What We Know about Racial Disproportionality and Disparity in Oregon's Child Welfare System: Decision Point Analysis Quantitative Report

The Child Welfare Partnership
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INTRODUCTION

Over the past ten years, there has been growing acknowledgment and concern about the racial disproportionality and disparity in child welfare systems in the United States.

National child welfare organizations, such as the Child Welfare League of America and Casey Family Programs, have focused attention on the issue. The Race Matters Consortium, hosted by the Center for the Study of Social Policy and Casey Family Programs, provided early leadership. The General Accounting Office has issued several reports documenting the concern at the national level, and the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators developed the *Disproportionality Diagnostic Tool*, stating that they, '…made the issue of disproportionate representation of children of color in the child welfare system one of its highest priorities.' The states of California, Michigan, Texas, and Washington, among others, have launched initiatives to address these issues. In 2008, the journal, *Child Welfare*, devoted a special issue to the topic.

Oregon too is attending to the issue of fairness and equity in the delivery of child welfare services. In May 2008, Multnomah County Juvenile Court hosted a Disproportionality Summit to launch their Model Court Initiative "Courts Catalyzing Change." In 2009, the Department of Human Services (DHS) and its child welfare agency, Children, Adults, and Families, entered into a partnership with the Oregon Commission on Children and Families and Casey Family Programs to launch an initiative to reduce the number of children in foster care in Oregon. A major component of that initiative is a focus on the issues of disproportionality and disparity.

In January 2009, Oregon's Governor Kulongoski issued an executive order establishing a Child Welfare Equity Task Force composed of leaders from across the state. A bill enacting this Task Force passed the Oregon legislature in the 2009 legislative session. The Task Force is charged with submitting a report to an interim committee of the Oregon Legislative Assembly no later than October 1, 2010.

The following research has been conducted to inform the work of this Task Force and the larger Casey Initiative. By providing state-wide and county specific analysis of disproportionality at nine specific points in child welfare, the research can steer attention to critical points of leverage for action planning. The research can also inform the setting of benchmarks for progress of action plans designed to promote fairness and equity of child welfare service delivery for all of Oregon's children and families.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The Child Welfare Partnership at Portland State University's School of Social Work has conducted this decision point analysis on behalf of the Child Welfare Equity Task Force and the Safe Reduction of Foster Care Initiative. The first phase of the study–the quantitative portion of the Decision Point Analysis reported on here –uses administrative data to examine the existence and extent of disproportionality and disparity at each key decision point in child welfare. The next phase of the study draws on a series of focus group discussions with those involved at each decision point to provide context to the data analyses, as well as point to possible points of intervention. A literature review will inform both research methods and action planning. The intent is for the Child Welfare Equity Task Force to have as much information as possible to inform planning and advocacy efforts.

DEFINITIONS

Often the terms *disproportionality* and *disparity* are used interchangeably, however the terms have different meanings.

> *Disproportionality* is generally defined as the extent/degree to which a specific group experiences some event, either higher or lower (over- or underrepresented) than that specific group's proportion in the general population. The comparison is <u>within</u> a group.
>
> *Disparity* is generally defined as the comparison of one group's disproportionality (over- or underrepresented) to another group. Typically, the majority population is used as the benchmark or reference group in the comparison. The comparison is <u>between</u> groups. This approach has been found to be particularly appropriate for 'decision point analysis' given that the result at one decision point is compared to the result of the proximal prior decision point.

Further, disproportionality is useful in looking at general population patterns and whether there are "too many" or "too few" people from a particular group getting access to a service or affected by a policy. By contrast, disparity is useful in comparing treatment among groups, thus highlighting degree of *equity*.

Equity is the state of being just, impartial, and fair. In law, it means justice applied in circumstances covered by law, yet influenced by principles of ethics and fairness.

Decision point analysis is a process of collecting data on disproportionality and disparity at various key decision points in a system or process, in this case, in the child welfare system in Oregon. Such analyses provide information beyond simply determining if overrepresentation exists. Decision point analysis provides information concerning *where* in the system overrepresentation exists and whether or not it exists to a greater or lesser degree at different decision points. A decision point analysis does not end with the collection, analysis, and display of data findings. Quantitative findings are only the beginning. Decision point analysis should also include an active exchange/ discussion with key players who are knowledgeable about the system who can help interpret and explain the findings at each decision point. A series of focus groups are being conducted to add this interpretive piece to the study.

