

To Get Ready for Today's Session, We Invite You to ...

Stay Engaged

- Am I focused and ready to be present for today's discussion?

Stay Open to New Ideas

- Am I ready to listen to different perspectives, expertise, and knowledge?

Stay Respectful

- Am I committed to pause and reflect before adding or responding to comments in the chat?

Sit With Discomfort

- Discussing race and equity can be difficult. Am I ready to be comfortable with being uncomfortable?

Source: Adapted from New York City Administration for Children's Services. (2020). Equity Checklist.

Thank you for joining us today!

We invite you to share your reflections in the chat during the session.

We will begin shortly.



Understanding the Past to Build a New Future: Advancing Racial Equity for Children, Youth, and Families



**Reiko Boyd | Sade Daniels | Louie Gasper
Jasmine Hayes | Robert Matthews | Sandra White Hawk**



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Understanding the Past to Build a New Future: Advancing Racial Equity for Children, Youth, and Families



Jasmine Hayes



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Understanding the Past to Build a New Future: Advancing Racial Equity for Children, Youth, and Families



Louie Gasper



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Session Learning Objectives

Learn about the **impact of historical racism in child welfare systems.**

Examine data that shows the **current context of structural racism.**

Identify **strategies** that child welfare professionals and agencies can take to **address racial inequities.**

Welcome and Blessing



Sandra White Hawk



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Exploring Historical Foundations of Child Welfare



Louie Gasper | Sandra White Hawk



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History of Child Welfare

The child welfare system **developed** as a result of the needs at the time, including poverty.

We still have a system in place that is **not beneficial to all children.**

We can **change the system** that was created when we identify and name the problem.

History of the Adoption of American Indian Children

In the 1940s and 1950s, Indian children were targeted for removal

- The campaign was originally called “The Indian Adoption Project.”

Before 1978, 25% to 35% of Indian children in certain states were removed from their homes

- Children were placed in non-Indian homes by state courts, welfare agencies, and private adoption agencies.

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) was passed in 1978

- The law governs the removal and out-of-home placement of American Indian and Alaska Native children and was enacted after recognition that American Indian and Alaska Native children were being removed from their homes and communities at a much higher rate than non-Native children.

Sources: Institute for Psychological Therapies. (2014). The Confusion of Poverty With Neglect; Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2021). Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).



Group Discussion: Exploring Historical Foundations of Child Welfare



**Reiko Boyd | Sade Daniels | Louie Gasper
Robert Matthews | Sandra White Hawk**



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Examining the History of Child Welfare

It is imperative that we examine the child welfare system from its creation to the present.

We can look critically at how the present mirrors the past.

We can acknowledge the past to advocate for systems change and equity.

Examining the History of Child Welfare

- ▶ Organized child protection was created for the protection of white children.
- ▶ The origin of child welfare often begins with the case of Mary Ellen McCormack, whose testimony in 1874 is believed to be the beginning of the Children's Rights Movement.



Mary Ellen McCormack in 1874

Source: Smithfield, B. (2016). The case of Mary Ellen—the first documented case of child abuse in the United States—was reported to the Animal Welfare Agency in 1874.

Examining the History of Child Welfare

- ▶ In 1853, Reverend Charles Loring Brace and colleagues established the Children's Aid Society in New York to care for abandoned white orphans.
- ▶ Many of New York's white children were put on "orphan trains" and sent to white, Christian families in the Midwest.
- ▶ During this same time period, Black children were being bought and sold as commodities, as the abolishment of slavery was 12 years away.
- ▶ Black orphaned children and juvenile offenders could be bought to serve as laborers through convict leasing.



Convict leasing was "a system in which Southern states leased prisoners to private railways, mines, and large plantations."

Source: Equal Justice Initiative. (2013). Convict Leasing.

Examining the History of Child Welfare

It is important to build a child welfare system for the **children, youth, and families that will be impacted by it.**

Consider how the child welfare system can be **redesigned to be an equitable system of support for families of color.**

Examining the Current Child Welfare System

- Currently, language and interventions are not based on family preservation or the concept of healing.
- Many families live below the poverty line and children are still being removed from homes due to parents' lack of resources.
- Consider reallocating money to provide prevention support and services to families in need.
- It is important to hear and learn from the voices of individuals with lived experience.

Understanding Disparity and Disproportionality



Louie Gasper | Reiko Boyd



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Understanding Disparity and Disproportionality

Racial inequities are currently, and have always been, a defining picture of the child welfare system.

