

Racial Disproportionality and Disparity for Youth in Foster Care in Indiana

Steven M. Koch, PhD¹, Crystal L. Cederna-Meko, PsyD², Jacqueline Remondet Wall, PhD³



¹Indiana University School of Medicine; ²Hurley Medical Center; ³University of Indianapolis

Abstract

This poster examines racial disproportionality and disparity for youth who were in placed in residential care, foster care and transitional living programs. Data was obtained from a multi-year, ongoing outcome project of private agencies providing services across the state. While disproportionality is noted, a majority of the outcomes and risk factors are equivalent between Black and White youth, suggesting that services are being provided to meet individual needs regardless of ethnicity and known risk factors.

Research Questions

- ✓ Are Black youth disproportionately placed?
- ✓ Are outcomes disparate between Black and White youth?
- ✓ Are there differences between Black and White youth for other known risk factors at intake that could also account for differences?

Method

Disproportionality is defined as a rate of placement by ethnicity that is different than that found in the general population (10.4% Black in Indiana).

Disparity is defined as an outcome or risk factor rate that is significantly different between groups of White and Black youth.

Previous analyses of youth in care from 1999 to 2002, from the IARCCA Outcome Measures Project (*the Project*), indicated that a disproportionate number of Black youth were placed into the various program types. Despite the disproportionality found, examination of outcomes found limited disparity between the two groups (Wall & Koch, 2007).

For this poster, analyses were conducted using a sample from *the Project* data for youth placed in care between 2003 and 2005 for the following program types:

- TL Transitional living
- FC Foster care
- RC-P Residential care using public schools
- RC-O Residential care using on-grounds schools
- RC-L Residential locked and staff-secure

For categorical data, chi-square analyses were conducted. For interval data, T-tests were conducted. Level of significance was identified *a priori* at .01.

Disproportionality

A national study (The Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2004) assessed disproportionality for each of the 50 states. They identified Indiana as 1 of 16 states with "Extreme Disproportion." However, their study examined youth in out-of-home care aggregately, and not by varying types of out-of-home placements. Youth in care in Indiana between 2003 and 2005 (below) indicated disproportionate representation of Black youth for all five program types; however, the identified rates are lower than that reported in the national study.

Program	Sample Size	% Black in Care	Rate	Category
TL	318	32.4%	3.12	High
FC	1,359	28.4%	2.73	High
RC-P	341	19.1%	1.84	Moderate
RC-O	1,326	19.9%	1.91	Moderate
RC-L	321	23.1%	2.22	Moderate

Disparity in Outcomes

Outcomes were examined from the following areas: clinical; functional; placement; and consumer satisfaction. For youth across the program types, most analyses were not significantly different.

Outcomes for Black & White Youth at Program Admission

	TL	FC	RC-P	RC-O	RC-L
Clinical Outcomes					
Global Assessment of Functioning					
Child Problem Checklist					
Family Risk Scales – Parent Centered	n/a				
Family Problem Checklist	n/a		##		
Functional Outcomes					
Education at Discharge		@@			
Employment at Discharge				@	
No New Court at Follow-up					
No New Abuse of Youth at Follow-up					
No New Abuse in Home at Follow-up		@@			
Placement Outcomes					
Length of Stay	##	@@			
Less or Similarly Restrictive Placement					
Permanency Plan Met				@	
Consumer Satisfaction Outcomes					
Child					
Parent / Guardian					
Referral Source					

Key:
 n/a This data not collected for TL
 # p < .01 Black youth greater than White youth
 @ p < .01 White youth greater than Black youth
 ## p < .001 Black youth greater than White youth
 @@ p < .001 White youth greater than Black youth

Disparity in Risk Factors

Risk factors were examined from the following areas: reported or suspected maltreatment history; child-specific factors; parent-specific factors' and court classification / adjudication status. For youth across all the program types, most risk factors were not present in significantly different proportions. However, for youth in certain programs (e.g., FC) and for certain factors across program types (e.g., psychotropic medication), different rates were obtained.

Disparate Risks found for Black & White Youth at Program Admission

	TL	FC	RC-P	RC-O	RC-L
Maltreatment History					
Neglect					
Physical Abuse					
Sexual Abuse		@@			
Witness Domestic Violence		@@			
Child-Specific Factors					
Have children	##				
Psychotropic Medication	@@	@@		@@	@
Special Education		@@			
Parent-Specific Factors					
Parent Substance Abuse					
Parent Incarceration					
Single Parent		##	#	##	##
Parent Rights Terminated			#		
Classification / Adjudication					
CHINS				##	#
Delinquent	@	@@		@	

Key:
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