Children of Color and *Families of Color* are terms used in this report to refer to members of the following racial groups: Black, Asian American, Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and those of any racial group who are of Hispanic ethnic or cultural origin.

Relative Rate Index (RRI) is a methodology for measuring rate differences between groups to estimate overrepresentation and underrepresentation of a phenomenon. In order to determine how one group compares to another, one first calculates the occurrence rate of each group. Secondly, one divides the rate of the minority group by the rate of the majority group. The RRI for the majority group will always be 1. Overrepresentation occurs when the RRI is greater than 1 and underrepresentation occurs when the RRI is less than 1.

Relative Rate Index Formula:

$$\frac{R1 \text{ (rate of occurrence of an event)}}{R2 \text{ (population size)}} \times 100 = \text{Group Rate of Occurrence}$$

$$\frac{\text{Minority Group Rate of Occurrence}}{\text{Majority Group Rate of Occurrence}} = \textbf{Relative Rate Index}$$

METHODS

Sample Design and Procedures

The decision points were identified with the help of a diverse research advisory group of child welfare experts selected by DHS. These points are typical of those selected by other jurisdictions conducting Decision Point Analysis.

The data used in the following analyses were extracted from the Children, Adults, and Families Child Welfare Administrative Data System. Data documenting decision points at the beginning of a child's pathway through care were drawn from analysis of Child Protective Services (CPS) Data for the calendar year 2008. Data documenting decision points further along the child's pathway through the system were drawn from permanency planning data using a six-month timeframe between Oct. 1, 2008 and March 31, 2009.

A. Data used for Child Protective Services decision points (See Figure 1.)

The data used in the child protective decision points include all of the qualifying intakes/reports for calendar year 2008 (N = 54,105). Based on the information that is collected in the administrative data system, the information represents an adult in the family, usually the mother in the family.

The following are the decision points included in the child protective services data analyses:

- Child Protective Service Intakes/Reports: all reports (mostly phone calls) received by child welfare and initially determined to be an issue of possible child abuse/neglect.
- Screening Decision: a determination of whether to assign the report for a full assessment or complete it at screening.
- Disposition: the results of the assessment indicating whether or not abuse/neglect occurred.

- Removal/Hold: an indication of whether or not a child was removed from his/her family or held apart from his/her family based on the immediate safety concerns arising from assessment of the report.

Figure 1. Child Protective Services
9 Major Decision Points

B. Data used for Foster Care and Permanency Decision Points

For the children in the "removal /hold" group who are placed in foster care, a collaborative court/agency/service provider/family process works to move the child along to a permanent safe family, either by reunification or another permanent family connection.

The data used to examine the foster care and permanency decision points include all of the children who were in foster care at some point in the six-month period between October 1, 2008 and March 31, 2009 (N = 11,219).

The following are the decision points included in these data analyses:

- Foster Care: all children in foster care sometime during the period (includes licensed kinship placements).
- Type of Placement: the most recent type of foster care placement for all children in care during the six-month period.
- Length of Stay in Foster Care: the length of time that each foster child had been in care during this current foster care experience.
- Plan for Permanence: the most current permanency plan for children in foster care.
- Exit Pathways: the actual permanency resolution (or other kind of exit) for those children who exited foster care between October 1, 2008 and March 31, 2009.

OREGON STATEWIDE QUANTITATIVE REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

National research tells us that the rate of child abuse and neglect is not greater among families of color. Yet, the Oregon statewide administrative data analysis in the following pages shows patterns consistent with national statistics, suggesting that children of color are represented disproportionately and disparately in the state's child welfare system. On aggregate, children of color have different pathways than their White counterparts as they move through Oregon's child welfare continuum. This executive summary provides highlights for the Oregon state task force. The detailed report that follows will provide information on where racial and ethnic groups' experiences vary, at which decision points interventions are needed, and where Oregon might most productively focus our systems improvement efforts.