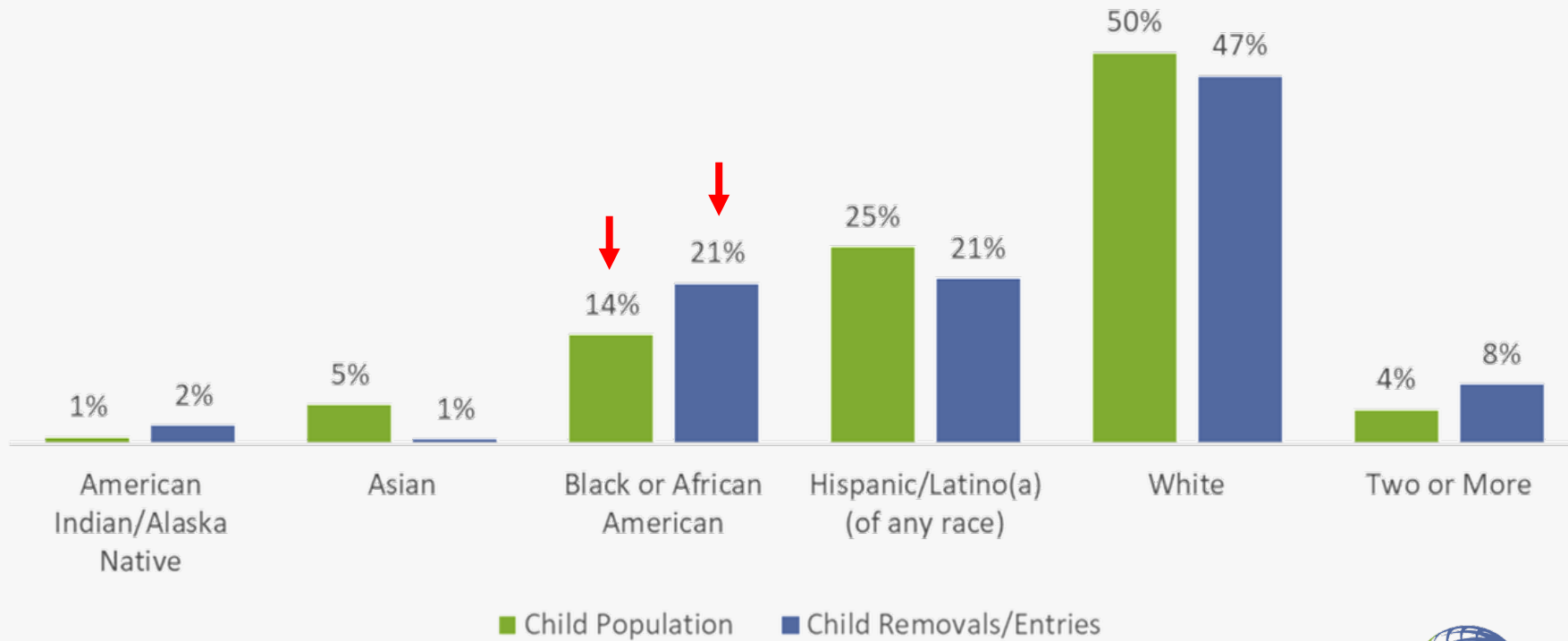
We need to focus on racial equity because lives depend on it.

Black and American Indian and Alaska Native families are overrepresented among referrals to the system and investigative reports.

Ultimately, Black children and youth are less likely than white children and youth to be adopted.

