

September 2022



## Exploring Race Equity in Nevada

Alicia Summers, PhD, Director

Sophia Gatowski, PhD, Consultant

Data Savvy Consulting, LLC



# Exploring Race Equity in Nevada

---

## Introduction

The Nevada Court Improvement Program, through their efforts to improve child welfare court practice in the state, is interested in examining race equity for the families involved in the child welfare system. An important first step to examine race equity is to disaggregate data by race/ethnicity to identify where there might be differences in practice or outcomes. This report is a first attempt at examining any race differences in outcomes for families.

## Method

Child welfare agency data is provided to Chapin Hall on a regular basis and then accessible in the Foster Care Data Archive (FCDA) to explore. These data include information on race of the child, placements of the child, timing of permanency, and permanency outcomes. Data from FCDA can be explored by race and by judicial district. Data were explored for cases that exited care between January of 2016 and December of 2021 to ensure a sufficient number of cases in each judicial district for comparisons. Data from FCDA was used to create judicial district level summaries of their race equity data. In addition, data from the child welfare agency is reported to the Children's Bureau and publicly released in the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS). The most currently available AFCARS data (fiscal year 2020) was used to explore race differences statewide.

Unlike the FCDA data, these data cannot be broken out by judicial district.

Data were examined to explore both disproportionality and disparity within the system. Mostly, data are disaggregated (broken apart) by race to provide preliminary information on how outcomes may look different depending on the race of the family. While most of the exploration is meant to describe what data look like by race, some statistical comparisons are made. Statistical comparisons are meant to determine whether numbers are actually different from each other or are similar. When there are enough cases by race of the child, statistical comparisons are made. Disparity is explored for removal reasons, placement, timeliness, and permanency of youth in foster care.

**Disproportionality** = overrepresentation of a group compared to its percentage in the general population

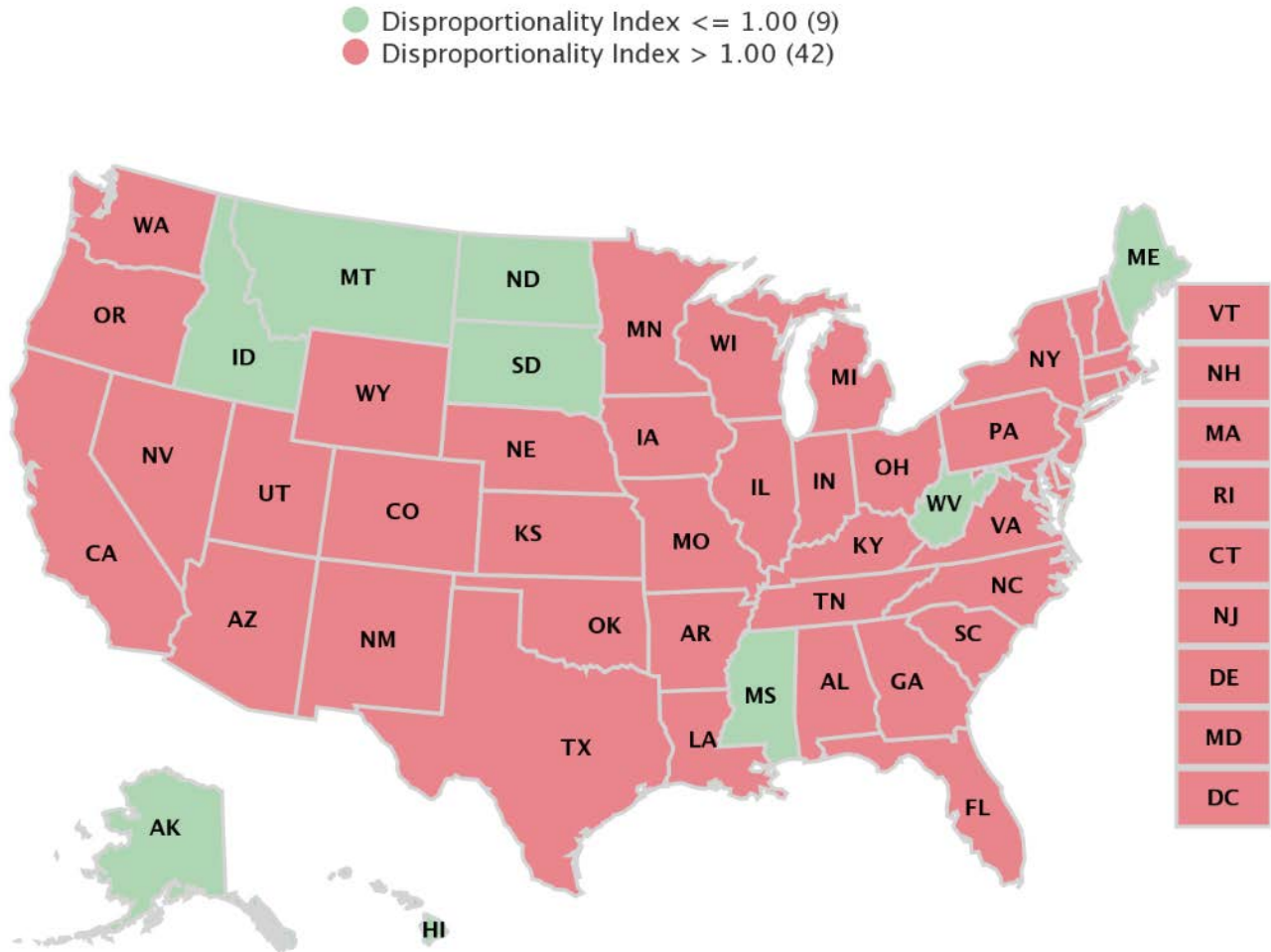
**Disparity** = Unequal outcomes of one group in comparison to outcomes of another group

## Findings

### Disproportionality

Disproportionality is examined first. Disproportionality explores whether groups are over or underrepresented in foster care in comparison to the general population. To set the stage, we first examined disproportionality in the country.