Child Protective Services. American Indian/Alaskan Native and Black families had the greatest disproportionate representation in Oregon's child welfare system. Specifically, American Indian/Alaskan Native families were nearly 2 times more likely and Black families were nearly 2.5 times more likely to be represented among reports to Child Protective Services (CPS) than to be present in Oregon's general population. American Indian/Alaskan Native were reported to CPS at a rate of 1.8 and Black families were reported to CPS at a rate of 3.6 as compared to a rate of 1.0 for White families, given the percent of each in the population.

Foster Care. Disproportionality and disparity continued along the child welfare continuum with children in foster care. Children of color, in particular American Indian/Alaska Native children, were in foster care at higher rates and stayed longer than other children. At least 19.7% of all children in foster care during the study period were children of color, despite the fact that children of color make up only 10.7% of Oregon's general child population.

American Indian/Alaskan Native children were nearly 5.5 times more likely and Black children 2 times more likely to be represented in Oregon's foster care population than to be represented in Oregon's general population.

American Indian/Alaskan Native, Black, and Pacific Islander children had a disparate overrepresentation in the foster care system when compared to White children. The difference among groups is particularly dramatic with Native American/Alaskan Native Children and Black Children. Native American/Alaska Native children are placed out of home foster care at over 5.5 times the rate of White children, and Black children are in out of home placement at four times the rate of White children. Pacific Islander children nearly 2 times more likely than White children to be in Oregon's foster care system.

Length of Stay in Foster Care. Once in foster care, children of color stayed longer. Over half of the American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA-eligible children had been in foster care two years or more. Close to half (46.5%) of Black children had been in care 2 years or more. A smaller percentage (38.5%) of White children experienced these long stays. A very small percentage of Hispanic children (under 25%) had stayed more than 2 years. Long-term foster care (considered the least permanent of all permanent plans) was the plan of record for more American Indian/Alaskan Native and Black children than White children.

Finding Permanence. In a surprising finding, American Indian/Alaskan Native children, including children who were ICWA eligible, were the most likely group to exit via adoption, with guardianship second. Black children and children of Hispanic origin were the most likely to exit by reunification (both more than White children).

Race/Ethnicity Unknown. At the time of this report, a significant number of children had race/ethnic designation of "Unknown." The significant number of families and children who were designated as "Unknown" was found throughout Oregon's child welfare continuum.

These data support the conclusion that there is racial disproportionality and disparity in Oregon's foster care. The reasons for this are beyond the scope of the quantitative data to explain, as are the possible interventions to move the system towards greater equity. Focus groups with individuals involved at the various decision points such as professionals, families, and community members, provide context for the data. Focus groups are now underway in Oregon to help identify the most important factors specific to Oregon's children. The focus groups offer possible explanations for the mechanism behind the differences and suggestions for practices that may improve the equity of service delivery across the system. For a summary of the focus group findings, please refer to the *Decision Point Analysis Qualitative Report*. The findings for the *Decision Point Analysis Quantitative Report* and *Decision Point Analysis Qualitative Report* can guide intervention plans at the statewide and local levels.

Decision Point Analysis Quantitative Report: Findings from the Oregon Statewide Administrative Data

Decision Point 1: Intakes/Reports to CPS

Calls to Child Protective Services about the safety of child(ren) in families.

The first Decision Point on the child welfare continuum is Intakes/Reports to Oregon's Child Protective Services (CPS). During 2008, citizens made over 54,000 reports to the CPS hotline. The research question at Decision Point 1 was: *Do racial and ethnic minority families receive more reports of abuse or neglect than do White families?*[1]

Table 1. shows that American Indian/Alaskan Native and Black families were represented in reports to Oregon's Child Protective Services in proportions greater than their proportions in Oregon's general population. Specifically, American Indian/Alaskan Native families were nearly 2 times more likely to be reported to the CPS hotline than their representation in Oregon's general population. Black families were nearly 2.5 times more likely to be represented among CPS hotline than their representation in Oregon's general population. Asian families were the least likely to be reported to the CPS hotline/intake. Asian families were 4.5 times less likely to be reported than to be represent in Oregon's general population. Pacific Islander families were included in the race/ethnic designated "Unknown" category due to their small sample size. At the point of intake/report, 21.9% of families were designated race/ethnicity "Unknown."

