

Minority Youth: Overrepresented & Underserved in Indiana's Systems

Briefly

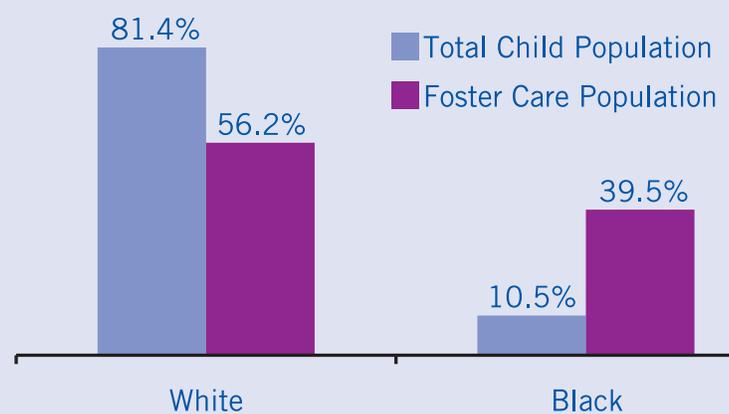
Minority youth are disproportionately represented in Indiana's child welfare, education, juvenile justice, and mental health systems. Children of color make up 18.6 percent of Hoosiers under age 18,¹ but they represent 39.5 percent of youth in foster care² and 42.0 percent of juveniles arrested.³ In schools, they are disciplined at a higher rate than their white classmates and are more likely to be suspended or expelled.⁴ African Americans tend to be overrepresented in the youth serving systems mentioned above, yet underrepresented in the mental health system.⁵ These facts have generated concern and prompted the creation of the state-appointed Commission on Disproportionality in Youth Services.

What we know

The issue of youth of color in state systems is complex and does not lend itself to blanket statements or generalities. Within Indiana's minority population are several groups including African American, Hispanic, and Native American. Additionally, "youth services" encompasses systems such as child welfare, mental health, juvenile justice, and education. Comprehensive cross-systems data and research are lacking, but here's what we know:

Figure 1
Comparison of Child Population to Foster Care Population by Race

AFCARS, 2000



¹ Ruprecht, K.M., Klein, M.B., & Chaille, M.E. (2006). *Kids Count in Indiana Data Book: County Profiles of Child Well-Being*. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Youth Institute.

² Center for the Study of Social Policy. "Race and Child Welfare Project: Fact Sheet 2 – State-by-State Statistical Profile of Racial Over-Representation in Foster Care." Uses data from AFCARS 2000. March, 2004.

³ Skiba, R.J.; Rausch, K.; Abbott, D.; Simmons, A. "Disproportionate Minority Contact in Indiana: Quantitative Analyses Final Report." June 2007.

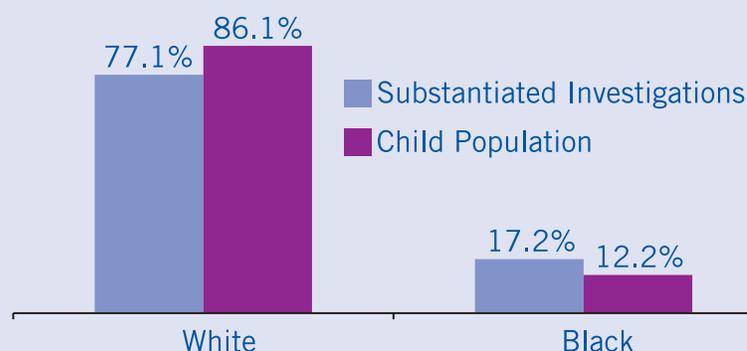
⁴ S.M. MacDermid, K. Ruprecht, N. Pillipsen, K. DeZern, L. Clough, "Growing Indiana's Human Capital: Assuring Positive Futures for Youth," Center for Families Publications. Year 2005 Accessed September 4, 2008 at <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cffpub/12>.

⁵ NAMI, 2007 African American Community Mental Health Fact Sheet.

CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

Figure 2 Comparison of Child Population to Substantiated Cases by Race

2005 Indiana Demographic Trends Report,
Easy Access to Juvenile Populations



As Figure 1 indicates, Indiana had an overrepresentation of African American children in the foster care system in 2000.⁶ Since then, the percentage of African American children in foster care has decreased.⁷ However, in 2004 African American children were twice as likely to enter foster care as white children and tended to remain in foster care an average of nine months longer.⁸ National studies show that African American children are no more likely to be abused or neglected than white children.⁹ In Indiana, 2005 statistics show that the percent of cases substantiated for African Americans and whites were similar to their percentage of the population (Figure 2).

JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

In 2006, the ratio of African American to white youth in custody in Indiana was 3:1.¹⁰ African American youth were more likely than their Caucasian peers to be arrested, detained, and confined in Indiana juvenile facilities.¹¹ National and state statistics show:

- Of all 2004 juvenile arrests for violent crimes in Indiana, 52 percent involved white youth and 46 percent involved African American youth.¹²
- African American youth were 2.64 times as likely as all other youth to be arrested; this significant finding held in a study of seven Indiana counties.¹³
- Nationally, almost 38 percent of African American juvenile offenders returned to custody in 2007, a higher recidivism rate than Caucasian and Hispanic offenders.¹⁴

⁶ Hill, R., "Disproportionality of Minorities in Child Welfare: Synthesis of Research Findings," Washington, D.C., Westat: 30, 2001.

⁷ Administration for Children & Families Child welfare outcomes 2003 Annual Report using data from AFCARS.

⁸ Report to the Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives. "African American Children in Foster Care." July 2007. www.gao.gov/new.items/d07816.pdf, Accessed September 2008.

⁹ National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, Children's Bureau. *Study Findings: National Study of the Incidence and Severity of Child Abuse and Neglect*. Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1981; Sedlak, Andrea J. *National Incidence and Prevalence of Child Abuse and Neglect: 1988 (Revised Report)*. Rockville, MD: Westat, 1991; Sedlak, Andrea J. and Broadhurst, Diane D. *Third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect*. Rockville, MD: Westat, 1996.

¹⁰ The Annie E. Casey Foundation, "2008 Kids Count Essay and Data Brief: A Road Map for Juvenile Justice Reform," www.acef.org, Accessed September 15, 2008.

¹¹ Skiba, R.J.; Rausch, K.; Abbott, D.; Simmons, A. "Disproportionate Minority Contact in Indiana: Quantitative Analyses Final Report." June 2007.

¹² Flores, R.J. "Juvenile Arrests 2004." Office of Justice Programs, Partnership for Safer Communities. December 2006. <http://www.noys.org/Juvenile%20Arrests%202004.pdf>

¹³ Skiba, R.J.; Rausch, K.; Abbott, D.; Simmons, A. "Disproportionate Minority Contact in Indiana: Quantitative Analyses Final Report." June 2007.

¹⁴ Juvenile Recidivism Report, 2007, IDOC www.id.gov/idoc/files/2007JuvRecidivismRpt.pdf

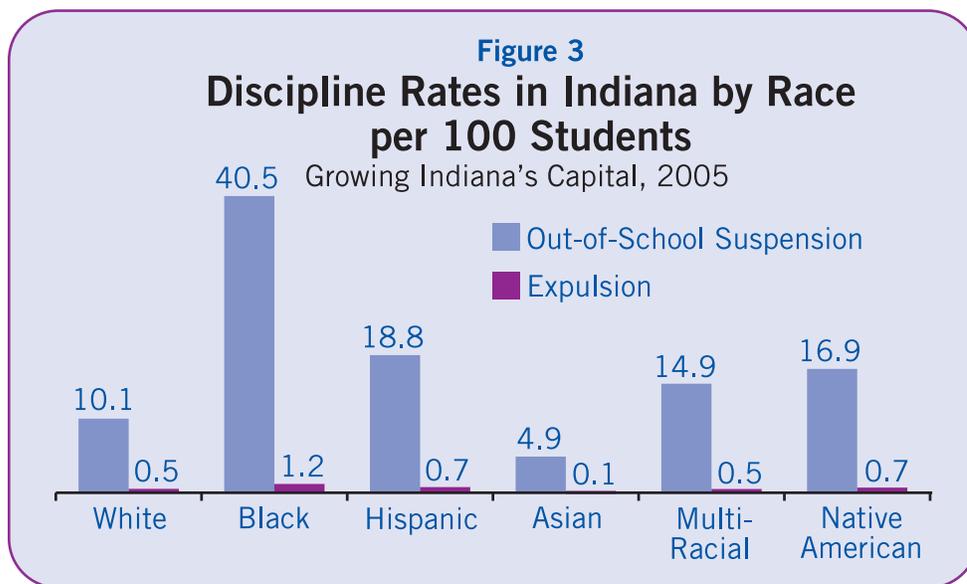
MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

