



**breakthrough
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collaborative

Reducing Racial Disproportionality And Disparate
Outcomes For Children And Families Of Color In
The Child Welfare System

Acknowledgments

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I: Introduction: Overview of Racial Disproportionality and Disparate Outcomes

The statistics paint a disturbing picture. At every point along the child welfare continuum, children and families of color are represented in numbers that far exceed their relative proportion in the population. Rates of substantiated maltreatment, entry into out-of-home care, and length of stay are all higher for children of color than for their white counterparts while family reunification and exit rates are lower.

Yet this comparison belies the fact that outcomes for white children and families in the child welfare system are also less than desirable. The hope in this Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) is that by improving the system for children and families of color—those who are most disadvantaged by the current system—the system will ultimately be improved for all children and families.

Disproportionality of children of color is the result of multiple disadvantages that are social, political, economic, and attitudinal in nature. Specific factors leading to disproportionality in the child welfare system include poverty, classism, racism, less than responsive organizational culture and service strategies, and inadequate resources. Of these factors, poverty has frequently been singled out as the major contributing factor. However, no significant racial differences in the incidence of maltreatment were found in the previous findings of the National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS) for NIS-2 or NIS-3¹, suggesting that race could influence the institutional response to maltreatment, thus resulting in higher substantiation and placement rates for children of color. Further research has also documented that race does in fact play a role in the decisions made by supervisors and child welfare workers at various critical decision points, including reporting, investigations, substantiations, placement in foster care, and exits from foster care². These decision-making dynamics

¹ U.S. DHHS. Administration for Children and Families (1980-1996). National Incidence Study I, II, & III, Washington, D.C.

² For a review of disparity-related research at each of the critical child welfare decision points, see Hill, 2006.

have also been cited as significant contributing factors to disparate outcomes for children and families of color.

Concerned child welfare administrators, scholars, researchers, and workers have puzzled over the problem for more than 30 years. Yet because it stems from a complex network of social and political disadvantages at the individual and institutional levels, many leaders assume it is simply the norm and believe that there is little they can do to change it. In the meantime, disproportionality and disparate outcomes for children and families of color in the child welfare system continue to increase.

Casey Family Programs believes that we can no longer afford to step softly around this problem; we must be willing to wake up and awaken others to confront institutional and individual issues that perpetuate disproportionality. Child welfare leaders in several jurisdictions around the country were invited to step up to the challenge and initiate strategies targeting institutional and practice biases that impact outcomes for children of color and their families. This work requires bold action and innovative leadership to make a lasting difference.

This BSC leveraged the wisdom, experience, and knowledge of national experts to create a practice framework. This framework was used by public child welfare teams representing states, counties, and tribes to test ideas aimed at reducing racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes through the development of small-scale strategies and interventions that could be tested, implemented, and measured in rapid cycles.

Challenges Associated with Addressing Racial Disproportionality and Disparate Outcomes

Public child welfare administrators have identified several challenges to addressing racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes in a meaningful and impactful way. The following are several that were shared across jurisdictions:

- Widespread lack of professional and public awareness
- Unavailability of family support services and resources
- Reluctance to address structural and institutional racism
- Limited cultural competence of agency staff
- Limited cultural relevance of agency services and service providers
- Lack of racial/ethnic diversity among staff and service providers
- Challenge of engaging other systems and community partners
- Agency policies and systemic practices

Our Vision

Our vision for this BSC was that participating jurisdictions would contribute to the development of child welfare systems that are free of structural racism and that benefit all children, families, and communities by:

- Engaging with a group of other jurisdictions in critical change activities
- Creating environments in which strategies can be developed and tested
- Developing a cadre of leaders across the country who are working toward solutions
- Creating and sustaining partnerships to advance the work
- Disseminating lessons learned

Report Purpose and Overview

This report has been developed to describe the Breakthrough Series Collaborative methodology and the experience of those jurisdictions that participated in the Disproportionality BSC. Included in this report is a detailed description of those strategies that participants developed during this process. While many ideas were tested by participants during this process, the strategies described in this report are those that were reported by the jurisdictions as having the greatest potential to show progress over time³.

³ For more information about the effectiveness of the Disproportionality Breakthrough Series Collaborative, including a more complete analysis of major outcomes and lessons learned, see evaluation report by Ward, 2008.

II: Background and Overview of the Breakthrough Series Collaborative

The Breakthrough Series Collaborative methodology was developed in 1995 by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) and Associates in Process Improvement (API). This quality improvement method has grown into an international movement in health care.

In 2001, based on the success of IHI, Casey brought the BSC methodology to the field of child welfare. In collaboration with IHI, Casey launched its first BSC, Improving Health Care for Children in Foster Care. Since then, Casey has directly coordinated six other BSCs that address significant issues facing agencies serving children in foster care, including:

- Improving Health Care for Children in Foster Care (2001-2002)
- Recruiting and Retaining Foster Families (2003-2004)
- California State Differential Response (2004-2005)
- Supporting Kinship Care (2004-2005)
- Reducing Disproportionality and Disparate Outcomes for Children and Families of Color in the Child Welfare System (2005-2006)
- Improving Educational Continuity and School Stability for Children in Out-of-Home Care (2006-2007)
- Timely Permanence through Reunification (2008-2010)

In addition to the above listed BSCs, Casey Family Programs has also sponsored collaboratives on additional critical issues through partnerships with external organizations:

- American Humane Association: Safety and Risk Assessments (2007-2010)

- Georgetown University Center for Juvenile Justice Reform: Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Integration (2008-2010)
- State of California: CA Disproportionality Project (2007-2010)
- State of California: Independent Living Transformation (2007-2010)
- New England Commissioner’s Roundtable: Safety and Risk Assessments (2008-2010)

Key Aspects of the BSC Methodology

In a BSC, teams from public and tribal child welfare agencies across the country come together to rapidly test strategies in order to improve a prevailing issue in child welfare. Each team is guided and mentored by experts in the field as they develop, test, improve, implement, and spread their successful strategies. Teams share lessons learned via a secured Internet site, phone conferences, and three 2-day meetings called Learning Sessions. The process typically takes approximately 18 months from planning to completion.

A unique feature of the Disproportionality BSC experience was the addition of a Post-BSC Working Period, extending participation in the collaborative process for selected participants for an additional 10 months and allowing for continued development and implementation of promising strategies. Also added was a Post-BSC Convening, in essence an additional learning session for those participants involved in this extended period.

The BSC methodology differs from a standard pilot or implementation project in several ways. The key aspects that set apart a BSC include the following characteristics.

- **The use of the BSC model for improvement**
- **Anyone can have and test ideas**
- **Consensus is not needed**
- **Ideas are openly shared**
- **Successes are spread quickly**
- **We measure to gauge improvement**

The Use of the BSC Model for Improvement

The BSC Model for Improvement uses Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles as the catalyst for the rapid changes that each BSC witnesses. Instead of spending a long time planning for massive changes, teams are encouraged to test an idea as soon as it occurs. Teams are encouraged never to plan more than they can actually do—and if they can’t complete their test “by next Tuesday,” they need to make their test even smaller.

Anyone Can Have and Test Ideas

Ideas to test should come from every team participant—not just from management.

Hotline workers, screeners, family members involved with the system, community partners, and management—all have a great deal of experience and knowledge, and all are thus a source of good ideas that can be tested.

Consensus Is Not Needed

The BSC encourages participants to test their ideas in the field instead of talking about their ideas in a meeting room. Consensus is not needed for participants to test their ideas.

Ideas Are Openly Shared

This methodology has the word *collaborative* in its title for a specific reason. Each participating team in the BSC benefits greatly from the successes and discoveries of the other teams. There are several levels of collaboration necessary for teams to be successful in a Breakthrough Series Collaborative: interteam, intrateam, and community.

Interteam Collaboration

At the broadest level, a BSC is a collaboration of teams from across the country. While Casey supports the teams by providing access to expert faculty, we have found that teams learn best from one another. Cross-team sharing is encouraged through regular conference calls, a secured internet site, a newsletter, and three in-person 2-day Learning Sessions. Because multistate collaborative efforts require a significant expenditure of resources, opportunities of this kind are, unfortunately, rare for most public child welfare agencies.

Intrateam Collaboration

The second type of collaboration exists within each jurisdiction's BSC team. BSC core team membership represents various levels of the public child welfare agency, courts, and community-based organizations, in addition to birth parents, youth, and alumni who have had direct involvement with the child welfare system. The extended team membership varies across jurisdictions but typically includes a broad representation of stakeholders. Faculty members coach these inclusive teams on how to value the voice of each team member and honor the voices of youth and families.

Community Collaboration

The final level of collaboration challenges jurisdictions to improve the way they partner with communities and other systems in their efforts to improve some aspect of child welfare practice. This collaboration is independent of the BSC organizational structure, reflecting a change in agency practice.

Successes Are Spread Quickly

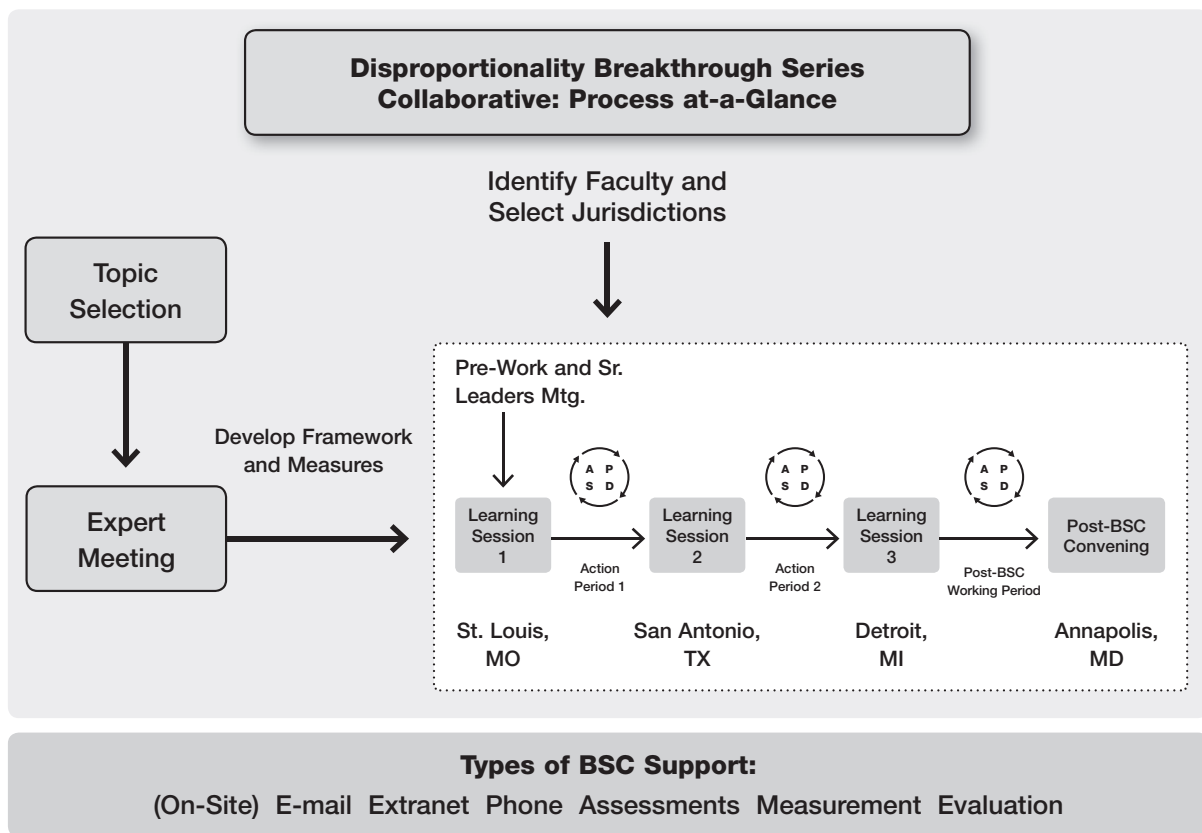
Many pilot projects begin and then remain only in a pilot site. Or even worse, once a “pilot project” is completed, the pilot somehow disappears. The BSC method tries to prevent this from happening. Once a change has been tested successfully in the pilot site, the

team is responsible for spreading that change throughout the agency and jurisdiction.