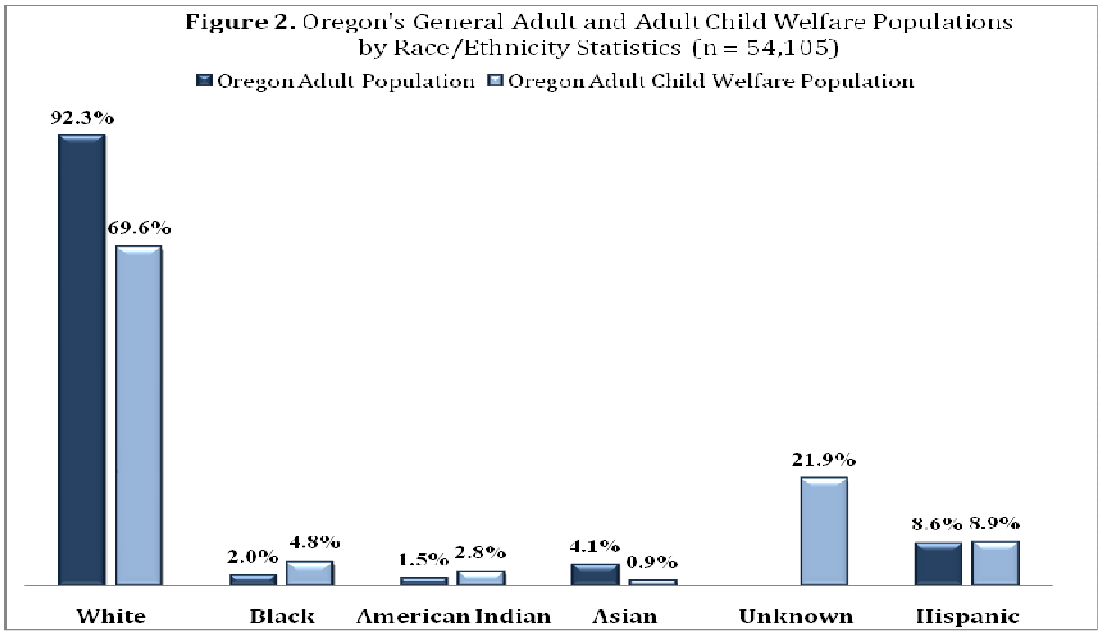
Table 1. Oregon Adult Population Compared to Child Welfare Intake by Race and Cultural Origin (n = 54,105)

Group	Adults in Oregon's General Population	Adults in Oregon's Child Welfare at Intake
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1.5%	2.8%
Black	2.0%	4.8%
Asian	4.1%	0.9%
White	92.3%	69.6%
Unknown*	–	21.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%
Hispanic	8.6%	8.9%

*The "Unknown" includes 0.3% of Pacific Islander families.

Figure 2. is a graphic representation of disproportionality—the extent/degree American Indian/Alaskan Native and Black families are disproportionately overrepresented in Oregon's child welfare system at Decision Point 1, intake/reports to CPS, as compared to their representations in Oregon's general population. Moreover, it is possible to view the extent that White and Asian families are disproportionately underrepresented in Oregon's child welfare system at intake as compared to their representation in Oregon's general population.

