

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILD WELFARE LEVERS FOR



Committing to Anti-Racist Practice

Racism & Child Welfare: It's Time to Move from Problem Identification to Action

Acknowledging the presence of racism and oppression within systems is a critical step in the journey toward equity and justice. This requires a critical examination of the structures and practices embedded within social service systems, particularly child welfare and child custody and support, that affect communities that are traditionally marginalized. While many policies may be presented as race-neutral on the surface, their outcomes reveal inherent racial biases that challenge the notion of race-neutral practice. To make continued progress towards achieving equal access to services and decrease disparities, we must acknowledge how racism and oppression are interwoven into the very fabric of these systems, whether intentionally designed or inadvertently perpetuated by longstanding practices.

The sources below reveal a deeply rooted issue within systems and urge us to confront systemic racism. It's time to move from asking if racism is a problem to instead commit to anti-racist practices that dismantle the structures that perpetuate it. **It's time for action.**



NATIONAL CENTER TO ADVANCE PEACE
for Children, Youth, and Families

The National Center to Advance Peace for Children, Youth, and Families (NCAP), is a coalition led by Caminar Latino-Latinos United for Peace and Equity and includes Ujima: National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community, the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center, the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center, and Futures Without Violence.



Build your capacity to recognize and understand how racism is embedded within Child Welfare, Custody, and Child Support systems

Centuries of racism and structural disadvantage have created the conditions of poverty and risk that contribute to maltreatment in Black families. These issues of disproportionate need are then compounded by the over-surveillance and over-reporting of Black families to child welfare systems, which begins their involvement in a system that further exacerbates these inequities.

Learn more: [It Is Not a Broken System, It Is a System that Needs to be Broken](#)

Racial disparities have been identified at every decision point within the child welfare system. The over-representation of Black children in the system reflects a political choice to address child poverty by surveilling and investigating parents instead of tackling poverty's societal roots

Learn more: [Child Protection as Surveillance of African American Families](#)

The voices of Black and Latinx parents involved in the child welfare system demonstrate that parents often feel poorly treated and experience child welfare processes as racist, unfair, judgmental, and disrespectful.

Learn more: [Lived Experiences of Racism Among Child Welfare-Involved Parents](#)



Racism has always played a central role in publicly funded systems that separate families – immigration, criminal justice, and child welfare systems. The history of these systems reveals that they have disregarded the real needs of children and actively discriminated against children and families of color since their founding.

Learn more: [Entangled Roots: The Role of Race in Policies that Separate Families](#)

A case study of two counties in New York identified promising practices that may assist in decreasing racial disparities in child welfare removal decisions. Among these were greater concentration on preventive services and resources, community collaborations, and blind removal meetings – a practice in which information about the family’s race is intentionally excluded from the facts of the case presented to the team making removal decisions.

Learn more: [A Case Study in Public Child Welfare: County-level Practices that Address Racial Disparity in Foster Care Placement](#)



Significant disparities exist in child support outcomes among Black, Hispanic, and White mothers. These disparities largely stem from racial and ethnic family formation differences, except for the unique challenges faced by Black-White differences in compliance rates.

Learn more: [Minority Families and Child Support: A Data Analysis](#)

Child support policies such as debt accumulation, high orders relative to income, and driver's license suspensions create barriers that contribute to racial and economic disparities.

Learn more: [Community Voices in Child Support](#)

CHECK OUT THESE RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON ADVANCING RACIAL EQUITY IN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVING SYSTEMS:

Talking About Racism in Child and Family Advocacy

This document emphasizes the crucial role of addressing racism within child welfare and family advocacy. It calls for candid conversations about racism's impact, especially within child welfare systems transitioning toward just alternatives. Effective discussions require resonant strategies bridging leaders and marginalized communities while reframing racism as a structural issue. Tailored for leaders in child welfare and youth development engaged in anti-racist work, it offers insights to foster public understanding and drive long-term mindset shifts toward a more equitable future.



Focusing on Race Equity throughout Change and Implementation

This tip sheet includes questions for teams to consider throughout change and implementation processes. Child welfare leaders, implementation team members, and technical assistance providers can use the discussion questions to raise awareness, promote reflection, and encourage actions that center equity as a goal within any implementation effort.

Advancing Racial Equity in Child Welfare: Child Welfare Virtual Expo 2021

Explore strategies to advance racial equity in child welfare presented by families and youth with lived expertise and other national experts. The Expo offers videos and corresponding discussion guides to prompt learning and reflection on racial inequities and develop plans to put ideas into action in these key areas:

- Build a Foundation for Racial Equity in Child Welfare
- Data and Racial Equity in Child Welfare
- Racial Equity and Authentic Engagement in Child Welfare
- Racial Equity and the Child Welfare Workforce

Strengthening Families Using a Racial Equity Lens

This presentation focuses on power dynamics and their impact on marginalized communities. It describes how professionals can use an awareness of power to adopt and embrace an anti-racist mindset. The facilitator describes real case scenarios and gives participants the opportunity to learn how mindset impacts the creation of policy and child welfare decisions throughout the life of a case. Policies drive child welfare practice and through interactive polling, participants observe and apply an anti-racist framework to various policy positions and decisions. In closing, participants are invited to envision a new system and articulate the role of policy in addressing racial inequity.



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