We Measure to Gauge Improvement

The BSC strives to gauge improvements over time. Each participating team is encouraged to track and report on specific measures monthly for the purpose of self-evaluation. By looking at progress in these measures as well as documenting their small-scale practice changes, teams can monitor their progress and improvements over time.

Figure 1 – BSC Process at-a-Glance

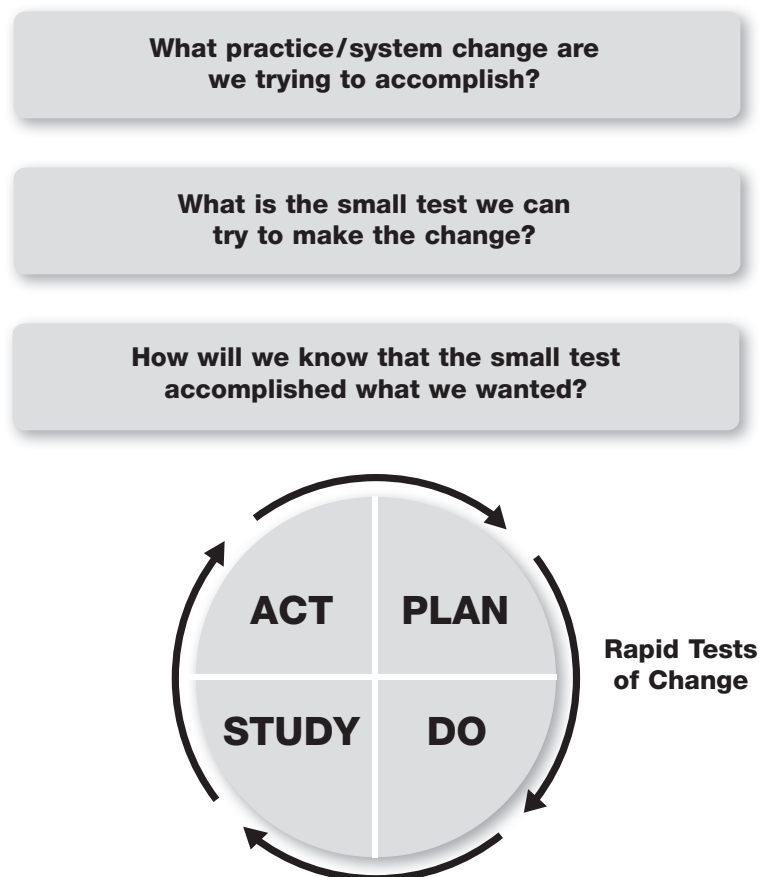


The Model for Improvement

The BSC emphasizes rapid, small-scale tests of change using the Model for Improvement developed by Associates in Process Improvement. Teams conduct Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles geared toward addressing specific changes the team would like to see happen within their system. Using small tests minimizes the time spent planning and reduces the consequences of implementing unsuccessful ideas and strategies.

Teams are encouraged never to plan for more than they can actually do—and if they are not able to complete their test rapidly, they are encouraged to make their test even smaller. Critical aspects of a successful PDSA process are defining the hypothesis of the small test of change and taking the time to determine if the intended outcome occurred. Teams who are most successful using the Model for Improvement understand the importance of not over-planning; developing a clear “prediction” of what they hope will occur during the test; keeping tests very small; and, immediately following the test, determining whether their prediction was accurate.

Figure 2 – Model for Improvement



What Makes Teams Successful in Using the BSC Methodology?

Casey Family Programs strives to use the Breakthrough Series methodology as a means to identify promising practices and encourage change in the child welfare system. From our process of analysis that follows every BSC, Casey's Systems Improvement Technical Assistance Unit has identified the following key factors of team success.

Dedicated Core Team

While teams are selected from jurisdictions that are progressive leaders in appreciating and beginning to address a specific challenge in child welfare practice (the topic of each respective BSC), ultimately their individual successes depend on the capacity of staff to fully participate in this process. All of the participating teams are able to develop and test strategies for change; however, not all are able to successfully implement and sustain these strategies. This challenge can be partially attributed to the difficulty some team members experience in devoting time to the project. Balancing the responsibility of managing cases and working toward systemic change can be overwhelming. Without the flexibility and ability to focus on BSC work efforts as opposed to case management, team members will naturally focus on their primary work efforts first.

For teams to fully benefit from the BSC experience, they must be able to access and participate in team collaboration. Teams that do not join all the collaborative calls or actively use the secured Internet site do not benefit from the full experience of peer-to-peer learning.

Committed Leadership

The BSC methodology requires that all team members participate in the development, planning, and testing of strategies. All team members, regardless of status, have a place and voice in this process; it is up to the senior leadership and day-to-day managers, however, to remove barriers and hold team members accountable. A commitment to improving practice and changing agency culture must be championed, supported, pushed, and led by the agency leadership. A lack of this investment will produce a low-quality return on the work and impede overall systems improvement.

Strong senior leadership plays a significant role in the success of BSC teams. Without a strong leader willing to clear the way for this process, the work will fail to move forward. The leadership of the BSC teams varies significantly, and as a result the success of teams does as well. While all teams experience challenges with resources and funding, it is apparent that teams with a strong, committed, and invested leader are better able to creatively navigate the challenges and produce innovative changes.

Integrating This Work into the Agency

The most successful teams find explicit ways of integrating the work of the BSC into their agency's strategic plan and priorities. The BSC methodology cannot be perceived as a new initiative; it must be viewed as a means to achieve what the agency already wants

to do in a more efficient and rapid manner. By understanding the priorities of the agency, teams are more successful at prioritizing the small tests of change and concentrating on the key areas that will result in maximum system improvement.

The Capacity to Track and Report Successes

Working to change a practice or change entrenched systems is difficult. Small changes in outcomes for children and families can motivate teams to “keep up the good work.” Teams that regularly track the progress and success of PDSAs and measures are better able to adjust their focus if needed and communicate their improvements effectively.

An Engaged Extended Team

The ultimate goal of a BSC is to spread successful tests of change throughout the organization and community. The core team is a small group of individuals committed to the issue—in this case, reducing and eliminating racial disproportionality and disparities. The core team alone is not sufficient to spread and sustain changes in practice. Others within the agency and community must be brought into the change process.

III: The Framework for Change

The Disproportionality BSC Framework for Change identified the key aspects of system operations that child welfare systems must address to reduce and ultimately eliminate racial disparities. The framework was not prescriptive but instead identified overarching principles to guide agency functioning and seven key component areas that, if addressed in policy, programming, practice, and training, are likely to lead to positive outcomes. See Appendix A to review the complete Disproportionality Framework for Change.

Applying a Structural Racism Lens

An analysis of structural and institutional racism was incorporated into the framework in an effort to explore and more fully understand the influence of race on institutional responses to families and decision making. Structural racism is the lens through which the BSC teams sought to understand these complex dynamics during the disproportionality BSC. Structural racism refers to the many factors that work to produce and maintain racial inequities in America today. It identifies aspects of history and culture that have allowed the privileges associated with “whiteness” and the disadvantages associated with “color” to endure and adapt within the political economy over time. It also points out the ways in which public policies, institutional practices, and cultural representations reproduce racially inequitable outcomes.

An approach of the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change¹ also provided a structure through which participants could use this structural racism *lens* to more fully recognize and understand:

1. The racial legacy of American society and the specific historical role of child welfare institutions
2. The meaning and significance of race in the relationship of families and communities of color to this society
3. How racism persists in our national policies, institutional practices, and cultural representations

¹ For a more comprehensive description of this structural racism analysis and lens, see Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, 2004.

4. How racism is transmitted and either amplified or mitigated through public, private, and community institutions, e.g., child welfare.
5. How individuals internalize and respond to this nation's racialized structures.

Guiding Principles

The public child welfare system is responsible for assuring safety, permanence, and well-being for all children served. In order to effectively meet this obligation for children and families at risk of experiencing disproportionality and disparate outcomes, the following basic principles should guide all policies, programs, practices, services, and supports.

- Clear agency mission with respect to racial equity and bias
- Family-centered and culturally responsive
- Minimum level of intrusion
- Strengths-based framework
- Continuity of family and community connections
- Open dialogue about race and racism
- Continuous assessment of policies and practices
- Advocacy for optimal resource alignment
- Cross-systems leadership and collaboration
- Community partnerships

Key Components

The principles described above can be translated into practice through seven component areas of a child welfare agency's work. Optimal improvements in the overall system of working with and supporting children and families who are involved with the child welfare system will occur when improvements in each of these seven individual components are achieved.

1. Design agency mission, vision, values, policies, and protocols that support anti-racist practice.
2. Develop cross-systems leadership to address issues related to disproportionality and disparity in outcomes for children and families of color in the child welfare system.
3. Collaborate with key stakeholders to support families in the context of their communities and tribes so as to safely divert them away from the child welfare system, whenever possible.
4. Create partnership between agency and community about child maltreatment, disproportionality, racism, and culture to focus on how communities can develop strategies to build the protective capacity of neighborhoods, tribes, and families.

5. Train and educate the agency staff and stakeholders about institutional and structural racism and its impact on decision making, policy, and practice.
6. Use cultural values, beliefs, and practices of families, communities, and tribes to shape family assessment, case planning, case service design, and the case decision-making process.
7. Develop and use data in partnership with families, communities, universities, staff, courts, and other stakeholders to assess agency success at key decision points in addressing disproportionality and disparate outcomes for children of color in the child welfare system.

Why Use a Framework?

Using a framework gives teams several advantages:

- The framework helps agencies to bridge the gap between knowledge and practice. The intention of a BSC is not to create an entirely new body of knowledge. Instead, a BSC is intended to fill the gap between what is known as “promising practice” and what is actually practiced in the field. The framework helps teams prioritize their work in order to focus on the most important areas of improvement. It also serves as a catalyst to generate ideas that move jurisdictions toward system and organizational culture change.
- It is intentionally comprehensive. The framework calls for improvements in all levels of child welfare system functioning including working directly with families, shaping policy, and collaborating with other systems, organizations, and communities. Making improvements at all levels helps ensure that the changes made during the BSC are sustainable.
- The framework guides the work of the team. They use the framework as a way to assess where they need to make changes and determine where they want to focus the strategies and small tests of change, as discussed in the Model for Improvement.

IV: Team Selection and Support

Following a competitive process in which applications were submitted from and interviews were completed by public child welfare agencies and tribes across the country, 13 teams were selected to participate in this Breakthrough Series Collaborative. Casey Family Programs selected jurisdictions with a high level of interest and readiness for this BSC, as demonstrated by the work already underway in documenting and addressing racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes and the commitment of the jurisdictions' leadership. See Appendix B for a complete list of participating public child welfare agencies.

Although all of the jurisdictions had distinguished themselves as progressive leaders in understanding and addressing racial disproportionality and disparities in their child welfare systems, several major factors influenced the level of readiness for participation in this BSC: (1) capacity to use data in documenting racial disproportionality and disparities; (2) an explicit commitment by the agency commissioner and/or director to create space for open dialogue about structural and institutional racism; (3) the capacity to track and report successes and challenges over time; and (4) the availability of leaders, staff, and other team members to dedicate time and energy to this work. The teams selected included state and county public child welfare agencies, including one partnership between a state child welfare agency and the local office of Indian child welfare.

Team Composition

Each jurisdiction was required to secure the authorization and active participation of the executive-level leadership within their respective jurisdiction (e.g., state or county commissioner, agency director) and was first asked to identify a *target site* where they would concentrate their work. The target site is the location within the public child welfare agency where the work is initially concentrated. While the process of identifying a target site varied from one jurisdiction to the next, many target sites were area or regional offices and/or within specific supervisory units. A

senior leadership group was developed in each target site and included a senior-level child welfare agency administrator, a senior-level administrator from a partnering human service system, as well as a sitting judge from the jurisdiction's family or juvenile court system.

A *core team* was then developed within each jurisdiction's target site and included one representative of each of the following stakeholder groups: (1) mid-level public child welfare agency supervisor or manager, (2) public child welfare agency staff, (3) birth parent with previous formal child welfare system involvement, (4) alumnus/alumna from foster care or youth formerly in foster care, and (5) a partnering community-based organization. A sixth member of the *core team* was allowed and could represent any one of the previously mentioned stakeholder groups. All of the participating jurisdictions then formed *extended community teams* that were comprised of additional representatives of the previously mentioned senior leadership and stakeholder groups.