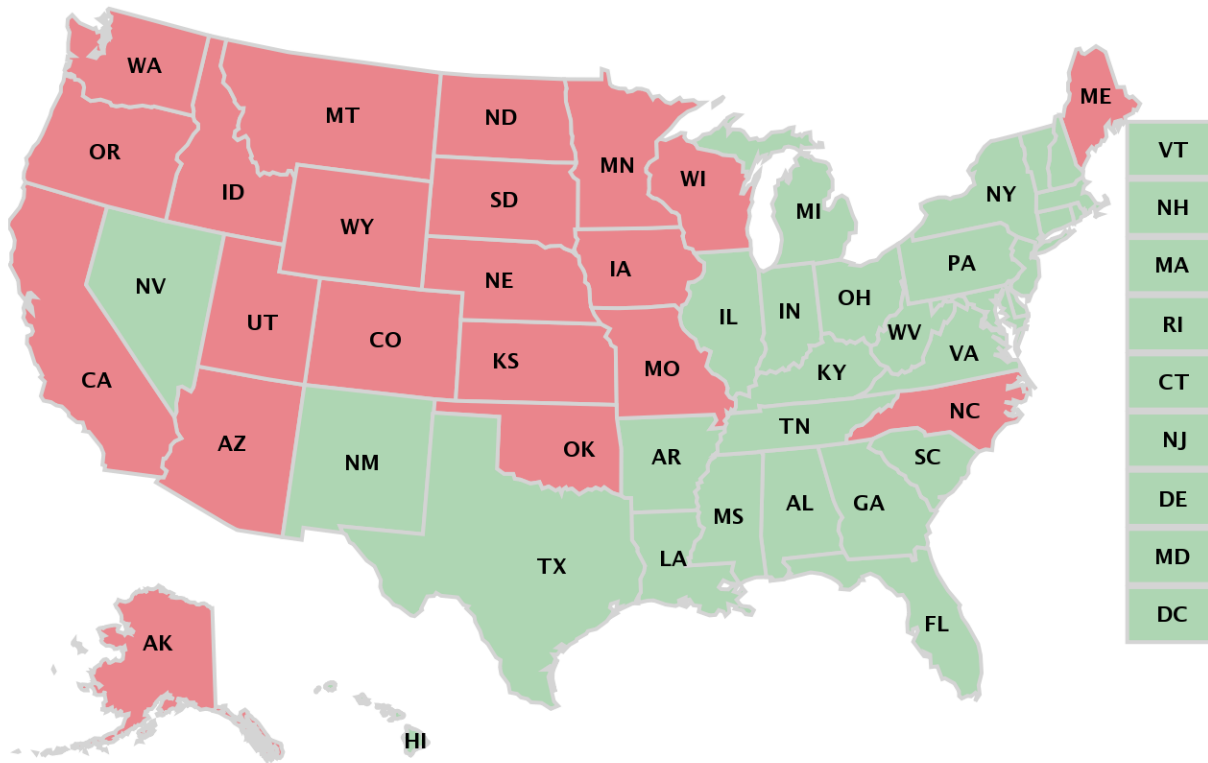
2020 Disproportionality index for Black children in foster care



Nearly all states have overrepresentation of Black/African American youth in foster care to some degree.

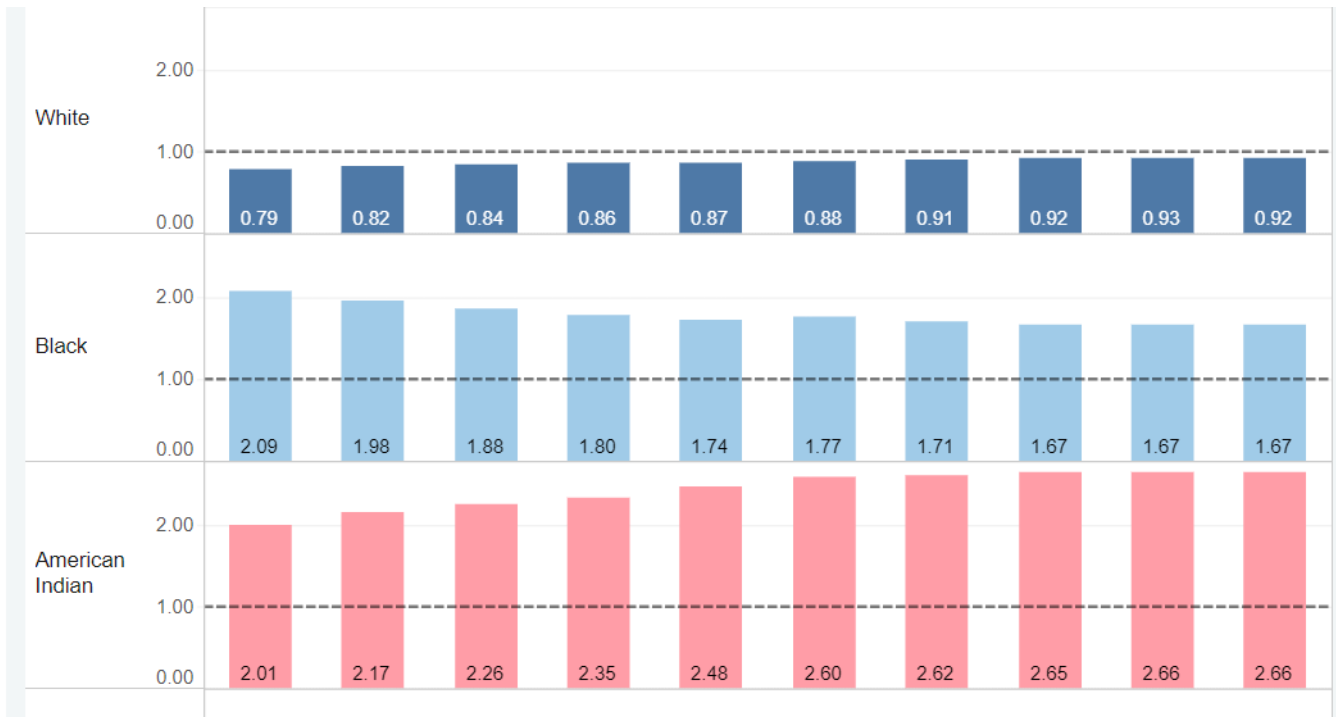
## 2020 Disproportionality index for American Indian children in foster care