Very little recent or Indiana specific data is available for the mental health system. Nationally African American adolescents, are more likely to be referred to mental health facilities than white adolescents, causing an overrepresentation in community clinics.¹⁵ However, minority youth are underserved by intervention services such as counseling and psychotherapy.¹⁶ National research indicates that:

- White youth are twice as likely as African Americans to receive necessary mental health care.¹⁷
- Though mental illnesses have some similar symptoms, African Americans are more likely to be diagnosed with a more severe disease, schizophrenia, than with depression, especially in the case of bipolar symptoms.¹⁸
- Despite evidence that African Americans may metabolize psychiatric medications more slowly than whites, they often receive higher dosages. This results in more severe side effects and often causes them to stop treatment.¹⁹
- Latino youth are at a significantly higher risk for poor mental health outcomes and are more likely than white students to drop out of school, report depression and anxiety, and consider suicide.²⁰

EDUCATION SYSTEM

No evidence indicates that African American children are more disruptive than other students in a school setting, yet African American males receive disciplinary action more often than males or females of any race.²¹ State and national research shows:



- African American students are four times as likely as their white classmates to be suspended from school and twice as likely to be expelled (Figure 3).²²
- African American males are three times more likely than white males to repeat grades.²³
- A student's ethnicity significantly influences the probability that he/she will be misidentified as needing special education. Misidentified students are often socially stigmatized and are held to lower academic expectations.²⁴

¹⁵ Takeuchi, Bui, and Kim, "The referral of minority adolescents to community mental health centers" University of California at Los Angeles, CA, *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* June 1993 Vol. 34 Issue 2.

¹⁶ A.F. Garland and B. Besinger, "Racial/Ethnic Differences in Court Referred Pathways to Mental Health Services for Children in Foster Care," University of California, San Diego 1997.

¹⁷ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2001) *Mental Health: Culture, Race, and Ethnicity—A Supplement to Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Psychology Today Magazine*. "Race and Mental Health Disparity." Sept-Oct 2003.

²⁰ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2001) *Mental Health: Culture, Race, and Ethnicity—A Supplement to Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services. [Downloads.ncadi.samhsa.gov/ken/pdf/SMA-01-3613/sma-01-361A.pdf](http://downloads.ncadi.samhsa.gov/ken/pdf/SMA-01-3613/sma-01-361A.pdf)

²¹ R. Skiba, R.S. Michael, & A.C. Nardo, "The Color of Discipline: Sources of Racial and Gender Disproportionality in School Punishment," University of Nebraska-Lincoln, June 2000.

²² S.M. MacDermid, K. Ruprecht, N. Pillipsen, K. DeZern, L. Clough, "Growing Indiana's Human Capital: Assuring Positive Futures for Youth," Center for Families Publications. Year 2005 Accessed September 4, 2008 at <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cffpub/12>

²³ The Indiana Commission on the Social Status of Black Males, 2006-2007 Annual Report.