Support Available to BSC Teams

Teams benefited from a number of resources while participating in the BSC, including access to national expert faculty, cross-team learning, shared learning opportunities with a group of peers from across the country, and support from the BSC staff.

BSC Faculty

The work of each team, as well as the direction of the overall BSC, was guided by the BSC faculty and co-chairs. Each of the faculty members and co-chairs brought a varied and unique perspective to issues surrounding the relevance and impact of race and culture on child welfare system functioning. Faculty members represented public agencies, tribes, community-based organizations, and constituent perspectives. The faculty worked diligently to advance the ideas for organizational improvement strategies and to increase the knowledge base of all participants around the role of structural and institutional racism in producing racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes for children and families involved with the child welfare system. See Appendix D for a list of Disproportionality BSC Faculty.

Cross-Team Learning Sessions

The BSC brought teams together for three in-person meetings called *Learning Sessions*. Each learning session provided teams with an opportunity to share their strategies for engaging in dialogue about racial disparities in child welfare, share their small tests of change, report on their successes and lessons learned, and access the experience of their peers to solve challenges. The periods between learning sessions are called *action periods*. During action periods, cross-team learning occurred through a variety of collaborative supports including regular conference calls, a monthly newsletter, and a secured project Internet site.

National Affinity Groups

The composition of the BSC teams created a unique group of national peer groups, or *affinity groups*, working on reducing and eliminating racial disparities in child welfare. Affinity groups

were formed by each of the respective stakeholder groups represented on each jurisdiction's BSC team and included birth parents, youth and alumni of foster care, senior-level child welfare system leadership, child welfare agency supervisors and staff, as well as community partners. These affinity groups shared strategies, successes, and the challenges of being involved in this work given their particular roles and relationships to the child welfare system.

BSC Staff

Each team received technical assistance and support from Casey Family Programs staff. Along with the faculty, Casey staff helped teams to develop effective strategies for increasing understanding and awareness about racial disproportionality and disparity, and to identify small tests of change, methods for collecting data, and effective strategies for using data within their own agency to support the use of the newly identified promising practice(s). Teams were able to access this support at any time. Helping teams to use data as a way of identifying and showing improvements increases the likelihood that jurisdictions can sustain and spread improvements. A listing of Disproportionality BSC staff and consultants is provided in Appendix E.

V: Preparing for This Work

Pre-Work

Upon invitation to participate in a BSC, jurisdictions immediately began to organize their team members to begin the *Pre-Work* period. Pre-work lasted three months and provided an opportunity for jurisdictions to finalize the composition of their BSC team and begin to develop an organizational structure to support regular team communication and to begin a consistent meeting schedule. Teams were asked to meet or at least have structured conversation about their work on a weekly basis. Many participating teams held weekly in-person meetings. Teams whose members were more geographically spread out frequently held meetings every two weeks or monthly, with conference calls and e-mail used to facilitate team sharing and communication in-between.

To support and facilitate full participation, many participating jurisdictions made arrangements to hold team meetings at times and in locations most convenient for the participating youth, alumni, and birth parents (who were often in school or working during the daytime). Meetings were frequently held in schools (with the coordination of the principal and/or guidance counselor), at a local community center, or in a local neighborhood church.

The major purpose of the pre-work period is to prepare participants for the work of the BSC. This includes an introduction to the BSC methodology and Model for Improvement, an introduction to the BSC framework, and the development of a foundation upon which could be sustained frequently challenging discussions about the complexities of the relationship between structural racism, institutional bias, and child welfare practice and decision making. The two major features of the Disproportionality BSC pre-work period included the completion of an agency self-assessment and the convening of senior leaders to prepare the senior-level leaders and judges in each participating jurisdiction to lead this work locally.

Senior Leaders Meeting

This was expected to be challenging work. The BSC experience generally requires a significant time investment by participants, especially at the beginning of the process. Given the analysis of structural racism that we asked participants to explore, it was

expected to be all the more challenging. It was for this reason that we added to this particular collaborative a *Senior Leaders Meeting*. We required the explicit commitment of agency directors and/or commissioners to support their team's exploration of the ways in which structural racism and institutional bias influence child welfare practice and policy, thus contributing to racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes.

The Senior Leaders Meeting was a 2-day in-person meeting held to introduce the senior-level child welfare administrators and participating judges to the BSC methodology and process, as well as to introduce our analysis of structural and institutional bias and its potential impact on child welfare practice and decision making. It was the expectation that participating leaders would be better prepared to introduce and lead conversations about these complex dynamics at home after having had an opportunity to explore them with their peers from around the country and the collaborative faculty. The Senior Leaders Meeting proved to be invaluable to the participants who were responsible for leading and guiding this work in their local jurisdictions.

Agency Self-Assessment

The work of teams participating in any BSC is typically guided by a BSC framework developed especially for the BSC topic. To assist teams in identifying a “starting point” for their BSC work, an agency self-assessment tool is developed and administered in the target site of each BSC team's work efforts. The purpose of the self-assessment tool and process is simply to provide an opportunity for team members to provide input that will help the team determine how to prioritize and implement work efforts during the BSC.

The agency self-assessment tool for the Disproportionality BSC was developed using the ideas and strategies described in the components and subcomponents of the BSC framework. A team of Casey BSC staff developed the 135-item survey for individual BSC team members to complete independently. The self-assessment instrument took approximately 45 minutes for team members to complete.

The agency self-assessment tool described different action steps that child welfare agencies can take in order to reduce disproportionality and disparate outcomes for children and families of color in the child welfare system. In the *Current Practice* rating section of the assessment, participants were asked to rate each statement on a 1 to 5 scale according to the extent to which it was currently practiced within the target site of their respective child welfare agency. The *Relative Importance* rating section asked participants to rate each statement on a 1 to 5 scale in terms of how important they thought it was for their child welfare agency to address this action step relative to the other suggested action steps; in this section, we were looking for *relative* importance so that each team could identify priority action items. See Appendix C for a copy of the Agency Self Assessment.

Using the Concept Mapping technology developed by *Concept Systems*, we were able to create suggested “go-zones” in which jurisdictions could prioritize their early BSC work efforts. These go-zones identified potential high-performance and high-impact areas of systems operation

based on what their team collectively considered to be very important strategies for addressing disproportionality, and areas of functioning in which they were not currently performing well.

The BSC staff organized each team's agency self-assessment results and facilitated for each team a process that supported both a team relationship-building purpose as well as a process for prioritizing their team's early BSC work. These facilitated discussions focused on team member perceptions of the following:

- Areas of agreement and disagreement among team members
- Consideration of role, perspective, and lens through which they approached their work
- Structural racism and institutional bias lens
- Climate of agency and targeted office
- Strength of leadership support
- Preparation and ground work necessary
- Sequencing considerations

The process of sorting through and talking through these dynamics helped teams in developing an open, safe, and constructive space for engaging in what we called *courageous conversations* about racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes, and child welfare practice and policy. This early process, guided by the data report from their-self assessment process, served as a model for how teams could use data (or some other body of information) to guide discussion forums and other discussions about what are often very personal ideas, reflections, and perspectives. It also highlighted the importance of each individual participant's perspective in shaping the team's prioritization, planning, and decision-making process. This facilitated process led by "neutral" BSC staff was very instrumental in neutralizing the inherent power dynamic present with the particular composition of these BSC teams.

VI: Strategies for Reducing Racial Disproportionality and Disparate Outcomes

This section of the report presents the major strategies developed by participating jurisdictions with the goal of reducing and ultimately eliminating racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes for children and families of color in the child welfare system. As jurisdictions began to develop their strategies, it became increasingly clear that many of the strategies being developed actually responded simultaneously to two or more components of the Disproportionality BSC. When reporting their strategies over time, teams listed the various components of the framework they believed that their strategies connected to.

For the purpose of organizing the strategies for this report, we have presented the strategies within a scheme that we believe more effectively captures the logical progression of how these strategies developed over the course of the BSC experience:

- Building Awareness and Understanding
- Community and Stakeholder Engagement
- Agency Policies and Procedures
- Child Welfare Practice and Decision Making
- Workforce Development
- Judicial System Involvement

Building Awareness and Understanding

Use of Administrative Data

The use and sharing of data were critical to agency efforts to address racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes. At a minimum, it was critical for agencies to access outcomes and SACWIS data by race and ethnicity at critical decision

points. Agency leaders found that “leading with data” was important for those individuals who are inclined to dismiss information about racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes. Access to administrative data often allowed administrators and supervisors to highlight the increasingly poor outcomes for children and families of color at each of the successive stages of involvement during the typical path of a family’s involvement with the child welfare system as mere speculation.

In jurisdictions with more advanced administrative data systems, administrators were able to report their data (organized by race and ethnicity at critical decision points) by supervisory unit within each of their major program and service areas. This was especially useful as a way of focusing special attention and increased agency resources on those supervisory units with the most severe racial outcome disparities.

Community Forums

Community forums were held to inform the general public and key community stakeholders about the poor state of affairs for children and families of color involved with the child welfare system. During these forums, community members were presented an overview of child welfare outcome data, organized by race and ethnicity at major case decision points, followed by an open dialogue about how the public child welfare agency and community partners can work more cooperatively in meeting the needs of children and families.

In a number of jurisdictions, community forums were held at churches or community centers within specific neighborhoods experiencing the greatest numbers of child maltreatment reports and removal rates. Community residents, civic leaders, and leaders from the local faith community were frequently invited to attend and participate in community forums. Frequently, attendees at these forums were subsequently invited to participate on the agency’s BSC extended community team and/or agency-led disproportionality workgroups. These workgroups often became the driver of ongoing disproportionality and disparity reduction efforts within the public child welfare agency.

In an effort to address racial disparities in child welfare, the director of the public child welfare agency in Ramsey County, MN, for example, reached out to community leaders of each of the ethnic minority/cultural communities (African American, Hmong, and Hispanic/Latino). Ramsey County developed a strategy to hire a “cultural consultant” from each of these cultural communities to assist in reducing the levels of mistrust and misunderstanding between the respective cultural communities and the public child welfare agency. This cultural consultant strategy was instrumental in driving the disproportionality and disparity reduction efforts in Ramsey County.

Internal Agency Discussion Forums

Internal agency presentations and discussion forums were held to familiarize colleagues with the reality of racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes, and their participation in the Disproportionality BSC. Similar to the use of data in community forums, staff and agency

administrators were provided an overview of child welfare data by race and ethnicity at critical decision points, and engaged in a discussion about potential contributing factors, the potential role of institutional and individual bias in decision making, and possible strategies for reducing these disparities.

Engagement of Birth Parents, Youth, and Alumni

The engagement of alumni and birth parents provided agencies with a reflective and often critical perspective on the ways families experience the child welfare system. In addition to sharing their personal experiences with members of the BSC team, birth parents, youth, and alumni with direct foster care experience worked alongside agency staff and administrators, community partners, and judges to brainstorm more affective and culturally responsive ways to support families and children. In many jurisdictions, alumni and birth parent representatives were actively involved in leading community forums as well as internal agency information sessions and discussion forums.

Undoing Racism Workshop

Many participating jurisdictions participated in the Undoing Racism Workshop facilitated by the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond. After the initial overview of key themes and definitions shared at the first learning session, many jurisdictions partnered directly with the People's Institute to facilitate workshops for their respective agency's senior-level leadership, supervisors, and caseworkers. Jurisdictions found this most useful in creating a common language and framework for understanding and discussing race and racism, with a particular focus on the role of institutions.

Several participating counties developed extensive partnerships with the People's Institute to lead workshops designed to increase mutual understanding across systems about the potential role of institutions in creating and exacerbating racial disparities in child welfare, education, and juvenile justice system outcomes. In Guilford County, NC, for example, public child welfare agency officials partnered with the People's Institute to facilitate workshops involving all county public child welfare agency administrators and supervisors, the public school system's central office and local school administrators, as well as police officers assigned to local schools. Through this partnership, each of these systems committed to achieving more culturally responsive practices and closer working relationships in responding to and meeting the needs of children, families, and the community.

Jefferson County, KY, child welfare officials, as well as Texas CPS officials and community partners also worked closely with the People's Institute to lead workshops for child welfare officials and staff as well as community partners. In all cases, this strategy was critical in transforming professionals' collective understanding of how institutions (including child welfare and other family and community-serving institutions), even unknowingly, promote policies and practices that produce disparate outcomes for children and families of color.