- Disproportionality Index  $\leq 1.00$  (30)
- Disproportionality Index  $> 1.00$  (21)



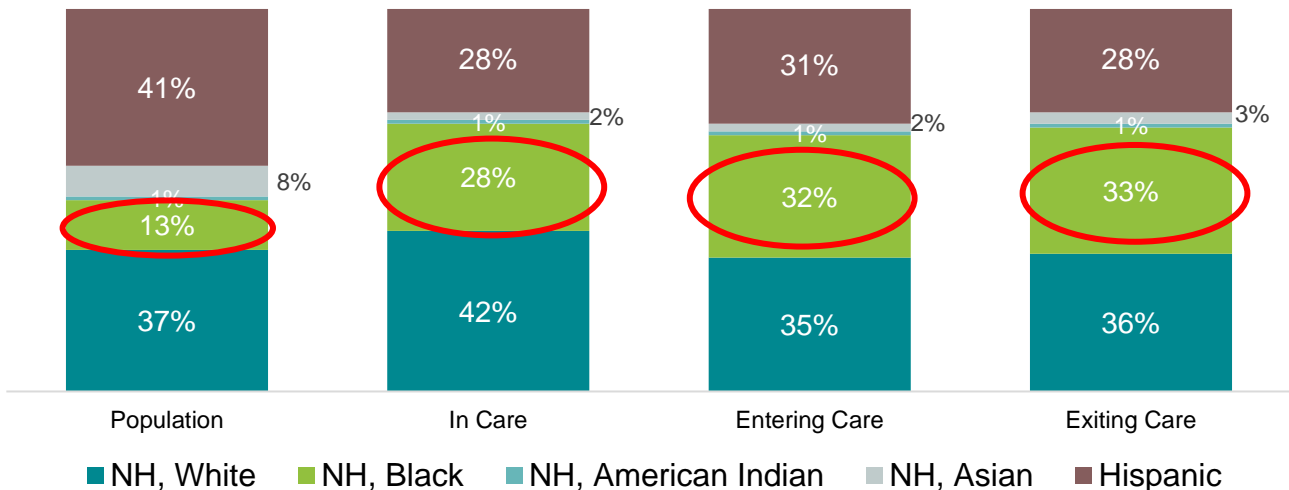
American Indian/Alaska native youth show a different pattern. Unlike Black children in care, most states do not have overrepresentation of American Indian/Alaska Native youth. However, states that do often have high levels of disproportionality. For example, Minnesota American Indian youth are overrepresented in foster care at a rate nearly 15x their rate in the general population.

If you explore trends in national rates of disproportionality, you will notice that Black overrepresentation has gone down in the last decade while American Indian overrepresentation has only risen (see Figure below).



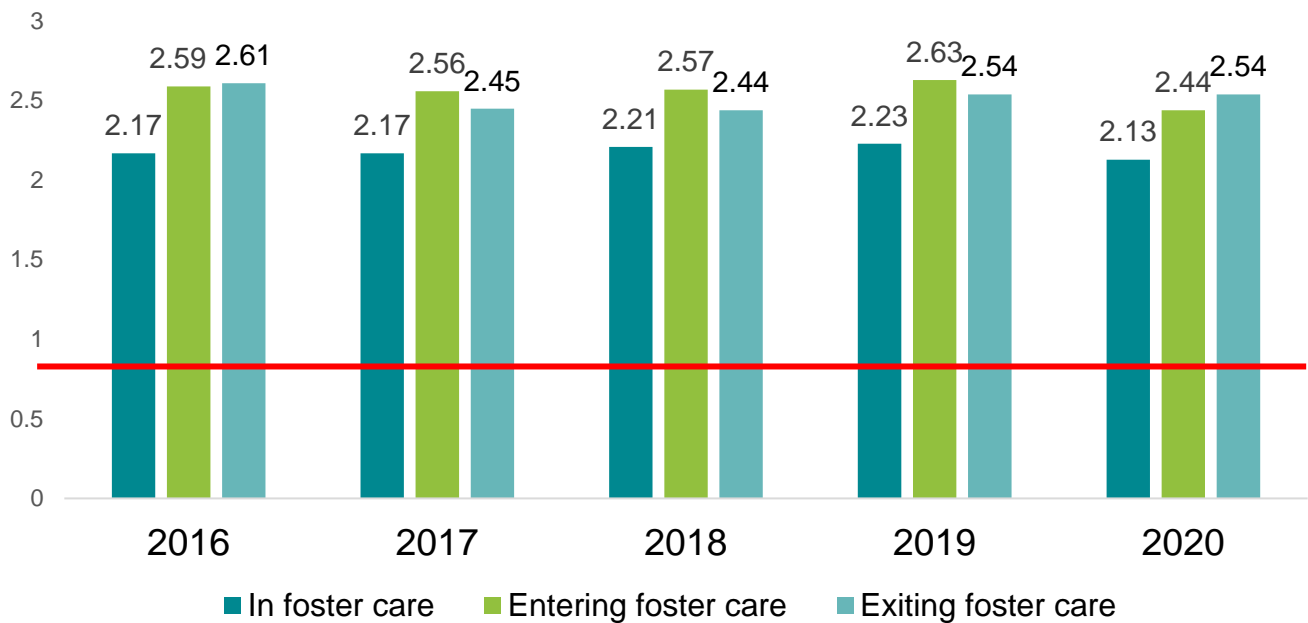
For Nevada, the data indicate that Black youth are overrepresented in foster care in terms of entries into care, exits from care, and youth in care. If you look at the population (left most column) you will note 13% of the population under 18 is Black. However, in foster care, the percentage is 28%. That is overrepresentation more than twice their rate in the general population. No other groups show overrepresentation.

### Nevada Disproportionality



Trends in overrepresentation of Black children in foster have been pretty consistent for the last five years, with at least 2 times the rate in the general population. Entry into foster care shows the highest rates of overrepresentation.