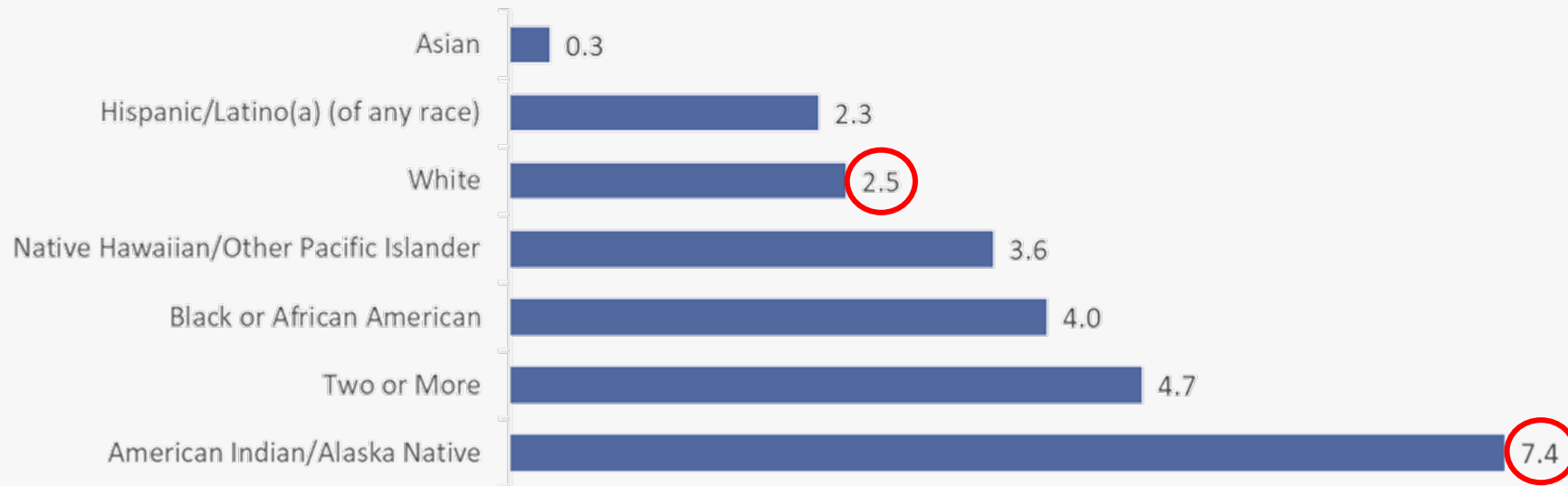
Data Deep Dive

Nationwide Disproportionality in Removals/Entries 2020



Data Deep Dive

The removal rate for American Indian/Alaska Native children is nearly **three times** that of White children.



Strategies to Advance Racial Equity in Child Welfare



Start with a **willingness to reverse course**, to adopt a fundamentally different approach that will **interrupt the cycle of inequity**.

Recognize that documenting disparities and racial differences without digging in and **exposing root causes** can perpetuate these disparities.

To address root causes, **focus on structural racism**, a fundamental root cause of racial disproportionality and disparities in the child welfare system.

Defining Structural Racism

Structural racism is “the **normalized and legitimized range of an array of dynamics** – historical, cultural, institutional, and interpersonal – that **routinely advantages whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color.**”

Tricia Rose, Chancellor's Professor of Africana Studies, Brown University

Understanding Disparity and Disproportionality



Louie Gasper | Robert Matthews



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DC Child and Family Services Agency Race Equity Work

Subcommittee working to ensure staff understand language and terminology like race, equity, and disparity

Data subcommittee reviewing rate of removals, decisions on the front end, and training needs

Additional subcommittees looking at policies and training

Strategies to Advance Racial Equity in Child Welfare



Have the **courage and motivation** to have **discussions about race equity**.

Review benchmark and exit standards through a racial equity lens when under a federal dissent decree.

If you **take on race equity and inclusion**, and **concentrate resources** in this area, you will see that there will be a **change in outcomes**.

Partnering With Youth and Families to Transform Systems and Advance Equity



**Reiko Boyd | Sade Daniels | Louie Gasper
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Approaching Issues of Disparity and Disproportionality



Revisit the language we use when working with families and use a healing lens.

Engage individuals with lived experience to help other families navigate the system.

Provide equitable services and support for families in need instead of removing children.

Explore mandated reporting laws and child maltreatment statutes to help shift how families come to the attention of the child welfare system.

Approaching Issues of Disparity and Disproportionality

We need to continue to think about and **change the child welfare system to address the needs of youth, particularly youth of color.**

Youth are being raised in a **system that was not designed to serve them** and does not uphold or affirm their culture and identity.

Remember that the **intention** of the child welfare system, which is to help, is **different than its impact.**

We can **unlearn, reeducate, and reconceptualize** what we view as help, and instead we can **build and generate conditions** in relationships and society that **make the need for foster care obsolete.**

Approaching Issues of Disparity and Disproportionality

Changing the system requires personal reflection, which may be uncomfortable.

We can play a part in sustaining structural racism or in eliminating it.

We can address implicit bias and policies that are not aligned with family preservation and bring communities together to begin to restructure the child welfare system.

Reimagining and shifting the child welfare system will take time.

Change begins with discussion, with engaging leadership, and moving from words to action.

Understanding the Past to Build a New Future: Advancing Racial Equity for Children, Youth, and Families



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Young, Gifted, and ...



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Closing Thoughts



Louie Gasper



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Up Next!

Thank you for your participation today!

Please explore the Resource Gallery and chat with participants in the Networking Lounge.

The next session will begin at 11:30 a.m. Eastern Time.