Knowing Who You Are Video and E-Learning

The *Knowing Who You Are (KWYA)* video and e-learning, developed by Casey Family Programs, has been a particularly effective tool for familiarizing both social service professionals and community members with the importance of understanding and being responsive to racial and ethnic identity development among youth in foster care. Many jurisdictions showed the KWYA video and followed the screening immediately with a structured dialogue about the perspectives shared in the video. Staff and other viewers were often challenged with identifying ways they could be more responsive to related child social and psychological developmental dynamics in their ongoing interaction with families and other professionals. A number of participating teams reported that an increased focus on these dynamics with youth in foster care and their foster parents positively influenced youth/foster parent relationships, thus improving placement stability.

Members of the Connecticut BSC team began by showing the KWYA video to a small number of unit administrators, supervisors, and staff. A designated facilitator took several minutes to introduce the major ideas before showing the video. Immediately following, the facilitator used several questions to structure a guided discussion about the video and its potential implications for working with youth and families. After each viewing, team members asked participants for their opinion about how engaging and useful the screening and discussion was and how it could be improved, with a particular focus on how to use this video in support of child welfare practice and cultural responsiveness. Team members continued to refine this process with each viewing and facilitated discussion. This video was eventually incorporated into the agency's employee orientation and training process. For continuing professional development, employees were encouraged to complete the *Knowing Who You Are* e-learning curriculum.

Public Relations Strategies

Several participating jurisdictions used public relations strategies to inform the broader community about racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes in child welfare. These strategies were frequently time-consuming yet effective in helping teams develop a clear message about current outcome disparities and their interest in partnering with the community-at-large in becoming more responsive to the real needs of children and families.

In Jefferson County, KY, the resulting public relations strategy took the form of posters, e-mail campaigns, and community forums as well as a publicly accessible Web site developed and maintained by the public child welfare agency specifically designed to inform, obtain feedback from, and organize the greater metropolitan community around providing racially equitable and culturally responsive support to all children, families, and communities. Through this comprehensive strategy, the participating public child welfare agency was able to redefine child welfare and family well-being as a comprehensive community responsibility. This approach provided a foundation upon which they would develop their broader disproportionality and disparity reduction agenda.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Working with Mandatory Reporters

Several participating jurisdictions identified working with mandatory reporters as a major priority. Several public child welfare agencies reviewed their child protective services child maltreatment reports and identified local schools and law enforcement as the most frequent reporters of suspected maltreatment. Specific efforts were undertaken to engage these partnering institutions to further train professionals on mandatory reporting requirements as well as to familiarize them with additional community-based resources that were appropriate for accessing non-maltreatment-related family support needs.

BSC team members from Connecticut began their school-related work by identifying the local elementary school with the highest number of child maltreatment reports to child protective services. They were curious about why their report numbers were so high. After further investigation, they determined that they were receiving a large number of reports for incidents that were perceived to be neglect but not serious enough to warrant removal. The public agency assigned a social worker to work with the school to develop a series of workshops on mandatory reporting requirements and guidelines. In addition, the social worker began a process of identifying all of the organizations and other institutions in the surrounding community that provided supportive services to families and youth. The goal was to develop a resource directory that could be used by school administrators and staff, whenever appropriate, to access supports and services for families connected to the school. It was believed that this would be an effective way of supporting families before their situations became severe enough for formal child welfare system intervention. Upon completion of the resource directory, the social public child welfare agency coordinated a community resource fair at the local elementary school in an effort to familiarize school personnel and other mandatory reporters with the community resources available to support children and families in need. Over time, child welfare officials noticed a significant decrease in the number of child maltreatment reports coming in from that school and the surrounding neighborhood. Plans were made to replicate that same process in other high-impact neighborhoods.

Community-Based Organizations

Public child welfare agencies made special efforts to develop partnerships with diverse community-based organizations. The goal of these partnerships often began as an effort to increase awareness about racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes but evolved into formal efforts to find resource families for children and other forms of support for families in need of services. Public child welfare agencies also relied on these relationships to identify and develop partnerships with unfamiliar and non-traditional community-based service providers with a track record of providing effective services to children and families.

Participating team members in Ramsey County, MN; Jefferson County, KY; and Texas organized meetings and other types of forums as a strategy for engaging the faith community and other community organizations in their racial disparity-related systems improvement

efforts. These efforts were designed to inform these organizations and institutions about disproportionality and disparate outcomes in child welfare, as well as encourage their ongoing participation in providing supports and services to youth and families in their respective communities. Key representatives from each of these organizations were also instrumental in helping the public agency identify all of the other (frequently smaller) organizations that had youth development programs or otherwise provided forms of assistance to youth and families in need.

Engagement of Elected Officials and Community Leaders

Several jurisdictions made a concerted effort to engage elected officials and other community/civic leaders in their disproportionality-related systems improvement efforts. They particularly engaged state and local elected officials, faith leaders, and other respected community officials to help reflect critically on the enduring needs of families and the ways in which formal institutions (e.g., public child welfare) could be most responsive. Participating jurisdictions found this to be especially critical in gaining buy-in and active support from the community-at-large in their racial equity-focused systems improvement efforts.

Engagement of Elders Councils and Tribal Communities

Several of the participating jurisdictions with a specific focus on American Indian and Alaska Native children organized formal partnerships with their tribal communities as a key component of their participation in this collaborative process. These partnerships allowed for a natural and critical role for the community's elders to inform and guide the thinking about strategies that would be most appropriate and responsive to the needs and cultural traditions of their children, families, and communities. At the forefront of this work was a critical examination of the public agency's familiarity and compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act as well as broader culturally specific cultural responsiveness and professional development activities. This emphasis on developing professional cultural responsiveness strategies extended beyond the formal public child welfare agency to include the intersection of the public agency with the courts, CASAs, as well as the schools.

A challenging aspect of these partnerships was balancing the sense of urgency driving the collaborative's desired system transformation efforts with the responsibility of the elders to reflect thoughtfully and deliberately on the appropriate role and function of formal child welfare systems and their engagement with tribal community children and families. During the period of this BSC, a respectful balance was achieved that facilitated the effort of the agencies with an American Indian and Alaska Native child welfare focus to explore and successfully implement a number of the other improvement strategies described within this report.

Agency Policies and Procedures

Fatherhood Engagement Protocol

Several jurisdictions recognized that they did not do an effective job of identifying and engaging fathers in the case-planning and decision-making process. In many cases, they reported that

mothers frequently state that they don't know where the father is and do not have information about any paternal relatives. With that information, workers were under the impression that they had satisfied their responsibility for inquiring about fathers. Without the mother's cooperation, they stated, there was nothing more for them to do. Some workers in these jurisdictions stated openly that they don't always feel comfortable interacting with the fathers and thus make little effort to find or engage them. Minimal effort was the theme of their responses.

Team members in both Guilford County and Wake County, NC, did a review of open cases in a given unit and discovered that only a very small percentage of these cases had any information about fathers or paternal relatives. A social worker in this unit decided to develop a standard protocol for identifying fathers and their relatives at the earliest stages of a family's involvement with the child welfare system. In doing so, she believed she could increase the number of cases in which information was available about fathers and thus increase the level of engagement of fathers in the planning and decision-making process related to their children.

She developed a set of questions that workers could use during the initial contact with a family. With each of the next several families that the social workers on this team engaged, they continued to refine the language and specificity of the questions so that workers felt comfortable asking the series of questions about fathers and other paternal relatives. Similar questions would be asked of other close family members if helpful. Once comfortable with the questions, they shared them with other supervisory units and social workers and made this a standard part of their initial engagement with families. They used the same process to find information about fathers for already open cases. Participants from this jurisdiction reported that their increased engagement of fathers has led to increased relative placements, increased exits to fathers and paternal relatives, as well as an increase in the number of children who have been diverted from entering care.

Racial Equity Approach to Contract Agency Accountability

Early in the BSC process, senior leaders from several participating public child welfare agencies discussed how challenging it appeared to address racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes when an increasing share of the services and support coordination for youth was being managed by licensed private providers and other community-based organizations that had formal contracts with the public child welfare agency. A number of these participants saw this as a legitimate explanation for why their agencies should not, therefore, be held solely responsible for the disparate outcomes experienced by families.

Child welfare administrators from Jefferson County, KY, decided they would develop a process for holding their private providers and other contractors to the same set of expectations that they were beginning to hold public agency staff with respect to reducing disparate outcomes for youth and families. Public agency administrators worked with key community partners to redevelop their contracting guidelines to include a "racial equity overlay." Potential private contractors were required to provide information in their (renewal) application to the public agency about the racial and ethnic composition of their board of directors, administrators, and

staff, including individuals and other organizations they contracted with to provide services (e.g., mental health assessments, life-skills trainers, mentors, etc.). For their current programs, they were also required to describe the race and ethnic background of youth and families receiving services from them. Lastly, they were required to provide data for particular outcomes and other process measures for youth and families receiving services, including types of services provided, timeliness of service availability, effectiveness of and youth and/or family satisfaction with services, location of services provided, length of time in care for youth under their supervision, number and frequency of visits with friends and family members, and number and types of extracurricular youth development activities they were involved in, among others.

This was the public child welfare agency's attempt to track process measures and other outcomes for youth in the care of private contractors. Agencies were required to establish a baseline at the start of the new contracting period and provide periodic data reports. Agencies that showed little or no progress in their outcomes were required to develop plans for achieving improvements or risk losing their contract with the public agency. After the first year of implementing this new racial equity accountability system, a number of the private agencies demonstrated improved outcomes, including increased levels of family engagement, more timely provision of services to youth and families, and increased numbers of reunifications with families. By the second year, they were beginning to notice a decrease in the length of time youth were staying in their care before achieving permanency.

Consideration of Race and Culture in Foster and Adoptive Placements

In two different jurisdictions, discussions took place about the importance of considering race and culture when preparing foster and adoptive parents as well as when placing children with foster and adoptive families. On one team, an adolescent youth currently in foster care discussed with her team members how challenging her experiences had been as an African American child placed with a white family. She described her experience of constantly feeling embarrassed and ashamed because her hair was rarely made up and her hair was constantly dry. Her foster parents were not familiar with her personal grooming needs and were not responsive to her requests to handle things differently. She had an idea to develop hair and skin care kits for all African American girls in foster care so they could always have the appropriate products to care for their own hair and skin. She talked with other girls about her idea and organized a set of products she thought would be most appropriate. This list became the basis for what her social worker and her colleagues would develop into a hair care kit and resource guide for parents.

In another state participating in the BSC, a young girl was extremely depressed and wanted to commit suicide because of similar experiences with her hair and her foster family placement. She always wore a baseball cap and was also always ashamed and embarrassed by her physical appearance. Her foster parents were likewise unresponsive to her requests to do things differently. When child welfare administrators found out about this dynamic, the girl was immediately removed from her placement as officials investigated. Based on this experience, child welfare administrators immediately took steps to incorporate into all foster parent training and preparation classes an enhanced focus on understanding and meeting the specific needs of

different groups of children, including the personal grooming and other cultural traditions that are personally meaningful to children given their background and prior experiences. A policy was developed mandating that all foster parents complete this updated aspect of foster parent training, including a practical demonstration of how to respond to similar scenario-simulated situations that might arise. This became an integral part of the agency's effort to protect the mental health and well-being of children of color while in out-of-home placement.

Involvement of State Legislatures

In several states, racial disproportionality and disparate outcome work efforts were supported by the explicit involvement of state legislatures. The work in Texas and Michigan was supported through the passage of legislation specifying periodic benchmark activities as well as regular update reporting requirements. This explicit involvement of the state legislatures provided the authority and "permission" for state and county child welfare officials to engage in this work. This approach, in the case of Texas, also provided an infusion of significant staff and financial resources to engage in this work.

Statewide Disproportionality Strategy

The State of Texas embarked on a statewide approach to transforming their child protective services system into a more culturally responsive and family-centered system. With the state legislature's creation of several positions devoted exclusively to coordinating this work at the statewide and regional levels, a significant "boost" of sorts was provided to CPS's early efforts to begin this work. The legislature designated a full-time position for a statewide manager of their racial disproportionality and disparate outcome reduction efforts. They also created disproportionality specialists who would coordinate these efforts at the regional level. At the core of this statewide and regional approach was the use of the Undoing Racism Workshop and the *Knowing Who You Are* video and e-learning tools in its training of CPS administrators, supervisors, and staff. A regional strategy was used whereby training was made available to CPS administrators, supervisors, and staff as well as family group conference facilitators. The goal of these trainings was to enhance these child welfare professionals' ability to effectively respond to and support children and families. By the conclusion of this collaborative process, a similar statewide approach had been developed by officials in Kentucky.