## Overrepresentation of Black Children in Foster Care in Nevada



### Disparities

National disparity explorations have noted some key differences in practice and outcomes for both Black and American Indian youth. Specifically:

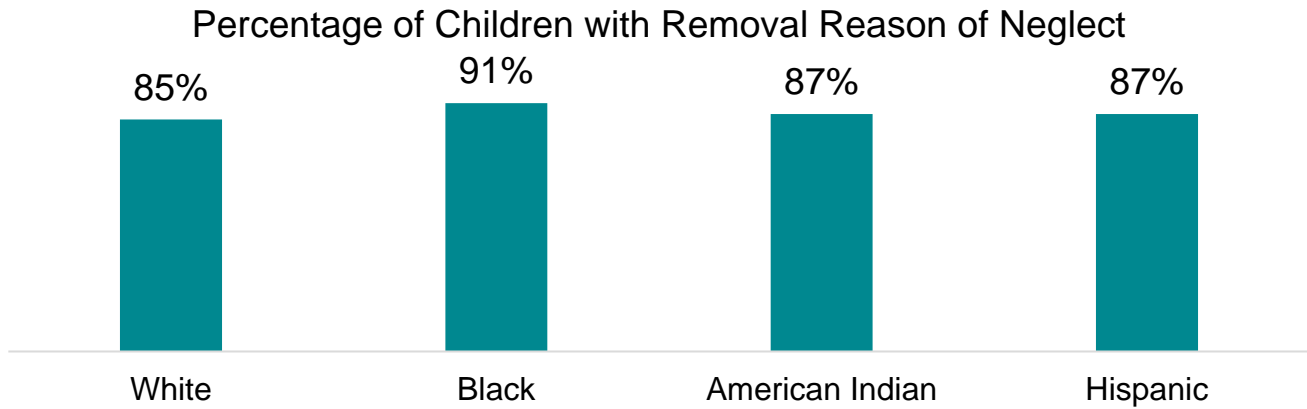
- **Black** children are more likely to:
  - Be investigated by CPS
  - Be removed from the home
  - Enter into foster care
  - Receive less desirable placements
  - Have more placement moves
  - Have fewer visits with families
  - Less likely to be reunified
  - Spend longer in foster care
- **American Indian** children are
  - More likely to be removed from their home
  - More likely to enter foster care
  - More likely to experience subsequent abuse while in foster care
  - Poorer outcomes (educational and employment) after exiting foster care

Since national data has shown some poorer outcomes for Black and American Indian youth, we explore similar practice and outcome measures in looking at Nevada's data.

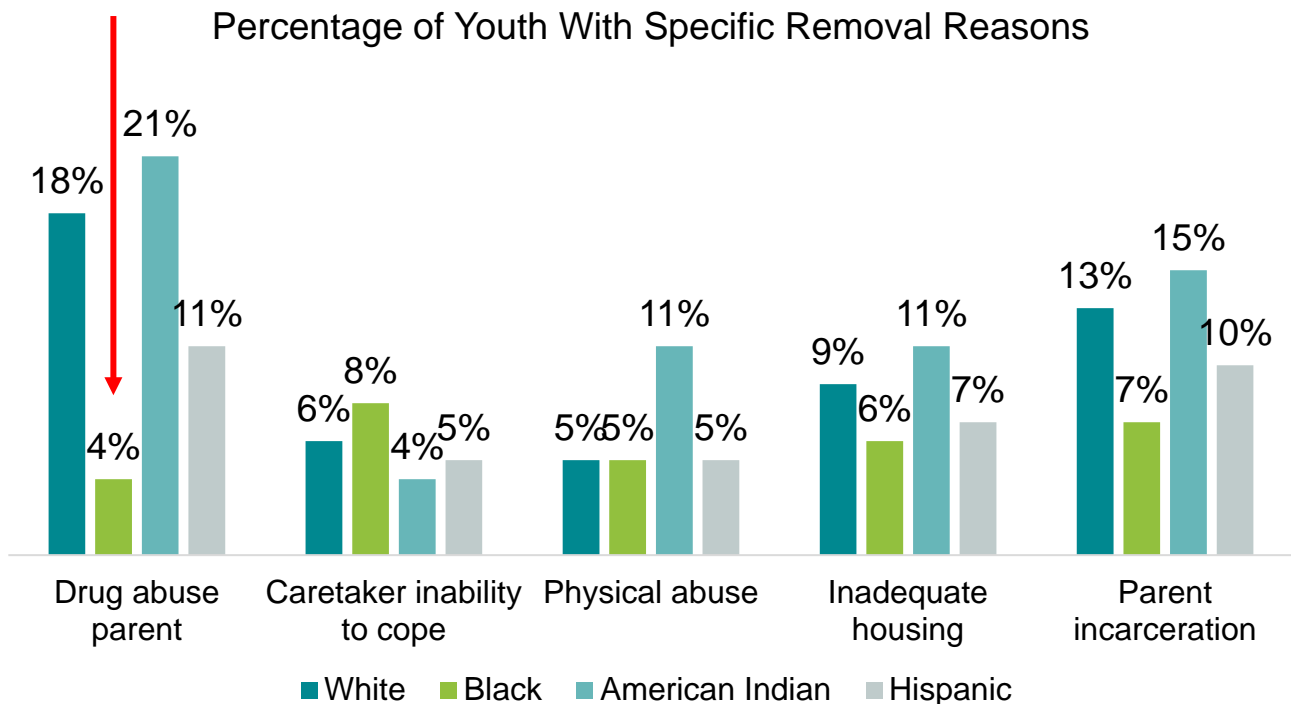


### Removal Reasons

The most common removal reason for all children in foster care is neglect.



Other common allegations are reported in the figure below. Black families are significantly less likely to have allegations of drug abuse by a parent. They are also less likely to have parent incarceration as a removal reason.