²⁴ National Education Association, "Disproportionality: Inappropriate Identification of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Children," NEA Education Policy and Practice Department, Center for Great Public Schools. Policy Brief, 2008

Looking for links

Several factors may compound or contribute to the overrepresentation of minorities in the various youth-serving systems. Only in-depth research will determine whether a link exists between disproportionate representation and factors such as poverty, employment level, family structure, teen pregnancy, and the size of the minority population. Of the possible connections, here's what we know:

- The unemployment rate for African Americans in Indiana is 10.3 compared to 4.1 for Caucasians and 4.7 for Hispanic or Latino citizens.²⁵ Furthermore, in 2007, 19 percent of Indiana families in poverty with children under 18 were African American compared to 7.6 percent of the general population.²⁶ Compared with children from more affluent families, poor children are more likely to struggle in school and experience health, behavioral, and emotional problems.²⁷
- In the U.S. 6.4 percent of African American children have a parent in prison, compared to 0.9 percent of white children and 2.4 percent of Hispanic children. Children whose parents are incarcerated risk becoming part of an intergenerational incarceration cycle.²⁸
- In Indiana, the teen birthrate for African Americans (66 per 1,000 females) is higher than for Caucasians (31 per 1,000 females).²⁹ Children born to teen mothers of all races are twice as likely to experience neglect as those born to women ages 20-21.³⁰
- In 2007, 33.4 percent of all families, and 66.9 percent of African American families were headed by a single parent.³¹ Children from single-parent households are more likely than children from households with two biological parents to exhibit behavior problems.³²

Searching for solutions

Several efforts are underway to address overrepresentation of minority youth in Indiana's systems:

- Indiana Black Expo's "State of Our Black Youth Report, 2007 Biennial Edition" presents statistics on the health and well-being of the state's black children. The information includes strategies to address challenges as well as local data for 16 communities:
<http://www.indianablackexpo.com/programs/soby.html>.
- In 2005, Marion County was chosen as a new site for the Annie E. Casey's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI), which supports the Casey Foundation's vision that all youth involved in the juvenile justice systems have opportunities to develop into healthy, productive adults. JDAI focuses on juvenile detention because the inappropriate detention of youth often has long-lasting negative consequences.
- In 2004, a group of advocates formed the Indiana Disproportionality Committee to ensure equality within the child welfare, juvenile justice, education and mental health systems. The committee's focus was bringing the percentage of minority youth within the systems into alignment with the percentage of minority youth in the overall population.

²⁵ Bureau of Labor Statistics. www.bls.gov/lau/ptable14full 2007.pdf

²⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 American Community Survey: <http://factfinder.census.gov>. Tables C17010 and C17010B. Accessed December 2008.

²⁷ Child Trends Research Brief Nov. 2002 www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2002_11_01_RB_Poverty%5B1%5D.pdf

²⁸ Cynthia Seymour, "Children with Parents in Prison: Child Welfare Policy, Program, and Practice Issues," *Child Welfare, Special Issue, Children with Parents in Prison*, Child Welfare League of America, Vol. LXXVII, September/October 1996, p. 472.

²⁹ The Alan Guttmacher Institute. (2004). *U.S. teenage pregnancy statistics: Overall trends, trends by race and ethnicity and state-by-state information*. Retrieved February 20, 2004, from www.guttmacher.org/pubs/state_pregnancy_trends.pdf

³⁰ Maynard, RA. (Ed.). (1996). *Kids Having Kids: A Robin Hood Foundation Special Report On the Costs of Adolescent Childbearing*. New York: Robin Hood Foundation. Press Release available at http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content/news/teen_pregnancy.html Accessed May 10, 2004.

³¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 American Community Survey: <http://factfinder.census.gov>. Tables C17010 and C17010B. Accessed December 2008.

³² Child Trends. (2002). *Charting Parenthood: A Statistical Portrait of Fathers and Mothers in America*. Washington, D.C.: Child Trends. <http://www.childtrends.org/files/ParenthoodRpt2002.pdf>

- Indiana’s Commission on Disproportionality in Youth Services, appointed by the governor and legislature, has investigated the causes of minority disproportionality in Indiana’s youth serving systems. A study was launched in January 2008 and was led by Angela Green, Deputy Director of the Indiana Department of Child Services, and Michael A. Patchner, dean of the Indiana University School of Social Work. The Commission has established a list of recommendations for legislators and community leaders in order to decrease disproportionality in Indiana youth services.