Child Welfare Practice and Decision Making

Team Approaches to Case Planning and Decision Making

Most participating teams used some form of family-driven and team-driven case-planning and decision-making processes with families. Various approaches were discussed throughout the collaborative, including Family Group Conferences (FGC), Team Decision Making (TDM), and Family Group Decision Making (FGDM). What seemed to be a theme across all of the efforts was the critical importance of the facilitator in preparing families and other parties to participate, and in leading the discussion during the actual meeting. The central challenge shared by participating jurisdictions was how to neutralize the power dynamic in these processes

so that families' needs and interests drove the outcome. The effective preparation of family members and the use of a facilitator that has the family's trust proved to be critical factors in producing improved family engagement.

In several jurisdictions (including Texas, Connecticut, and Iowa), BSC team members reached out to ministers, community organizers, and other individuals engaged in and respected by the community to serve as facilitators of their family group conferences. With their increased use of these individuals, they found a significant increase in the willingness of family members to more openly and fully participate in the discussion and subsequent case-planning process. They similarly reported an increased rate of compliance by family members with the terms agreed to in their actual case plan.

At least one county using the Team Decision Making approach also made an interesting discovery. Upon closer review of their cases, they found that even with the use of TDMs in place within the agency, families were still experiencing significant outcome disparities. They realized that families that had access to TDMs were more likely to realize improved outcomes while those families without access tended to realize poorer outcomes. It was also discovered that white families tended to be referred to TDMs at greater rates than were African American and other families of color. They worked with referring social workers to further understand why they were differentially referring families and worked to correct this trend.

Identification and Engagement of Extended Family Support Networks/Kinship Resources

Numerous participants acknowledged early during the BSC process that they rely most heavily on "one primary relationship" in the cases they manage. That primary relationship is frequently with the mother of a child who has been suspected of being maltreated. The extent to which they developed relationships with members of the extended family and support network frequently depended on the amount of information shared by the mother and her (the mother's) own comfort level engaging with other relatives. Also influencing the social worker's willingness to engage other members of the family and the extended support network was her or his own familiarity with and comfort level communicating with and moving around in a given community.

Through this collaborative experience, social workers acknowledged developing a greater awareness of their own biases related to working within and engaging families within communities unfamiliar to them. They acknowledged exerting less energy and spending less time following up and developing relationships with members of the extended family and support network that could potentially serve as stronger support resources for parents and their children, especially when children had been placed in out-of-home care and their parents were working toward reunification. By the end of the process, many of these social workers reported investing significantly more time developing relationships with and engaging individuals in the extended family and support network. They attributed this shift to their increased awareness of how they were making decisions based on what they actually knew about a person or family versus assumptions they made about a family and community based on their perception or lack of information.

24-Hour Check-Back Initiative

In Polk County, IA, team members noticed significant rates of placement disruption for children of color in out-of-home placements. Upon further examination, they noticed that very little follow-up was being done with families after a child was placed until a crisis occurred. After being notified of a crisis, they were very prompt in responding and coordinating a family team meeting to determine what the problem was and identify potential solutions. In many of these cases, they reported that the problems usually started as something small, sometimes even misunderstandings and miscommunication, and then escalated. One of the participating social workers decided to begin following up with youth and families within 24 hours of any new placement. Their goal was to check back and identify any real or potential challenges in the placement from the perspective of the family as well as the youth, and problem solve any challenges that were presented. Through this strategy, social workers reported a significant decrease in overall placement disruptions and practically no disruptions in placements in which the 24-hour check-back strategy was used.

48-Hour Family-Community Team Meetings

Also in Polk County, IA, team members noticed a trend involving children who were being removed from home and placed in out-of-home care, and subsequently reunified within several weeks. This trend was particularly prevalent in specific neighborhoods that were predominantly African American. Their subsequent review of a number of these cases revealed that many of these children did not necessarily have to come into care. Moreover, relatives were frequently available to care for the children but were not contacted prior to initial placement.

Social workers developed a strategy to convene family team meetings with key individuals close to the family and, whenever possible, facilitated by someone familiar to and respected by the family, within 48 hours of the agency's initial report about the family. The goal of these meetings was to identify the nature of any concerns about a family's ability to care for its children safely, to identify the types of supports that might be immediately useful to the family, and when necessary to identify as many relatives and other individuals as possible who might be available to provide temporary care for the children. Through this strategy, these workers were able to significantly increase the rate of relative placements as initial placements, as well as divert families to community-based resources early, thereby preventing removal of the children from their home.

Parent Advocate Programs

Several participating counties also participated in Family to Family efforts through the Annie E. Casey Foundation. As a result of their successful engagement of birth parents during their Disproportionality BSC work, at least one county pushed to develop the Parent Advocate Program through their Family to Family partnership. Jefferson County, KY, developed a very successful program through which birth parents with prior child welfare system involvement are matched with birth parents currently becoming involved with the child welfare system. Through this matching process, newly involved birth parents learn valuable lessons, through

this peer relationship, about their rights as parents, what to expect through this process, and effective strategies for successful reunification with their children. Families involved in this process have been significantly more likely to experience reunification than those families that have not benefited from this program.

Workforce Development

Agency-University Partnerships

Child welfare officials in Jefferson County, KY, developed a partnership with one of the area universities to develop a course examining racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes for children and families of color involved with public serving systems. A university professor participated on the jurisdiction's BSC team and incorporated many of the BSC strategies and concepts into the development of the course. This single course was expanded into a series of CEU-approved courses for social workers.

Interviewing and Hiring Protocols

Several participating jurisdictions sought to improve the level of cultural responsiveness of their child welfare workforce. One strategy they used to improve the immediate level of readiness of their workforce to support and work effectively with families of various racial and ethnic backgrounds was to do a more responsive screening of new staff. They incorporated a number of questions into their standard interviewing and hiring process to better assess the values, assumptions, and potential biases that potential workers held about families and communities. They also sought to understand the extent to which potential workers were familiar with the complex history of race and its role in shaping the relationship between public serving institutions and communities and families.

Employee Performance Review and Development

Several participating jurisdictions sought to incorporate a cultural responsiveness and racial equity competency into the employee performance and professional development procedures for their agency.

Role of Judges, the Courts, and the Broader Legal System

It was clear at the earliest stages of planning for this collaborative that these types of system reform efforts could not be accomplished without the meaningful engagement of judges and courts. Judges play such an important role in guiding the life of a child and the family's journey through the child welfare system. Their perspectives on how decisions are made and how systems can work more effectively in support of equitable outcomes were critical to this process.

While all of the participating judges acknowledged that they were consciously aware of the overrepresentation of families of color appearing in their courts, they did not all agree on how appropriate it was for judges to actively reflect on and question whether the courts play any role in the existence of racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes. After learning more about

the history of race and its relationship to child welfare and social services in this country, as well as the courts' role in shaping this country's national policy regarding race, all of the judges became actively engaged in the collaborative discussion about the role of structural racism and institutional bias in shaping disparate outcomes in child welfare. The active work efforts of judges involved in this BSC process largely fell into the categories described below.

Judicial Role in Decision Making

After critical reflection and dialogue with their peers, participating judges involved in discussions during the Disproportionality BSC process felt strongly that they were not immune from the effects of the legacy of race and racism in American society. Several judges acknowledged that, similar to social workers, their professional decisions can also be influenced and shaped by stereotypes, assumptions, and perceptions they might hold of families, communities, and social service professionals. Especially in the presence of conflicting recommendations and evidence presented to the court, judges acknowledged that their decisions can frequently be shaped by perceptions of trustworthiness, motivation, initiative, enthusiasm, perceived interest, and engagement, and even the personal appearance and presentation of families and other parties appearing before the court. Being aware of these potential influences and these dynamics was said to be critical in minimizing their influence on decision making.

Requiring Evidence and Documentation of Diligent Efforts by Caseworkers and Supervisors

Judges were greatly influenced by the experiences of children and families shared during their participation in the BSC process. A number of the judges had not given substantive attention to some of the basic challenges endured by families as they sought to navigate the child welfare bureaucracy. They indicated that there were obvious lines of questioning that they could pursue in an effort to ensure that agencies were thoughtful and very deliberate in their role and responsibility for supporting families with the goal of reunification.

Judges recognized that they and the courts play a critical role in requiring social workers and other child welfare officials to show documentation of diligent efforts with respect to the following:

- a). Identifying relatives and other members of a family's extended support network who could serve as placement resources as well as support the ongoing case-planning and decision-making process.
- b). Connecting families with timely and effective services and support resources that respond to the particular needs of the parent or family; included could be considerations of language accessibility and general cultural responsiveness of service providers.
- c). Timeliness and accessibility of services should be reasonable and appropriate for a family as well as responsive to a family's transportation and other scheduling needs (e.g., accessibility to public transportation, scheduling around work or childcare obligations and challenges, etc.).

Racial Equity and Potential Bias in Legal Representation for Children and Families

One of the participating judges sought to better understand the quality of legal representation for children and families appearing in court. This judge developed and administered a voluntary survey to gauge the frequency of contact that families had with their attorney as well as each family's general satisfaction with their attorney. Through this survey, the judge realized that families frequently had no contact with their attorney until the morning of their hearing, and frequently this occurred just outside of the courtroom and moments before walking into the courtroom. According to the judge, this tendency appeared to be more pronounced for families of color. This led the judge to ask deliberate questions of the attorneys, during the hearings, about the frequency and duration of contact with their clients and the child welfare agency, and how extensive their efforts had been in understanding the specific dynamics presented in a given family's case. Asking attorneys specific and detailed questions about their familiarity with a family's case was an effective way of demonstrating the court's expectation that attorneys be thoroughly familiar with and thoughtful in their representation of families before the court. Orders could be made for specific types of follow-up with the court on those occasions when one or more of the represented parties seemed unprepared to justify their actions and/or recommendations.

CASA-Related Work Efforts

In King County, WA, team members developed a partnership with their local Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program to increase their mutual understanding about racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes, as well as cultural responsiveness more broadly. Included within this partnership was an effort to recruit more CASAs of color to reflect the background of children and families involved with the child welfare and juvenile court systems. Through this partnership, the local CASA program was successful in recruiting more CASAs of color, and an extended engagement in King County's ongoing racial disparity initiative began. These efforts were seen as particularly valuable in that CASAs could be better prepared to understand the particularities of a child and family's experience and thereby have a fuller, family-centered appreciation for what is in the "best interest of the child."

Additional Court Considerations

As a result of their involvement, participating judges highlighted the following dynamics and themes as being among the most critical areas for further exploration and consideration as judges and the courts become more actively engaged in racial disproportionality and disparity-related work efforts across the country.

The Challenge of Selected and Biased Evidence:

- A paradigm involving "multiple interested parties" with competing "interests" and competing "priorities."
- A priority on "winning the case" for represented parties makes it challenging for "multiple interested parties" to work through differences toward a mutually agreeable outcome.

- A tendency toward the presentation of selected evidence most favorable to desired outcome for represented parties.
- Dynamics have evolved over time; increasingly “crisis-driven” environment of child welfare and the role of the juvenile court.

Listening to the Voice of Youth and Families:

- Importance of listening directly to youth and families in the professionalized context of “represented parties.”
- Opportunities for “straight talk” with youth and families in the judge’s chambers.
- What is their perspective on their needs, challenges, interests, and services most likely to be responsive?
- What is their assessment of the effectiveness and responsiveness of services and service providers made accessible to them?

Scope of Questioning in the Courtroom:

- Reasonable efforts related to provision of services and resources to children and families, including considerations of timeliness, accessibility, effectiveness, and cultural responsiveness.
- Reasonable efforts related to *identification* of relatives (including fathers and paternal relatives) and members of the extended family support network, as well as their active *engagement* in the case-planning and decision-making process.

Kinship Care Challenge:

- Challenge presented when relatives are interested in caring for the children but are not interested in becoming licensed foster parents (or adoptive parents).

ASFA-Related Considerations:

- Perceived restrictiveness of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) with respect to judicial discretion and flexibility, timelines, compliance, and progress.

Working with CASAs and GALs

- Variable experiences of jurisdictions with respect to the involvement of Court Appointed Special Advocates and Guardians Ad Litem; influence, role, and effectiveness varies widely.