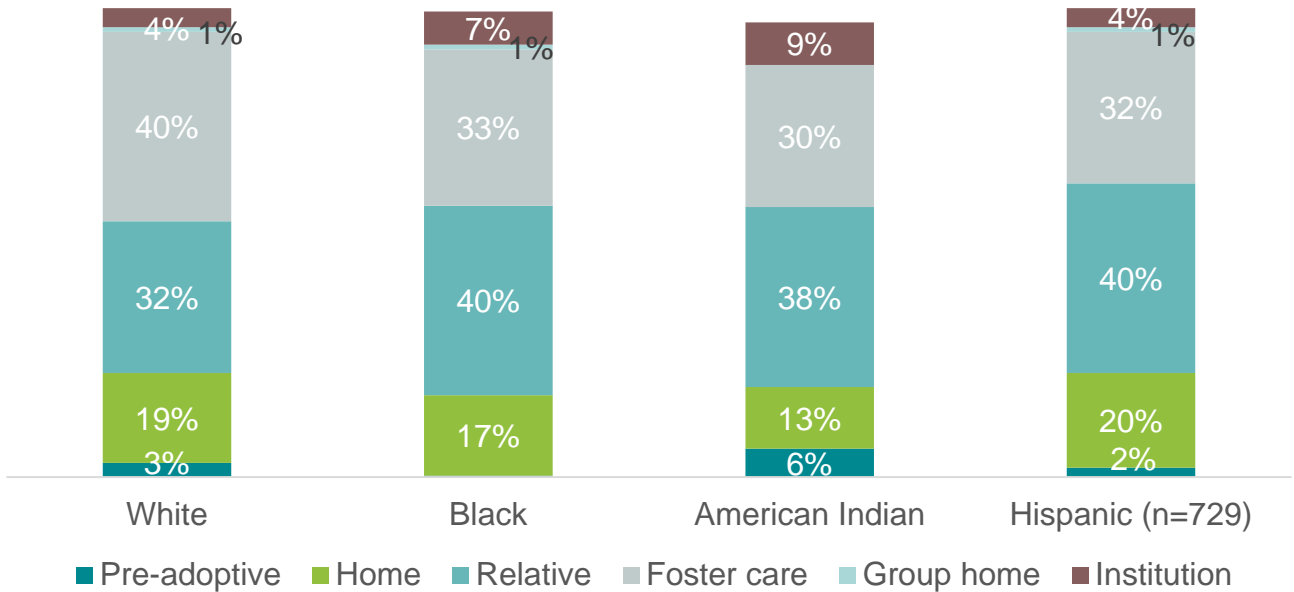


### Placement

Placement was explored in terms of the current placement type and in terms of number of placement settings. The figure below portrays placement settings. Black children have more

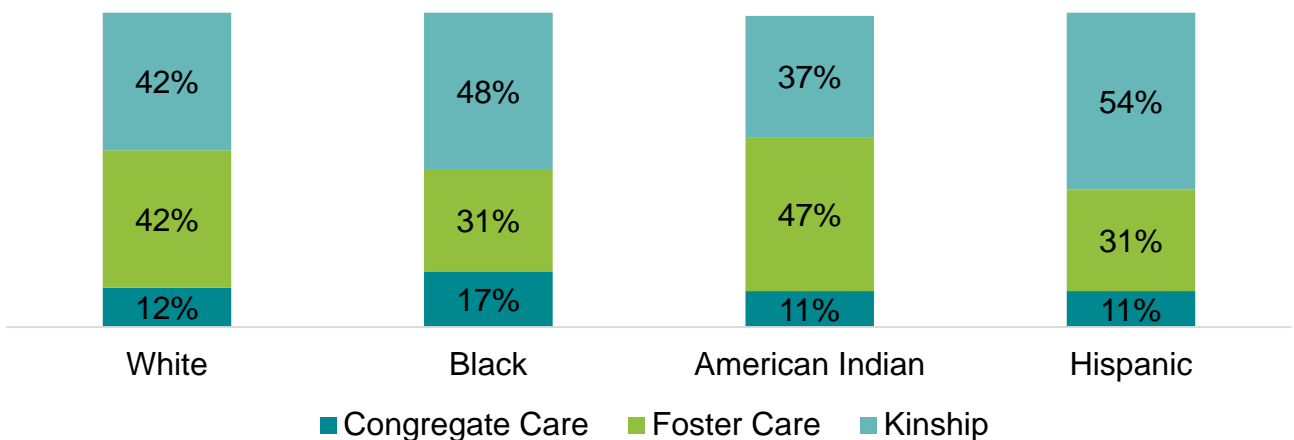
relative placements in comparison to White children but are also more likely to be placed in an institution. These differences were not statistically significant.

### Current Placement Settings



Black children averaged 2.6 placements in foster care, compared to 2.4 for American Indian youth, 2.8 for White youth and 2.6 for Hispanic youth. We also explore their average proportion of time in each placement type.

### Average Percentage of Time in Each Placement Type



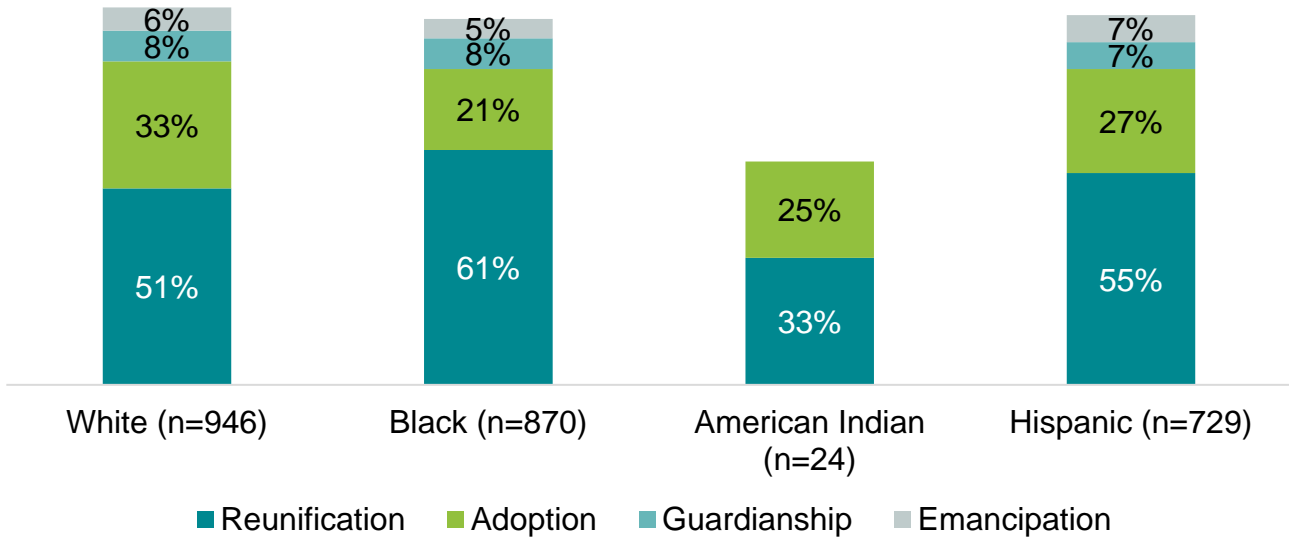
No significant differences were found, but there was a trend for Black children to spend more time in Congregate care than other youth.