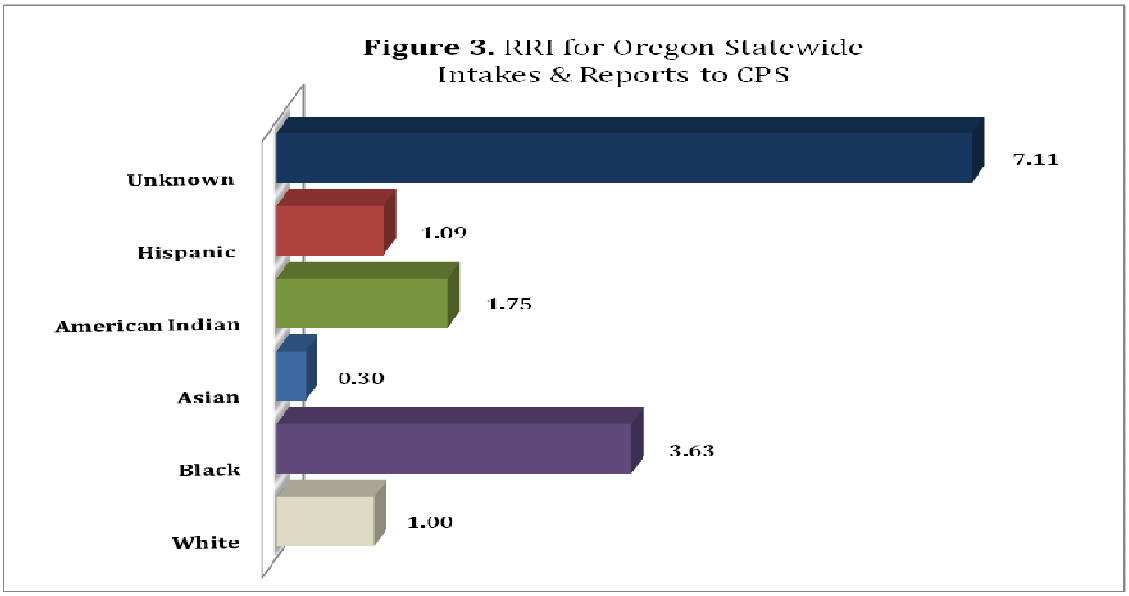
[1] At Decision Point 1, the adult caregiver's race and ethnic identities are represented.



Note. There are no state statistics on the number of racially/ethnically "Unknown" designated families.

Relative Rate Index Analysis for Intakes & Reports to CPS

The RRI analysis estimates the extent there is disparity between two different racial or ethnic groups. As illustrated in Figure 3., there was notable disparity between White and American Indian/Alaskan Native families and White and Black families at Decision Point 1. American Indian/Alaskan Native and Black families were overrepresented for reports to the CPS hotline compared to the number of reports White families are reported to the CPS hotline. The RRI calculations indicate that the greatest disparate overrepresentation between identified racial/ethnic groups was between Black and White families. Of note, families with race/ethnic "Unknown" designations were greatly overrepresented as compared to White families. CPS hotline reports for Asian families were underrepresented as compared to the reference group, White families.



Decision Point 2: Screening

Is the report serious enough for an assessment or should the report be screened out?

Once a report is made to the Child Protective Services Hotline, the person receiving the call uses specific screening criteria to decide whether the report appears serious enough to refer for a full assessment. While the intake decision of whether to 'refer for an assessment' is the second decision point in the child welfare continuum, it is the first decision point that actively involves families in the child welfare system. The research question at Decision Point 2 was: *Are families of color less or more likely to be screened for a child welfare assessment than White families?*

As shown in Table 2., White (54.9%), American Indian/Alaskan Native (53.3%), and Black (57.3%) families were referred for an assessment at similar rates. Asian (66.7%), Pacific Islander (70.2%), designated race/ethnicity "Unknown" (67.7%), and Hispanic (65.8%) families were more likely to be referred for an assessment than White families.

Table 2. Screening Decision by Race and Hispanic Cultural Origin (n = 54,105)

Group	Screened Out	Referred for Assessment
American Indian/Alaskan Native	46.7%	53.3%
Black	42.7%	57.3%
Asian	33.3%	66.7%
Pacific Islander	29.8%	70.2%
White	45.1%	54.9%
Unknown	32.3%	67.7%
Total	42.1%	57.9%
Hispanic	34.2%	65.8%