Post-TPR Involvement and Hearings: Permanency

- Variability among jurisdictions with respect to the frequency of judicial reviews and hearings related to permanency planning efforts and timelines to permanency.

VII: Conclusion

Overarching Themes

As participating jurisdictions continued to develop those strategies that seemed to hold the most promise for reducing racial disproportionality and disparities, several themes emerged from their work efforts and reflections:

- Centrality of culture, language, and values in practice
- Engagement of maternal and paternal relatives
- Centrality of extended family and support network
- Equitable and timely access to services and opportunities
- Interagency and between-systems accountability and transparency
- Effective community-based service providers and educational enrichment resources
- Timely check-back, troubleshooting, adjustments

Centrality of Culture, Language, and Values in Practice

Participating jurisdictions spent considerable time discussing the differences and relationships between race and culture. Individual participants came to understand that culture more fundamentally accounts for a people's worldview, values, language, traditions, and ways of understanding and engaging life. Participants acknowledged that they frequently made assumptions about individuals' cultural backgrounds (and thus their values, traditions, language, etc.) based on what they assumed to be a person's racial identification. A number of participants also reported that they had not previously considered the impact of cultural backgrounds and race on family and community functioning, assuming a more "color-blind" approach to family engagement.

This collaborative particularly provided staff and supervisors with an appreciation for using culture and race as a lens through which to understand a family's experiences, and thus as a consideration when developing strategies to engage children and families from the earliest stages of child welfare system involvement, including initial

investigation, family-centered and team-focused case-planning and decision-making processes, identification and provision of relevant services and family supports, as well as child placement and resource family development considerations.

Engagement of Maternal and Paternal Relatives

It is very important that social workers identify as many family resources as possible during the initial engagement with youth and families. Many social workers participating in this collaborative acknowledged that they were most comfortable working with mothers and their extended family, more so than with fathers. In fact, a number of social workers admitted being, at times, intimidated and less comfortable working with fathers and their families. Moreover, they admitted holding stereotypical perceptions of fathers (e.g., deadbeat, uninterested in their children, irresponsible, lazy, etc.) and their families. It is critical that social workers go the extra mile in identifying fathers and paternal relatives so that they can be engaged early in the investigation, case planning, and decision-making process. Whenever appropriate, they should also be considered as potential resource families for their children (or relatives).

Centrality of Extended Family and Support Network

In addition to engaging maternal and paternal relatives, participants also reflected on the critical importance of engaging other members of the family's extended family support network. These individuals could be "fictive kin," ministers, close friends, athletic coaches, colleagues, or other individuals who are prominent in an individual's life. When appropriate, efforts must be made to consistently engage these individuals in early intervention efforts and investigations, as well as in ongoing case planning and decision making. Frequently these individuals already serve as natural support resources for a family and could potentially be just as supportive and encouraging while a family works toward reunification. Also when appropriate, these individuals can be considered as placement resources when removal of the child from the home is necessary.

Equitable and Timely Access to Services and Opportunities

When reviewing case files for youth and families with open cases, a number of teams discovered racial disparities in the quality of, as well as timeliness of the support services made accessible to families. It was not uncommon for some families to be referred to "traditional" support services (e.g., parenting classes) because they were available, while the underlying stressors that families struggled with went unaddressed. Many participating teams also discussed the consistent challenge of matching families up with the real services and support resources that families need, especially effective substance abuse treatment programs, affordable housing, and effective mental health services. It is imperative that child welfare systems continue to develop mechanisms to track current access to, as well as quality of, timely services, resources, and opportunities for families and children.

Interagency and Between-Systems Accountability and Transparency

With the increasing number of public child welfare agencies relying on private providers and

other community-based organizations to provide services and supports for families, it is very important that public systems also hold them accountable to the same standards of racial equity and cultural responsiveness. Several participating public child welfare agencies created protocols for requiring private providers to report on their organization's (and other contracted consultants') capacity to provide culturally responsive services to youth and/or families. They are similarly required to report their outcomes by race and ethnicity. When appropriate, these providers are required to demonstrate improved outcomes with respect to racial disparities as a condition of receiving or renewing their contract with the public agency.

Effective Community-Based Service Providers and Educational Enrichment Resources

Two of the participating teams developed significant partnerships with elementary schools within neighborhoods experiencing high levels of child welfare system involvement. Engagement in this collaborative highlighted for them the need to better identify the various organizations based in the community that are available to provide services and supports to families. The public child welfare agency's development of community resource directories in partnership with the schools enabled school administrators and teachers to access many supports and services for families in those cases where more punitive child welfare system involvement is unnecessary.

Given the experience of the participating teams, it is clear that more consistent efforts must be made to identify the range of traditional and non-traditional community-based service providers, therapists, educational support programs, after-school programs, etc. Agencies must be committed to supporting and working with the range of service providers and support resources. Broad awareness and timely accessibility is critical.

Timely Check-Back, Troubleshooting, Adjustments

Any time a youth experiences a placement change, a social worker should visit the youth and the resource family within 24 to 48 hours to determine if everything is going well. If any concerns are raised by the youth or family, immediate troubleshooting should be done to resolve any current or potential challenges. The frequency of check-back and potential troubleshooting should be consistent with and responsive to the developmental level and specific needs of the child and family. Similar approaches should be developed and implemented with respect to the school experiences of youth and families.

Highlighting Improved Child Welfare Outcomes

Since the conclusion of the Disproportionality Breakthrough Series Collaborative, a number of participating jurisdictions have continued to develop, implement, and spread strategies to reduce racial disparities in outcomes for children and families involved with the child welfare system. In our subsequent follow-up discussions with several jurisdictions, we have learned of improved outcomes for children and families of color who were intended to be impacted directly by the jurisdictions' respective improvement strategies and efforts. While these reported improved outcomes are not *exclusively* attributable to the specific work efforts

the jurisdictions developed while participating in this national BSC, the jurisdictions reported that their participation in this collaborative, in coordination with other system improvement efforts underway during their participation, made these improved outcomes possible. A brief description of these reported improvements follows:

- Jurisdictions that developed and/or improved strategies to engage parents, relatives, and extended family members, as well as members of a family's extended support network, in "group" or "team" service-planning and decision-making meetings reported increased numbers of children who did not have to enter foster care and whose families were diverted to community organizations for resource supports; greater rates of relative placements when placement was found to be necessary; increased exits for children in care; and shorter lengths of stay for children in care. These improved outcomes were reported for those strategies that focused on improving *how* families are prepared for and engaged in these meetings, including the use of facilitators with whom families were more trusting and comfortable. Moreover, jurisdictions that used these family group meetings as soon as the agency became aware of a possible need for assistance were much more likely to divert these families to community-based support services and/or relative placements before formal system intervention was needed.
- Jurisdictions that developed and implemented strategies to more consistently identify birth fathers and paternal relatives as well as subsequently engage them meaningfully in the service-planning and decision-making process noticed significant decreases in the number of children entering care as well as increases in the numbers of children exiting care. Workers also reported less discomfort and a greater level of competence in working with fathers and paternal relatives.
- Jurisdictions focused on using parent advocate programs or similar approaches to engaging parents with prior system involvement as mentors for families with current child welfare system involvement reported higher rates of reunification, and thus increased exits for children in care.
- Jurisdictions that developed and applied a *racial equity lens* to their contracting procedures and agreements with private service providers reported an increased ability to track outcomes for children and families of color in care and/or receiving services, as well as greater numbers of children of color who were able to stay with their families as opposed to coming into formal foster care after completion of related service plans and related diversion programs.
- Jurisdictions that began to implement a policy of checking with a child and foster parents within 24 hours of a placement change reported greater rates of placement stability for children in foster care. These efforts were primarily focused on children with the highest rates of placement changes, primarily children of color.

Reflecting on the Methodology...Defining the *Real Work*

One of the defining features of the Breakthrough Series Collaborative and the Model for Improvement is that jurisdictions can move beyond studying and analyzing an issue toward actually doing something about it. This accounts for the heavy emphasis on the *rapid* testing of ideas.

Indeed, a motivation for Casey Family Programs' investment in this methodology as a means of addressing racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes was that it could assist jurisdictions in moving "beyond just talking" and toward meaningful action. Implied in this notion was the suggestion that jurisdictions had been talking, studying, and contemplating "the issue" long enough. The challenge facing the field was how to get public child welfare agencies to roll up their sleeves and look more fundamentally at the underlying and enduring *structural factors* accounting for racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes.

An assumption of the BSC faculty and planning team was that we could use the time during the Pre-Work period and immediately following the first learning session to introduce the analysis of structural racism and institutional bias, facilitate each team's process of understanding these dynamics within the context of child welfare, and move each jurisdiction toward the testing of concrete practice change strategies within a few short months. After beginning this work, participants strongly urged us to reconsider our timelines and expectations, insisting that they needed more time to constructively discuss and understand the ways in which racism and bias potentially impact child welfare practice.

For a period of time, the BSC faculty and planning team continued to push participants to move beyond "just talking" and to begin to identify those aspects of practice they could potentially do differently with improved results. Participants continued to push against this notion and insisted that their ongoing investment in more deeply understanding the impact of structural racism and institutional bias was very much a part of their "real system transformation work."

Inherent in this experience of the BSC was a fundamental tension. We quickly realized that a fundamental aspect of any meaningful attempt at reducing racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes must include a deliberate and thoughtful examination of both race and culture, and their impact on the individuals involved with this work, including professionals, families, and communities. More fully understanding the complexity of these dynamics allows individuals to engage in self-reflection and thus a more critical and reflective child welfare practice. It was engaging in this critical and challenging process with their peers that allowed participants to conceptualize a different and more culturally responsive way of working with and supporting children and their families.

The experience of the BSC participants was appropriately captured in the closing remarks shared by one of the co-chairs of this collaborative, Dr. Carol Wilson Spigner, during the final learning session. "*This work is really challenging. There is no blueprint for this work. One thing that we can all see clearly is that this work is more like a marathon, and less like a sprint.*"

Looking Forward...

In 2005, Casey Family Programs developed a comprehensive vision for what this nation's child welfare system should and could look like by the year 2020. This vision includes safely reducing the number of children in this nation's foster care system by 50 percent by the year 2020.

It is our contention that successful efforts at eliminating racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes will not only make child welfare systems more responsive to children and families of color but will make these systems more responsive to all children and families in need of additional support and intervention. Indeed, successful efforts to address and eliminate racial disproportionality and disparities will guarantee that we will make significant progress towards this 2020 goal. Given our experience with participants in this national Breakthrough Series Collaborative, we are confident that this safe foster care reduction goal is indeed achievable. It will, however, take courageous and determined leadership as well as data-driven, consistent, and sustained systems improvement efforts to make this vision a reality.

VIII: Appendices

Appendix A: A Disproportionality Breakthrough Series Collaborative Framework for Change

Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Reducing Racial Disproportionality and Disparate Outcomes for Children and Families of Color in the Child Welfare System

The Framework for Change



...there are few things in the world as dangerous as sleepwalkers



—Ralph Ellison, *The Invisible Man*, p. 5

Preface

The statistics paint a disturbing picture. At every point along the child welfare continuum, children and families of color are represented in numbers that far exceed their relative proportion in the population. Rates of substantiated maltreatment, entry into out-of-home care, and length of stay are all higher for children of color than for their white counterparts while family reunification and exit rates are lower.

Yet this comparison belies the fact that outcomes for white children and families in the child welfare system are also less than desirable. The hope in this Breakthrough Series Collaborative is that by improving the system for children and families of color—those who are most disadvantaged by the current system—the system will ultimately be improved for all children and families.

This phenomenon is not a secret, nor is it confined to child welfare. Disparate outcomes and disproportionate representation of children and families of color are also an issue in juvenile justice, education, health care, and other systems. It is an uncomfortable and emotion-laden issue but child welfare leaders cannot continue to “sleepwalk” around it for it is an endangerment to children and families.

Concerned child welfare administrators, scholars, researchers, and workers have puzzled over the problem for more than 30 years. Yet because it stems from a complex network of social and political disadvantages at the individual and institutional level, many leaders assume it is simply the norm and believe that there is little they can do to change it. In the meantime, disproportionality and disparate outcomes for children and families of color in the child welfare system continue to increase.