### Outcomes



Permanency outcomes were explored for youth. Only the most common are reported in the chart below. For American Indian youth an additional 25% ended in a transfer to another court. Black children are more likely to reunify than other children, but the difference was not significant.

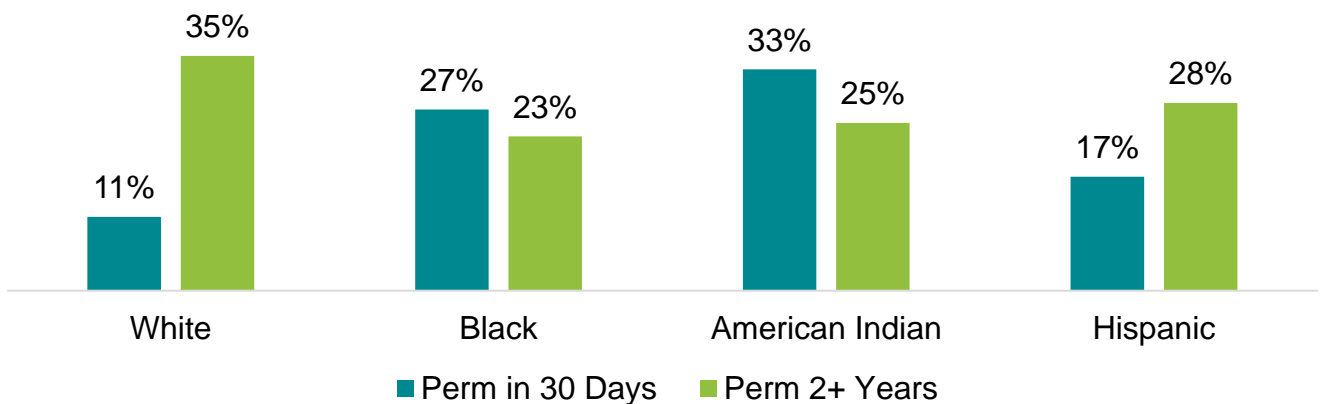
### Case Outcomes



### Timing of Permanency

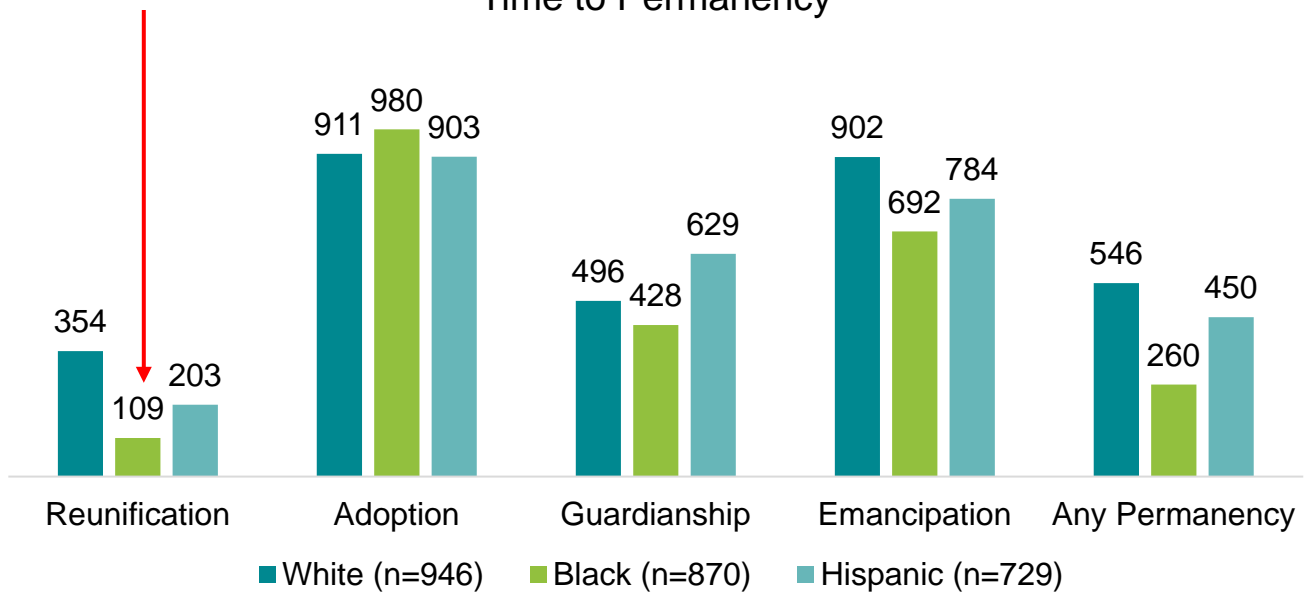
We examined the timing of permanency for all youth. Black and American Indian youth are much more likely than other youth to exit care within 30 days of entry and less likely to be in care longer than two years. The difference for Black youth was statistically significant.

### Permanency



The difference in outcomes is predominantly in the time it takes Black youth to reunify. Black children trended longer in times to adoption, but had shorter times to permanency in all other outcomes.

