

These 2020 Data Briefs highlight and track long-term trends associated with progress towards the 2020 Strategy goals. Their purpose is to help internal and external stakeholders analyze these key trends with respect to our shared goals.

California by the numbers:

- Number of children in out-of-home care: 76,310 (2007)
- Number of children in the state: 10,007,501 (2007)
- Approximate percentage of nation's foster care population in California: 16.7%
- Approximate percentage of nation's total population of children living in California: 13.2%
- Rate of children in out-of-home care per 1,000 children: 7.3 (2007), compared to 6.9 nationally (2005)
- Number of children entering care: 34,282 (2007)
- Rate of children entering care: 4.5 (2007), compared to 4.2 nationally (2005)

CALIFORNIA

2020 Data Brief

How has California's breakthrough series collaborative (BSC) on differential response reduced the number of children in out-of-home care?

What's the issue and how is it relevant to our 2020 Strategy?

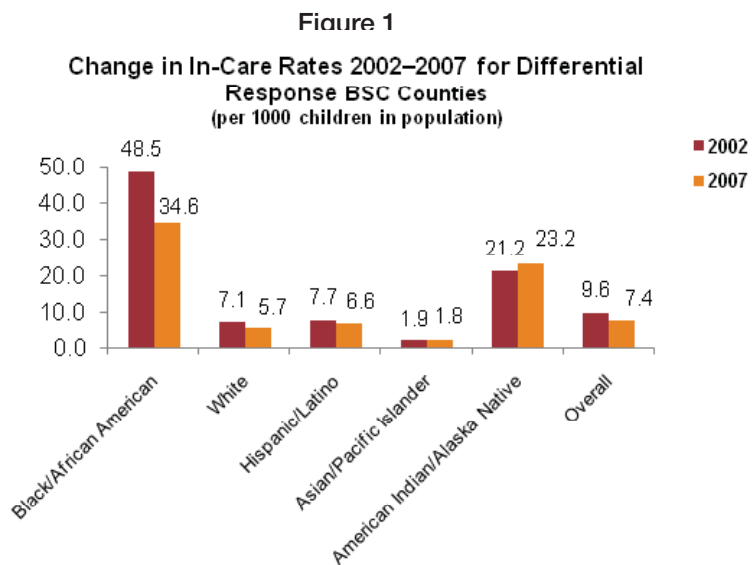
The primary goal of the 2020 Strategy is to safely reduce the number of children in foster care by 50 percent. Reducing entries into care, shortening the length of stay in care, and increasing exits are the three elements of reduction. California's implementation of differential response addresses all three elements by providing suitable alternatives for placing youth in care, increasing family involvement in case planning, and strengthening community partnerships to support families.

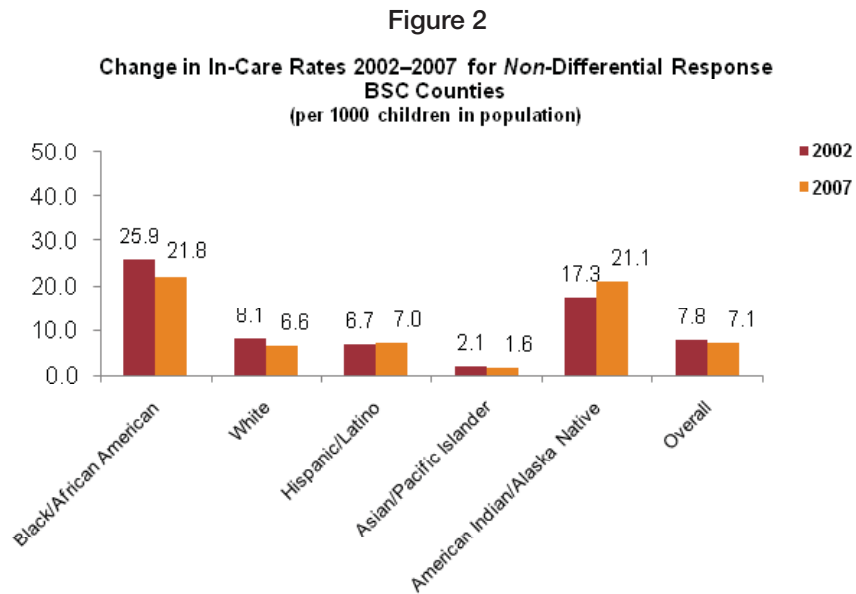
Background: The California differential response BSC

The California differential response BSC began in January of 2003 and produced a final report in 2007. Forty-three of California's 58 counties participated in the BSC, including Los Angeles, Alameda, San Diego and Sacramento Counties. The full final report is available at www.casey.org.

What do the numbers tell us?

The rate of children in care is defined as the number of children in care per 1,000 children in the general population. Looking at this rate over time is a straightforward way of seeing how much a jurisdiction is reducing its foster care population. In California, this rate has been decreasing since 1999: from 11.5 children down to 7.3 in 2007. How might this reduction be tied to the differential response BSC?





To begin assessing the impact of the differential response BSC on reduction, it is helpful to compare in-care rates from BSC and non-BSC counties since 2002. (See Figures 1 and 2.)ⁱ Although the 2007 overall in-care rate in non-BSC counties is lower than in BSC counties, the BSC counties showed more improvement in reducing the rate of children in care. The BSC counties decreased their rate by 22.9 percent compared to a 9.0 percent reduction for non-BSC counties. The rate of African American children in care also dropped more significantly in counties that participated in the BSC: 28.7 percent compared to 15.8 percent for non-BSC counties. Although the rate of Latino children in care actually increased for non-BSC counties, it showed a decrease in BSC counties. In both cases the rate of American Indian and Alaska Native children in care increased, but less so for BSC counties.

What's next

It is important to note that these numbers in no way prove that the differential response BSC is the sole cause of the differences in these counties. These numbers do, however, provide a reason to perform more rigorous analysis that might tie the BSC to reduction results. Casey and our partners in California are exploring ways to acquire more information about the results of the BSC.

i Child Welfare Services Reports for California. Retrieved February 14, 2008, from University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research Web site. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/>. These data only include child welfare cases.