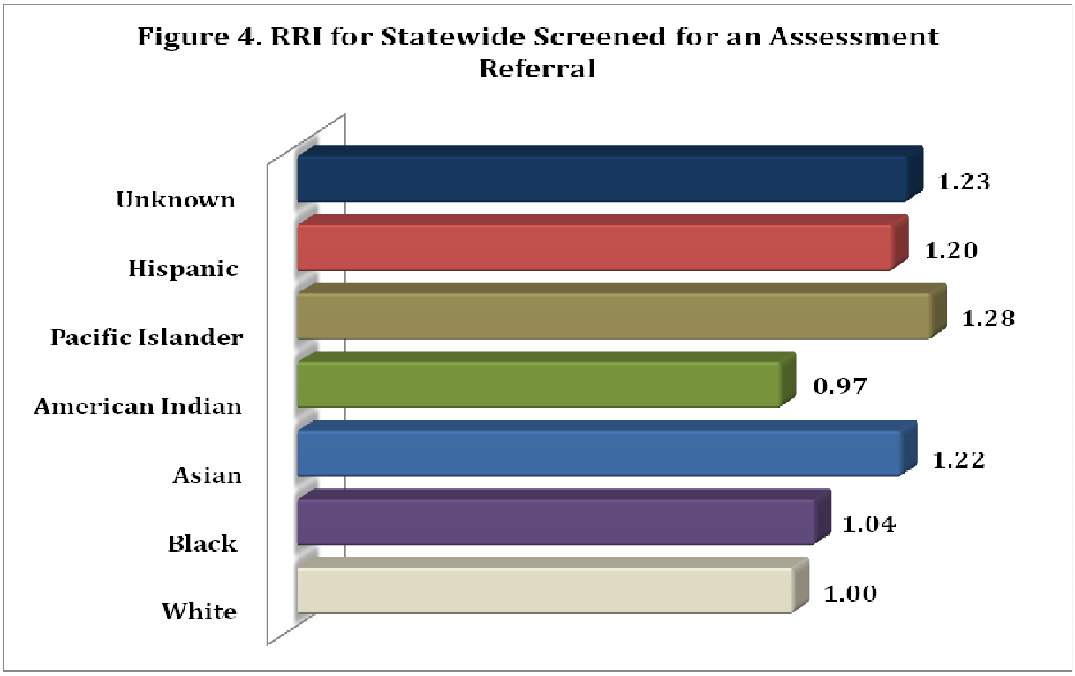
The Intake/Reports to CPS Decision Point indicated that families of color, particularly American Indian/Alaskan Native and Black families were more likely than other races to be reported to the CPS Hotline, but these families are less – likely to be referred on for assessment. It may be that the use of standardized criteria for screening at the hotline is providing some mediating effect for community bias that leads to the initial higher rates of reporting American Indian/Alaskan Native and Black families to child welfare. As the literature review will show, this intervention (standardized screening criteria) has been shown in other jurisdictions to reduce disproportionality and disparity at the point of intake.

Although there is an apparent equal representation of referrals for assessments among American Indian/Alaskan Native, Black, and White families, disproportional numbers of children of color are taken in to child welfare services at this point due to the higher percent at the initial referral. Additionally, when compared to White families, the percentages of Asian, Pacific Islander, race/ethnicity designated "Unknown", and Hispanic families were disparately represented among those with screening decisions "referred for an assessment".

The percentage of families designated with their races/ethnicities "Unknown" at the screening stage remains high, suggesting that screeners could improve collection of information about a family's racial or ethnic-cultural identity. It is also possible that there is a practice preference to ask about race/ethnicity at future decision points (e.g., assessment at disposition) rather than on the first call.

Relative Rate Index Analysis for Screening

In Figure 4., the RRI calculations show that all racial and ethnic minority groups were disparately overrepresented for referred for an assessment, with the exception of American Indian/Alaskan Native families, as compared to White families.



Decision Point 3: Disposition

Upon assessment, was there reason to be concerned for the safety of the children in their home?

The next point in the child welfare decision-making pathway is to make a dispositional finding based on assessments conducted with children, families, and collateral contacts. Findings from the assessment will determine whether the original report of child abuse or neglect is *found* to have merit, whether concerns are *unfounded*, whether the worker was *unable to determine* the presence of abuse, or if a supervisor decided based on local information that *no assessment was needed*. While services may be provided to any family who comes to the attention of child welfare, the most active child welfare response happens with a founded disposition. The research question at Decision Point 3 was: *Are families of color more or less likely to have a founded disposition – the disposition category that leads to greater involvement with child welfare?*

Table 3. shows that the greatest apparent disparity for founded disposition decisions was between American Indian/Alaskan Native (29%) and White (24.5%) families. White and Hispanic families (25.1%) had close to equal founded dispositions. Black (20.2%), Asian (20.4%), and designated race/ethnicity "Unknown" (20.1%) were the least likely to have a founded disposition.