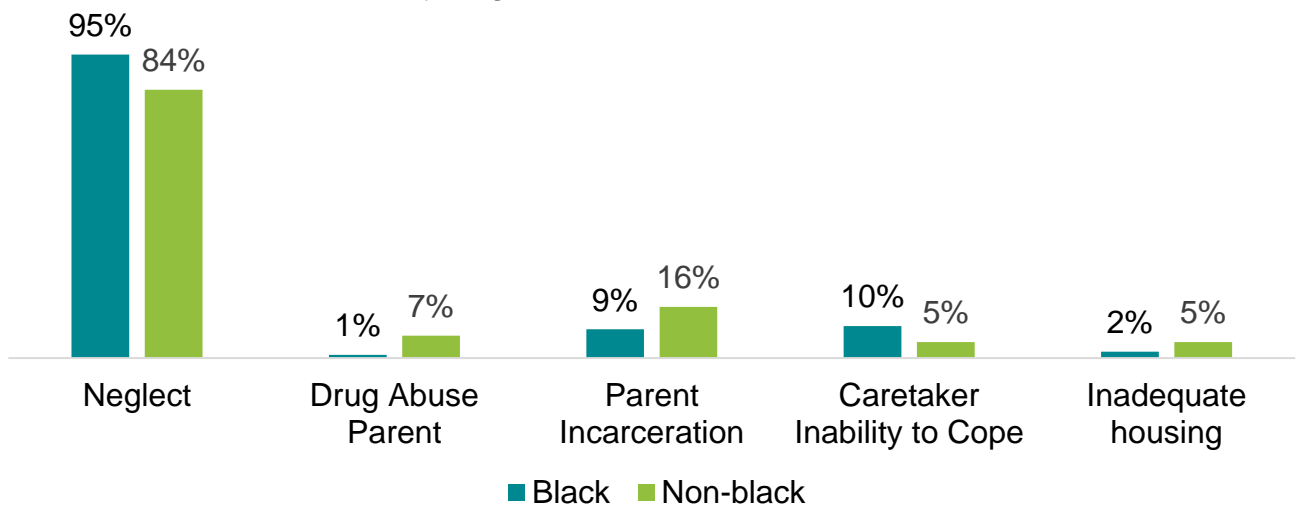
### Time to Permanency



### Short Stayers

Because black children were more likely to be short stayers, we further explored some differences in short stayers, comparing Black to non-Black youth who exited care within 30 days. There were statistically significant differences in removal reasons (reported in the figure below) compared to other youth.

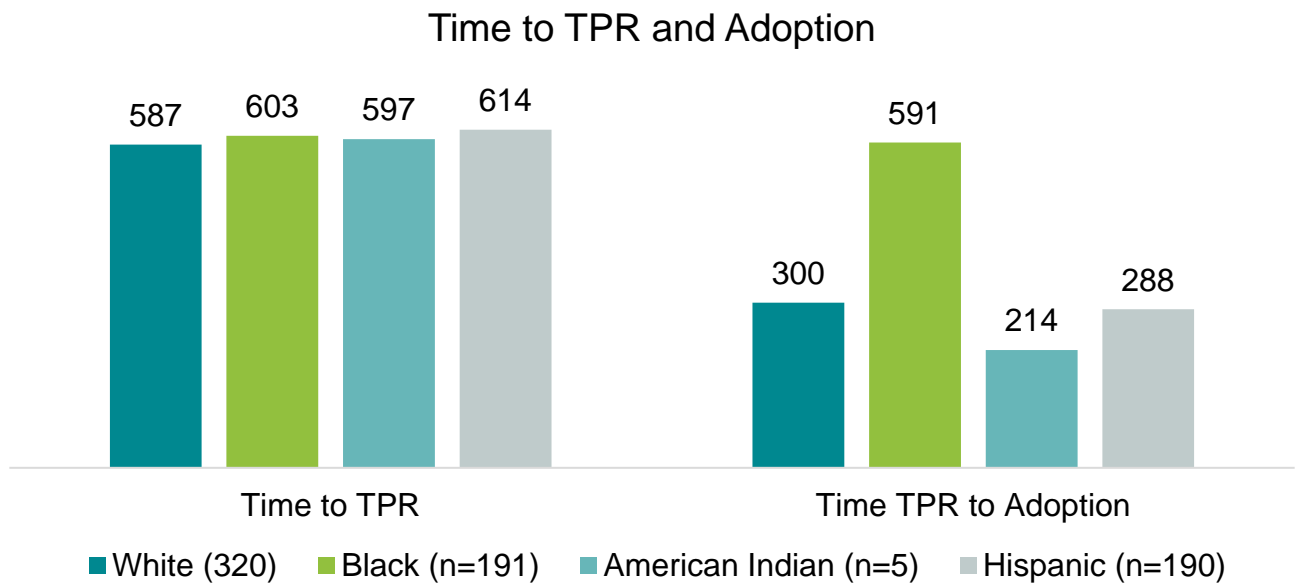
### Statistically Significant Differences in Removal Reasons



### Termination of Parental Rights

We also explored race differences in the time to termination of parental rights and adoption. The “Time to TPR and Adoption” graph below illustrates the timing between removal and a TPR order

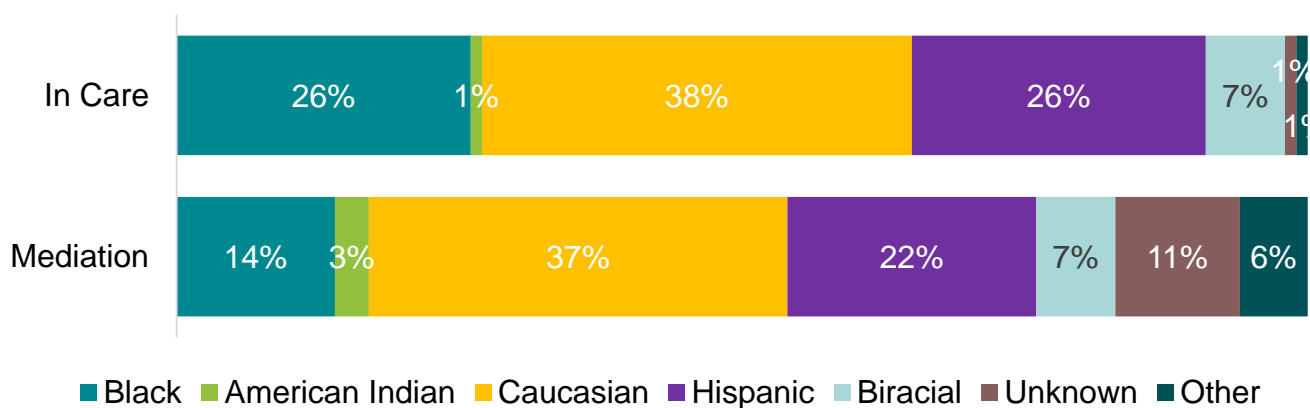
and the time between a TPR order and adoption. All youth are statistically similar in terms of time to TPR, but Black youth take significantly longer to reach adoption.