For information about the commission’s recommendations, visit
<http://socialwork.iu.edu/site/indexer/1598/content.htm>

Action steps

Community agencies, organizations, and individuals can take action. Here’s how:

TRAIN STAFF TO BE CULTURALLY COMPETENT

- Child welfare personnel may benefit from additional training for working with children and families from diverse backgrounds. Access cultural competency resources from the Office of Minority Health: www.omhrc.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=2&lvlid=107.
- For a variety of training tools to reduce disparities and improve ethnic and linguistic responsiveness, visit www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/cultural/staff.cfm.
- To read a cultural competency success story and learn about Oregon’s national model for reducing racial disparity in juvenile detention, visit www.cjcj.org/pubs/portland/portlandpr.html.
- For ideas on how to make your program or staff more culturally competent, visit the New Jersey Mental Health Cultural Competence Training Center: www.mhccc-fsasj.org.

HIRE MINORITY STAFF

- To read about a citizens’ group that focuses on finding African American foster parents, access the newsletter for The Children’s Home of Tampa Bay, Florida: [www.childrenshome.org/documents/TCH%20Newspaper%20Fall%202004\(1\).pdf](http://www.childrenshome.org/documents/TCH%20Newspaper%20Fall%202004(1).pdf).
- To learn more about the recruitment and retention of minority staff, see this journal article: “Proactive

Steps to Successfully Recruit, Retain, and Mentor Minority Educators.”³³

FOCUS ON STRENGTH-BASED STRATEGIES

- To acquire free tools to help young people prepare for adulthood, check the life skills assessments and customized learning plans at www.caseylifeskills.org.
- To learn about Project H.O.P.E. (Hope, Opportunity, Pride & Empowerment), an independent living skills training for youth who are in the custody of the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department, visit www.ydinm.org/PIT/hope.aspx.

MAKE SURE PROGRAMS AND ASSESSMENTS ARE NOT BIASED

- To ensure that all assessments are culturally sensitive, review the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory’s “Critical Issue: Ensuring Equity with Alternative Assessments,”: www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/methods/assment/as800.htm.
- To tap into the Juvenile Justice Model Program Guide database of scientifically proven programs that address a range of issues from substance abuse to mental health, visit www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5/mpg_index.htm.

³³ Barnett, Ernest; Gibson, Meichelle; Black, Pam. “Proactive Steps to Successfully Recruit, Retain, and Mentor Minority Educators.” *Journal of Early Education and Family Review*, v10, n3 p 18-28 Jan-Feb 2003.

Indiana Youth Institute Resources

IYI Weekly Update, a free, electronic newsletter featuring useful information such as training opportunities, free resources, new reports about youth, and a “Grant Tip of the Week.” Subscribe at http://www.iyi.org/weekly_updates/subscribe.asp

Kids Count in Indiana Data Book and online database, including state, county, and school district statistics on Indiana children and youth to support grant proposals and program initiatives. Access the database at www.iyi.org/data

Virginia Beall Ball Library, a free lending library of youth development and nonprofit management materials, which can be borrowed easily by youth workers throughout the state, either on-site, online or through our toll-free main number. Search the catalog or sign up for an account at <http://www.iyi.org/library>

Youth Service Help Line, 877-IYI-TIPS, providing free phone assistance to youth organizations seeking quick answers to questions about fundraising, youth development and legal matters.

Free custom research on Indiana youth, at www.iyi.org/datarequest.

IYI's Web site, www.iyi.org, an online source for new reports on children, data for grant proposals, information about IYI's programs and library materials, and links to other valuable sources of youth development information.

Regional trainings, taught by nationally regarded instructors, offered at convenient locations across the state, on topics such as fundraising and working with youth.

Professional Development Grants, mini-grants for qualified youth workers to attend their choice of seminars, workshops, and conferences.

Kids Count in Indiana Conference, an annual fall conference designed to give Indiana youth workers the inspiration, networking opportunities, information and tools they need to serve children effectively.

Statewide assistance, providing free local service in all 92 Indiana counties. Call 1-800-343-7060 for information about how to contact the IYI Regional Field Representative near you.



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