We can no longer afford to step softly around this problem; we must be willing to wake up and awaken others to confront institutional and individual issues that perpetuate disproportionality. Child welfare leaders in several jurisdictions around the country have stepped up to the challenge and initiated strategies targeting institutional and practice biases that impact outcomes for children of color and their families; they are beginning to see promising results. It will require bold action and innovative leadership to make a lasting difference.

This Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) will leverage the wisdom, experience, and knowledge of national experts to create a practice framework. This framework will be used by public child welfare teams representing states, counties, and tribes to test ideas addressing disproportionality and disparate outcomes through the development of small-scale strategies and interventions that can be implemented, tested, and measured in rapid cycles. Successful strategies will be spread as teams test strategies that can help reverse the trend.

Our vision for this BSC is that participating jurisdictions will contribute to the development of child welfare systems that are free of structural racism and that benefit all children, families, and communities by:

- Engaging with a group of other jurisdictions in critical change activities
- Creating environments in which strategies can be developed and tested
- Developing a cadre of leaders across the country who are working toward solutions
- Creating and sustaining partnerships to advance the work
- Disseminating lessons learned

Background and Overview

Child welfare systems cannot be improved without addressing disproportionality and disparate outcomes. Disproportionality refers both to the presence of children of color in the child welfare system in percentages that dramatically exceed their presence in the general population as well as poor outcomes for these children. Consider the following facts:

- In 2003, 64 percent of the children in foster care were children of color although they comprised only 36 percent of the U.S. child population under 18 years of age¹. During

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2002). The AFCARS Report. Retrieved September 25, 2002 from: <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/buplications/afcars/report7.html>; The Annie E. Casey and The Population Reference Bureau (2001). The Child Population: First Data from the 2000 Census. Washington, D.C.

this same year, African American children accounted for approximately 38 percent of the total number of children placed in foster care while comprising only 15 percent of the total U.S. child population under 18 years of age.

- American Indian children represented 3 percent of children in out-of-home care while comprising 1 percent of the child population². In states where there are large numbers of American Indian children, they may represent between 15 to 65 percent of children in the child welfare system. These percentage rates may be under-estimates, as they do not include the number of children in tribal child welfare systems.
- Data that are aggregated on a national level often mask the overrepresentation of Hispanic/Latino children who have been found to be overrepresented in foster care in states and cities with large Hispanic populations³.

What causes disproportionality?

Disproportionality of children of color is the result of multiple disadvantages that are social, political, economic, and attitudinal in nature. Specific factors leading to disproportionality in the child welfare system include poverty, classism, racism, organizational culture, service strategy, and resources. Of these factors, poverty is often singled out as a major contributor, since foster children of color come primarily from families living in poverty. However, no significant racial differences in the incidence of maltreatment were found in the National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS) for NIS-2 or NIS-3, suggesting that race influences the institutional response to maltreatment resulting in higher substantiation and placement rates for children of color.

These factors shape organizational structures and practice in a way that limits positive outcomes. Disproportional entry into care, long stays, and poor results have a negative impact on children's well-being and influence their physical and mental health, academic achievement, spirituality, cultural connections, and connectedness to family and community. Removal of children from their families and communities also leaves the family members feeling vulnerable, disenfranchised, disempowered, and unable to act on the behalf of themselves or their children.

Promising Practices

The challenge of disproportionality and disparate outcomes requires agencies to be assertive in assessing their own policies, programs, practices, and beliefs and to work actively to modify and develop innovative responses that improve the experience and results for children and families of color. Many jurisdictions across the country such as Ramsey County, MN; King County, WA; and Fulton County, GA have begun work that targets disproportionality. Many of their efforts are showing promising early results.

2 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families. AFCARS, Report #8. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003. The report is available online at <http://www.act.hhs.gov/programs/cb/publications/afcars/report8.html>

3 2000 AFCARS and Census Data, analysis by Dr. Robert Hill.

The Framework

This document offers a framework that describes the key components that child welfare systems must address to reduce and ultimately eliminate these disparities. This framework is not prescriptive but instead identifies eight principles to guide action and seven key component areas that, if addressed in policy, programming, practice and training, are likely to lead to positive outcomes.

Key Principles

The public child welfare system is responsible for assuring safety, permanency, and well-being for all children served. In order to meet this obligation for children and families at risk of experiencing disproportionality and disparate outcomes, there are eight basic principles that must guide all policies, programs, practices, services, and supports. The order of the principles listed here does not suggest any priority; each principle is critical and should be reflected in all aspects of public/tribal child welfare agency (the agency) operations.

1. The goal of the agency is to secure safety, permanency, and maximum developmental outcomes for each child served irrespective of race, ethnicity, tribal status, class, location, or family structure so that these attributes are not predictors of negative outcomes.
2. The agency understands and respects the varying beliefs, values, and family practices of different cultural, racial, and ethnic groups. Culturally relevant services and supports are family-centered, family-driven, and strengths-based. These services comprise the least intrusive intervention possible and are need-driven; they should be available in the communities, neighborhoods, and tribal communities where families live.
3. Parents, children, youth, kin, communities, and tribes have strengths, resiliency, and their own natural supports, which are used in reducing risk factors. The public agency recognizes and honors the fact that children are inextricably connected to their families and communities (cultural and geographic).
4. Improved outcomes for children and families of color are advanced by the open discussion of personal, organizational, and institutional racism and the development of strategies to remedy its impact on families and children.
5. Continuous assessment of policies and practices is necessary to assure that they do not further disadvantage children and families who experience social and economic vulnerability and physical and mental disabilities.
6. Advocacy is required for a better alignment of resources, policies, and practices with the needs of families to assure access to prevention, early intervention, diversion, and permanency/reunification services.
7. Shared leadership and collaborative efforts among courts, schools, and other agencies are necessary to improve the way in which the needs of children and families are met.
8. Partnerships with the diverse communities and tribes are essential to reduce potential risks to children.

Key Components

The eight key principles described above can be translated into practice through seven component areas of a child welfare agency's work. The work in each component should reflect the core values defined by the key principles. In order to eliminate disproportionality and disparities in outcomes, child welfare agencies should address all seven of these components. Improvements in the overall system of working with and supporting children and families who are involved with the child welfare system will only occur when improvements in each of these seven individual components are achieved.

1. **Design agency mission, vision, values, policies, and protocols that support anti-racist practice.**
 - a. Agency leadership is developed and supported to actively and affirmatively ensure that policies, practices, programs, and services are supportive of children and families of color through an articulated agency vision.
 - b. Agency leadership identifies, continually assesses, and changes policies and practices that contribute to and support structural racism and impact poor outcomes for families of color in the child welfare system.
 - c. Organizational structure and funding allocations support culturally relevant strategies at each critical decision point across the continuum of families' involvement in the child welfare system, including addressing the structural racism that leads to the over-use of placement.
 - d. Agency leadership creates an environment that promotes ongoing discussions of race and disproportionality and addresses these issues in an authentic manner that assists staff and stakeholders to integrate anti-racist principles into their work.
 - e. Staffing composition reflects the cultural, racial, ethnic, linguistic, and religious/spiritual backgrounds of the population being served.
 - f. Consumers inform decisions regarding policy and procedures and are represented on decision-making bodies such as advisory boards, consultant teams, and volunteer committees.
 - g. Agency leadership provides staff with appropriate and adequate support to partner with parents, children, youth, communities, and tribes.
2. **Develop cross-systems leadership to address issues related to disproportionality and disparity in outcomes for children and families of color in the child welfare system.**
 - a. Agency leaders assume responsibility for educating their colleagues in other child-serving agencies on issues related to structural and institutional racism.
 - b. A multi-agency team composed of leaders in the child welfare agency, court, CASA, school, media, policy-making agencies, families, community leaders, and youth is used to identify and address cross-systems issues about the well-being of families and children

- of color who are in or come to the attention of the child welfare system.
- c. Policies and procedures in the agency reflect an understanding of issues related to structural and institutional racism within the child welfare agency and with key stakeholders representing family and child-serving agencies (court, schools, health care, mental health).
3. **Collaborate with key stakeholders to support families in the context of their communities and tribes so as to safely divert them from the child welfare system, whenever possible.**
 - a. Deliberate efforts are made to safely divert families from the child welfare system and into community- and tribal-based supports that include home-based services whenever possible.
 - b. The family's informal networks of support are actively identified and engaged to care for and protect children in their communities.
 - c. Culturally relevant services, supports, and opportunities are need-driven, individualized, and made available and accessible in the community and tribe, including access to partner agencies that offer housing, substance abuse treatment, subsistence benefits, education, employment, transportation, and physical/mental healthcare.
 - d. Funding for culturally competent front-end and post-permanency services assumes priority.
 4. **Partner with the community about child maltreatment, disproportionality, racism and culture to focus on how communities can develop strategies to build the protective capacity of neighborhoods, tribes, and families.**
 - a. The agency identifies, engages, and raises awareness of the issue of disproportionality and disparity of outcomes with community service providers, partners, leaders, and emerging leaders.
 - b. The agency uses proactive strategies to build public will and to develop community-based alternatives to the child welfare system that includes strategic and sustained collaboration with mandatory reporters, community leaders, hotline workers, and the media.
 - c. The agency acts as a catalyst to improve the capacity of communities and tribes to prevent child abuse and neglect.
 - d. Mandatory reporters are educated regarding cultural and racial differences in child rearing and how this is related to child maltreatment laws and their reporting responsibilities.
 - e. Agency services and workers are co-located in communities where families live.

5. **Train and educate the agency staff and stakeholders about institutional and structural racism and its impact on decision-making, policy, and practice.**
 - a. The agency develops a process that creates a common language, analysis, and understanding of racism: individual, structural, and institutional.
 - b. Staff understand their own racial and cultural identities and the impact of assimilation and internalized racial oppression on their work with families.
 - c. Staff understand and their practice reflects the need for continued family connections and the impact of placing children and young people in situations where their language and cultural heritage are not understood.
 - d. Staff receive ongoing support, training, and preparation for working with parents, children, youth, communities, and tribes using child welfare core competencies including culturally appropriate interviewing, the use of genograms, ecomaps, family group decision making, and other culturally respectful and inclusive planning and decision-making tools and practices.
 - e. Ongoing case consultation is available to staff on cross-racial and cross-cultural issues.
 - f. The agency performance appraisal process includes an assessment of staff's ability to work with families of different cultural backgrounds.
 - g. The agency assures that contract providers demonstrate culturally competent practice.
6. **Use cultural values, beliefs, and practices of families, communities, and tribes to shape family assessment, case planning, case service design, and the case decision-making process.**
 - a. Parents, youth, children, kin, tribes, and others who are significant in the life of the child and family are engaged as partners who shape case planning and decision making in ways that build upon cultural strengths and acknowledge the impact of structural racism on family outcomes at all decision points, including but not limited to:
 - Intake/initial screening
 - Assessment
 - Service planning and delivery
 - Placement
 - Reunification and other permanency options
 - Case closure
 - Post-permanency supports

- b. Family team-building processes include building the capacity of parents/kin and youth to participate in every decision related to their situation and to advocate on their own behalf to sustain the safety and well-being of their children and families.
 - c. Staff fully share information with the family about:
 - The agency's assessment of child safety and family capacity
 - The availability of agency and community-based supports and services
 - The agency's commitment to continuity in family, community, and tribal relationships
 - The consequences of the agency's intervention
 - d. Staff fully share information about the rights, responsibilities, and expectations of parents, children, youth, the agency, and the court.
 - e. Placement and reunification strategies work to maintain, honor, and support relationships and connections between parents, siblings, children, kin, and significant others. The agency gives priority to kinship placements when placement is necessary.
 - f. At every decision point in the child welfare service continuum, culturally appropriate assessments, decision-making practices, and anti-racist tools are used to capitalize on the strengths and needs of parents, children, youth, and families.
- 7. Develop and use data in partnership with families, communities, universities, staff, courts, and other stakeholders to assess agency success at key decision points in addressing disproportionality and disparate outcomes for children of color in the child welfare system.**
- a. Development of measurement strategies, definition of data elements, and collection and interpretation of data encompass a participatory approach that includes parents, youth, and children.
 - b. Staff recognize and address the lack of trust by communities of color and tribes, which is often related to the misuse, misrepresentation, and misinterpretation of data.
 - c. Data on process and outcomes are categorized by ethnicity/race, are tracked at key decision points, are used to improve agency and staff performance, and are reviewed regularly and consistently at all levels of the agency.
 - d. Data are shared with the community to facilitate partnerships to address disproportionality.
 - e. Data are used to evaluate the effectiveness of contract services required to meet the needs of families in a culturally competent manner.
 - f. Data regarding customer satisfaction are obtained and used to assess agency performance.