#### Mediation Data

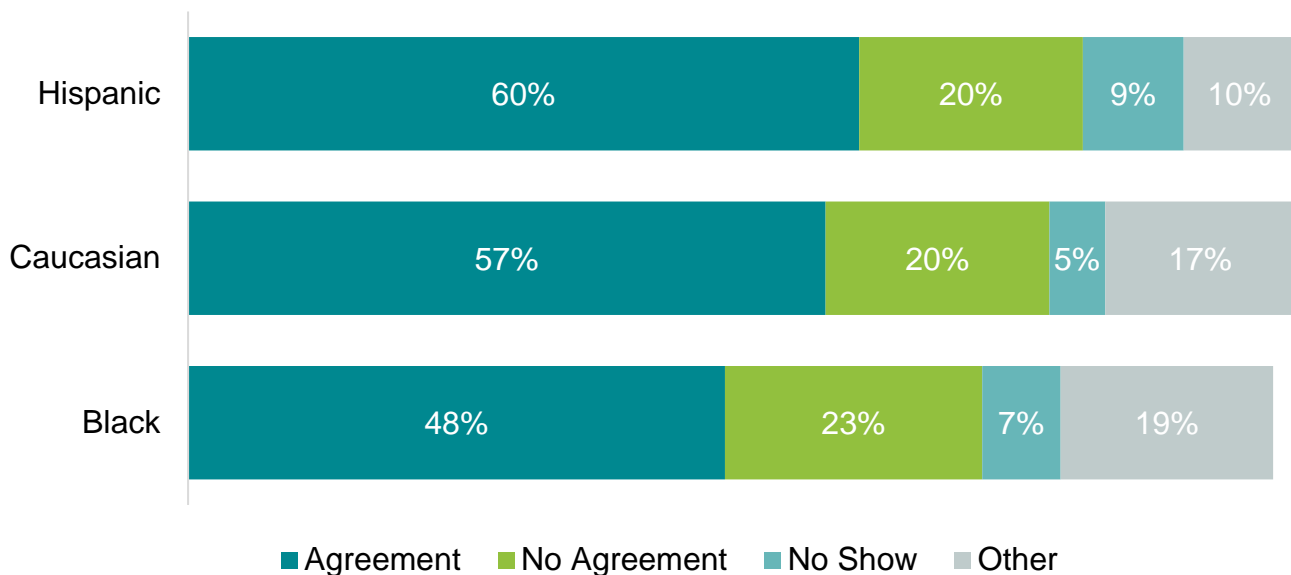
Mediation data were also explored for race differences. Something that stood out from mediation data was that Black family are underrepresented in mediations. While they make up 26% of youth in care, only 14% of mediations are for Black families.

Race of Children in Care Compared to Children Whose Families With a Mediation



The other thing of note from the mediations was that Black families have the lowest agreement rate and the highest no agreement rate of all families in foster care. This difference was not statistically significant.

## Mediation Agreement by Race/Ethnicity



## Conclusions and Recommendations

This report provides an initial exploration into race differences for children in foster care in the state of Nevada. The data are not meant to answer all questions about race equity, but rather to serve as a starting point in digging deeper into race equity in the state. These data represent statewide numbers, but judicial districts vary widely in terms of their demographics, practices, and outcomes for youth. These data should be used as a starting point and paired with local data to best understand what the differences are in practices and outcomes for children of color in foster care. Suggested next steps for better understanding race equity are:

- *Work with each judicial district to understand their local data.* Each judicial district was provided their own data. Working with each site to support their understanding of the data and identification of additional data they need to answer their questions would help them identify concrete local strategies.
- *Gather user data from parents and youth to explore perception of court practice.* A parent survey was implemented in the state, but lacked sufficient numbers of Black parents to understand their perspective. Further efforts to increase the sample size of Black families is needed. Efforts to survey or talk with youth could also provide additional data into the unique challenges that families might face in working with the child welfare system.
- *Dig deeper into statistically significant issues.* For example, Black short stayers are overrepresented in foster care. Washoe and Clark counties have high rates of short stayers. Both counties should explore more in-depth whether they have higher rates of Black short stayers and why that difference exist. Black children are also less likely to be

adopted than other youth (and take longer to achieve adoption). It is important to explore these issues in more depth.

- *Identify what additional data are needed to better understand race equity.* The current report offers high level information on placement, timeliness, and outcomes. There are many additional things that sites (or the CIP) may want to know to inform systems change efforts. These data are a starting point and should be used to think critically about what else is necessary to know to make informed decisions. This will help with development of future data collection efforts.
- *Begin conversations on the **causes** of differences.* This report illustrates that there are differences that do exist. However, it does not provide an explanation of *why* differences exist. Site professionals (e.g., judges, attorneys, caseworkers) and parents are uniquely suited to best understand why practices and outcomes may vary by race of the family. Discovering why a difference exists is critical in determining what type of intervention to develop to improve equity in the state.
- *Consider collecting race data for all interventions in the state.* This report shows differences in placement, removal reasons, and outcomes for children in foster care. It also shows some differences in how Black families access services (like mediation). It is important to start tracking both which families are served by specific programs or interventions in the state as well as how effective these programs are for all families.