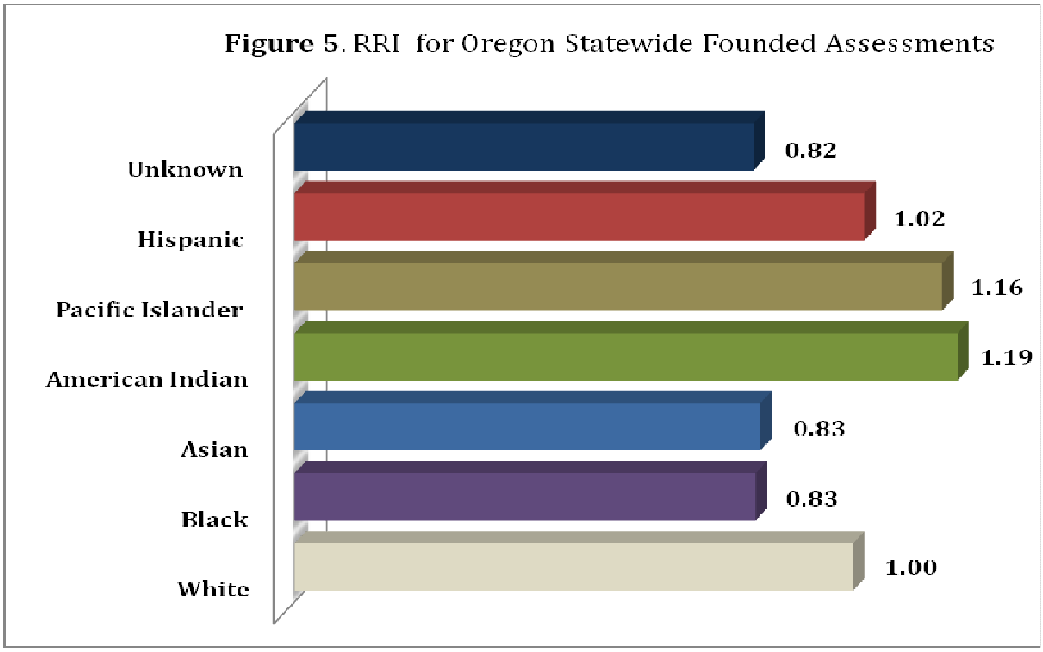
Of note is that approximately 25% of all families assessed at Decision Point 3 had designated race/ethnicity as "Unknown."

Table 3. Referral Disposition Decision by Race and Hispanic Cultural Origin (n = 31,232)

Group	Founded	Unfounded	Unable to Determine	No Assessment Needed
American Indian/Alaskan Native	29.0%	41.3%	19.2%	10.5%
Black	20.2%	51.8%	19.6%	8.4%
Asian	20.4%	51.2%	20.7%	7.6%
Pacific Islander	27.8%	39.1%	28.7%	4.3%
White	24.5%	47.9%	19.5%	8.2%
Unknown	20.1%	49.4%	22.7%	7.8%
Total	23.3%	48.2%	20.3%	8.1%
Hispanic	25.1%	51.1%	18.0%	5.8%

Relative Rate Index Analysis for Founded Reports

The RRI analysis indicates there was overrepresentation of founded assessments for Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaskan Native families and an underrepresentation of founded assessments for Black and Asian families. However, the disparity between theses racial minority families and the reference group (White families) were considered small. (See Figure 5.)



Decision 4: Removal/Hold

Is the situation serious enough to remove a child or keep the child from going home?

The next decision point is the determination of whether a child becomes less or more involved in child welfare by removal from parental care. The decision to remove a child is considered an important decision point as it has implications for the well-being of children and families, specifically concerning the short- and long-term effects of parent-child separation, safety, and

service needs. The research question posed at Decision Point 4 was: *Are children of color more or less likely to be removed from their families than White children when abuse or neglect has been founded?*