Appendix B: Participating States and Counties

The following 13 jurisdictions were selected to participate in the Disproportionality Breakthrough Series Collaborative.

- Alaska Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Children's Services
- Arizona Department of Economic Security, Division of Children, Youth and Families
- Connecticut Department of Children and Families
- Guilford County Department of Social Services (North Carolina)
- Iowa Department of Human Services
- Kentucky Department for Community-Based Services
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Social Services
- Michigan Department of Human Services
- Ramsey County Community Human Services Department (Minnesota)
- The City and County of San Francisco Human Services Agency (California)
- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
- Wake County Human Services (North Carolina)
- Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Children's Administration

Appendix C: Agency Self Assessment

Thank you for participating in this Concept Mapping process. Please complete the organizational characteristics and rating forms below, and fax them to **Kristin Ward at 202.467.4499**. You may also mail them to:

Kristin Ward
Casey Family Programs
1808 Eye Street, NW, 5th Floor
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: 202.728.2003

Participant Characteristics

The following questions will help us interpret your information, so please take a moment to answer these questions about yourself and the role that you will play in this BSC. Please choose the appropriate option for each of the following background questions. Thank you.

1. What state or county are you from? (Choose One)

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alaska | <input type="checkbox"/> Arizona | <input type="checkbox"/> Connecticut |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guilford County, NC | <input type="checkbox"/> Iowa | <input type="checkbox"/> Kentucky |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Massachusetts | <input type="checkbox"/> Michigan | <input type="checkbox"/> Ramsey County, MN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> San Francisco Co., CA | <input type="checkbox"/> Texas | <input type="checkbox"/> Wake County, NC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Washington | | |

2. What role do you play in this BSC? (Choose One)

- Member of the Senior Leader Team (including Executive Sponsor)
- Day-to-Day Manager
- Member of the Core Team (not the Day-to-Day Manager)
- Member of the Extended Community Team

3. Which of the following is the best description of the system or group that you are representing in your role in this BSC? (Choose One)

- Birth Parent
- Young Adult or Foster Care Alumni
- Child Welfare System
- Court/Judicial System
- Juvenile Justice System
- Law Enforcement
- Probation
- Schools/Educational System
- Health Care System
- Mental Health System
- Housing
- Other

4. Which of the following best describes your racial/ethnic background? (Choose One)

- African American or Black
- Asian
- Caucasian
- Hispanic or Latino
- Middle Eastern
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Polynesian or Pacific Islander
- Mixed/More Than One Race/Ethnicity
- Other

5. What is your sex? (Choose One)

Female

Male

Rating Recording Sheet

Each statement below describes an action step that child welfare agencies can take in order to reduce disproportionality and disparate outcomes for children and families of color in the child welfare system. Please rate each statement on a 1 to 5 scale according to the extent to which it is currently practiced within the target site at your child welfare agency. Use the following scale:

1 = Never happens

2 = Rarely happens

3 = Sometimes happens

4 = Frequently happens

5 = Always happens

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1. The child welfare agency collects customer satisfaction data from children and families of color in order to assess agency performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The child welfare agency uses placement strategies that support relationships/connections among parents, children, siblings, kin, and significant others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The child welfare agency involves families and significant others as partners in decision making during intake and assessment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The child welfare agency creates a common language, analysis, and understanding of individual racism.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The child welfare agency creates a common language, analysis, and understanding of institutional and structural racism.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The child welfare agency ensures that services and supports are accessible to children and families of color in the community and tribe (including access to partner agencies who offer housing, substance abuse, subsistence benefits, education, employment, transportation, and physical/mental health care).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
7. The child welfare agency ensures that policies are supportive of children and families of color.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. The child welfare agency categorizes all applicable data by race/ethnicity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. The child welfare agency involves families and significant others as partners in decision making during service planning and delivery.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. The child welfare agency fully shares with every family of color information about the rights, responsibilities, and expectations of parents, children, and youth in the agency's care.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. The child welfare agency prioritizes funding for culturally competent post-permanency services for children and families of color.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. The child welfare agency provides staff with appropriate support to partner with parents, children, youth, communities, and tribes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. The child welfare agency prepares, trains, and supports staff to use culturally appropriate interviewing in their interactions with children and families of color.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. The child welfare agency articulates a vision that affirms support to children and families of color.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. The child welfare agency fully shares with every family information about the rights, responsibilities, and expectations of the court.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. The child welfare agency engages community partners (e.g., community service providers, community leaders, and emerging leaders) to raise awareness of the issue of disproportionality and disparity of outcomes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. The child welfare agency shares data on race/ethnicity with the community in order to facilitate partnerships that address disproportionality.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. The child welfare agency makes deliberate efforts to safely divert families of color away from the child welfare system and into home-based services whenever possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. The child welfare agency assesses and changes policies and practices that contribute to and support structural racism and impact poor outcomes for families of color in the child welfare system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
20. The child welfare agency fully shares information with every family of color about the agency's assessment of child safety and family capacity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. The child welfare agency collaborates with community leaders, mandatory reporters, and the media to develop community-based alternatives to the child welfare system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. The child welfare agency creates a multi-agency team to identify and address cross-system issues about the well-being of families and children of color who come to the attention of the child welfare system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. The child welfare agency fully shares information with every family of color about the agency's commitment to continuity of family, community, and tribal relationships.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. The child welfare agency reviews data on race/ethnicity regularly at all levels of the agency.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. The child welfare agency hires staff who reflect the cultural, racial, ethnic, linguistic, and religious/spiritual backgrounds of the population being served.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. The child welfare agency prepares, trains, and supports staff to use culturally respectful and inclusive planning and decision making tools that may include such things as genograms, ecomaps, and family group conferencing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. The child welfare agency ensures that youth and families of color are represented on decision-making bodies such as advisory boards, consultant teams, and volunteer committees.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28. The child welfare agency involves families and significant others as partners in decision making regarding reunification and other permanency options.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
29. The child welfare agency uses data to evaluate the effectiveness and cultural competency of contract services in meeting the needs of children and families of color.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30. The child welfare agency develops and employs proactive strategies that build public support around the need for community-based alternatives to the child welfare system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31. The child welfare agency places children/youth of color in kinship placements whenever possible if placement is necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32. The child welfare agency ensures that practices, programs, and services are supportive of children and families of color.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33. The child welfare agency assures that contract providers demonstrate culturally competent practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34. The child welfare agency improves the capacity of communities and/or tribes to prevent child abuse and neglect.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35. The child welfare agency supports staff in developing an understanding of her/his own racial and cultural identity and how this impacts her/his individual work with families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36. The child welfare agency, through cross-systems collaboration, helps to create policies and procedures that reflect an understanding of issues related to structural and institutional racism that exist in other child-serving agencies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37. The child welfare agency tracks data on race/ethnicity at all key decision points.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
38. The child welfare agency allocates funding to support culturally relevant strategies at each critical decision point across the continuum of families' involvement in the child welfare system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39. The child welfare agency ensures that services and supports to children and families of color are individualized and needs-driven.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
40. The child welfare agency helps to build the capacity of family members to advocate on their own behalf in every decision related to their situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
41. The child welfare agency educates staff about the impact of putting children and young people of color in placements where their language and cultural heritage is not understood.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
42. The child welfare agency fully shares information with every family of color about the consequences of the agency's intervention.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
43. The child welfare agency identifies and engages families' informal networks of support to care for and protect children of color.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
44. The child welfare agency creates an environment that promotes ongoing discussions of race and disproportionality.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
45. The child welfare agency approaches data, measurement, and evaluation in a participatory manner that involves parents, youth, and children of color.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
46. The child welfare agency assesses staff on to their ability to work with families of different cultural backgrounds as part of the agency's performance appraisal process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
47. The child welfare agency ensures that services and supports to children and families of color are culturally relevant.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
48. The child welfare agency co-locates or out-stations agency workers in communities where children and families of color live.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
49. The child welfare agency develops and supports leaders to enable them to support children and families of color.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
50. The child welfare agency educates mandatory reporters about cultural and racial differences in child rearing and how they relate to child maltreatment laws and reporting responsibilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
51. The child welfare agency recognizes that past misinterpretation and misuse of data often contributes to the lack of trust that communities of color and tribes have of the child welfare system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
52. The child welfare agency fully shares information with every family of color about the availability of agency and community-based supports and services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
53. The child welfare agency requires staff to make every effort to pursue, maintain, and nurture family connections for children and families of color.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
54. The child welfare agency fully shares with every family of color information about the rights, responsibilities, and expectations of the agency.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
55. The child welfare agency makes deliberate efforts to safely divert families of color away from the child welfare system and into community- and tribal-based supports.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
56. The child welfare agency ensures that services are located and provided in communities where children and families of color live.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57. The child welfare agency makes a sincere effort to assist staff and stakeholders to integrate anti-racist principles into their work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
58. The child welfare agency involves families and significant others as partners in decision making regarding case closure and/or post permanency supports.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
59. The child welfare agency prioritizes funding for culturally competent front-end services for children and families of color.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
60. The child welfare agency uses reunification strategies that support relationships/connections among parents, children, siblings, kin, and significant others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
61. The child welfare agency uses data on race/ethnicity to improve agency and staff performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
62. The child welfare agency involves families and significant others as partners in decision making during/regarding placement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
63. The child welfare agency assigns leaders the responsibility of educating their colleagues in other child servicing agencies about issues related to structural and institutional racism.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
64. The child welfare agency makes ongoing case consultation on cross-racial and cross-cultural issues available to staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
65. The child welfare agency capitalizes on the strengths of families of color at every decision point in the child welfare service continuum through the use of culturally appropriate tools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for your time and your input!

Appendix D: Co-Chairs and National Faculty

Co-Chairs

- Dr. Carol Wilson Spigner, University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice
- Dr. Ralph Bayard, Casey Family Programs

Faculty

- Chiemi Davis, Casey Family Programs
- Marva Hammons, Colorado Department of Human Services
- Dr. Sarah Hicks, National Congress of American Indians
- Sandra Jimenez, Consultant, Parent Advocate, and Trainer
- Dr. Ruth G. McRoy, University of Texas at Austin
- Dr. Barbara Needell, Center for Social Services Research, University of California at Berkeley
- Khatib Waheed, Center for the Study of Social Policy

Extended Planning Team/Casey Partners

- Sarah Greenblatt, Casey Family Services
- Sania Metzger, Casey Family Services
- Wanda Mial, Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Gretchen Test, Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Susan Notkin, Center for Community Partnerships in Child Welfare

Appendix E: Breakthrough Series Collaborative Staff and Consultants**Disproportionality BSC Staff**

- Oronde A. Miller, Casey Family Programs
- Dr. Kristin J. Ward, Casey Family Programs
- Traci Savoy, Casey Family Programs
- Rebecca Jones Gaston, Casey Family Programs
- Kathy Barbell, Casey Family Programs
- Fran Gutterman, Casey Family Programs
- Betsey Rosenbaum, Casey Family Programs

BSC Consultants

- Jen Agosti, JRA Consulting, Ltd.
- Lorrie L. Lutz, L3P Associates, LLC

About Casey Family Programs

Casey Family Programs' mission is to provide and improve—and ultimately to prevent the need for—foster care.

Established by United Parcel Service founder Jim Casey, the Seattle-based national operating foundation has served children, youth, and families in the child welfare system since 1966.

The foundation operates in two ways. It provides direct services, and it promotes advances in child welfare practice and policy.

Casey collaborates with foster, kinship, and adoptive parents to provide safe, loving homes for youth in its direct care.

The foundation also collaborates with counties, states, and American Indian and Alaska Native tribes to improve services and outcomes for the nearly 500,000 young people in out-of-home care across the United States.

Drawing on four decades of front-line work with families and alumni of foster care, Casey Family Programs develops tools, practices, and policies to nurture all youth in care and to help parents strengthen families at risk of needing foster care.

For more information about this report, contact Casey Family Programs at info@casey.org or 1300 Dexter Avenue North, Floor 3, Seattle, WA 98109. Visit our Web site at www.casey.org.



Casey Family Programs

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Racial Disproportionality and Disparity Resources

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