conduct Pilot Testing
Communication to All
Staff



**August 1 – 31,
2023 – Pilot
Trainings to Staff**

Implicit Bias
DEI
Bias Free Removal



**June 30, 2023 –
Appointments of
Review Team and
Advisory Board**



**April 30, 2023 –
Pilot Program
Completed and
submitted for
Approval**



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Questions???

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