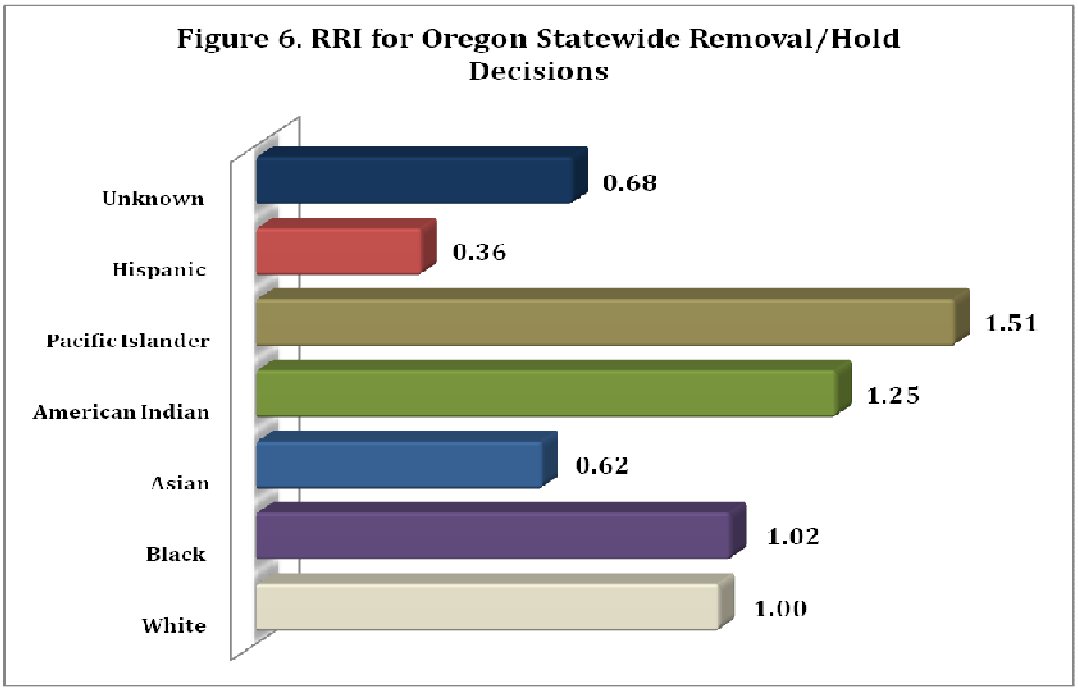
The data illustrated in Table 4. suggest that a greater percentage of American Indian/Alaskan Native (51.4%), Pacific Islander (56.8%), and Black (43.3%) children were removed from their parents than White children (40.1%). Asian (26.9%), Hispanic (31.6%), and designated race "Unknown" (28.2%) children were removed at a lower rate than White families (40.1%).

Table 4. Removal/Hold Decision by Race and Hispanic Cultural Origin (n = 7,810)

Group	Removal/Hold	No Removal/Hold
American Indian/Alaskan Native	51.4%	48.6%
Black	43.3%	56.7%
Asian	26.9%	73.1%
Pacific Islander	56.8%	43.2%
White	40.1%	59.9%
Unknown	28.2%	71.8%
Total	38.0%	62.0%
Hispanic	31.6%	68.4%

Relative Rate Index Analysis for Removal/Hold Decisions

The Relative Rate Index Figure 6. shows that only Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaskan Native families had a higher rate of removal/hold decisions than White families. All other racial/ethnic groups and race/ethnicity designated "Unknown" families either had similar removal/hold decisions or were underrepresented as compared to White families.



Decision 5: Foster Care

Comparison of Oregon's general child population and Oregon's foster care population.

A comparison of the racial/ethnic representation of children in Oregon's foster care system to those in Oregon's child population provided the answer to this question the question at Decision Point 5: *Are children of color more likely to be represented in the foster care population than they are in the general population?*

Table 5. reports that of all children in Oregon's foster care population, at least 19.7% were designated children of color (excluding Hispanic ethnic designated children). American Indian/Alaskan Native and Black children were represented in foster care disproportionally higher than in the general child population. American Indian/Alaskan Native children were nearly 5.5 times more likely and Black children 2 times more likely to be represented in Oregon's foster care population than to be represented in Oregon's general population. Conversely, Asian, White, and Hispanic (regardless of race) children were underrepresented in Oregon's foster care population in proportion to their representation in Oregon's general child population. (See Figure 7.)

Black and American Indian/Alaskan Native children constitute 4% and 1.9% respectively, of Oregon's population, yet make up 8.1% and 10.2% of the foster care population. Asian American children represent 4.8% of Oregon's child population but represent 0.9% of the foster care population. White children represent 89.3% of the general population and 67.7% of the foster care population. Hispanic children make up 17.6% of the child general population and represent 11.2% of the foster care population. Children with racial/ethnic designations of race "Unknown" represented 12.8% of the foster care population.

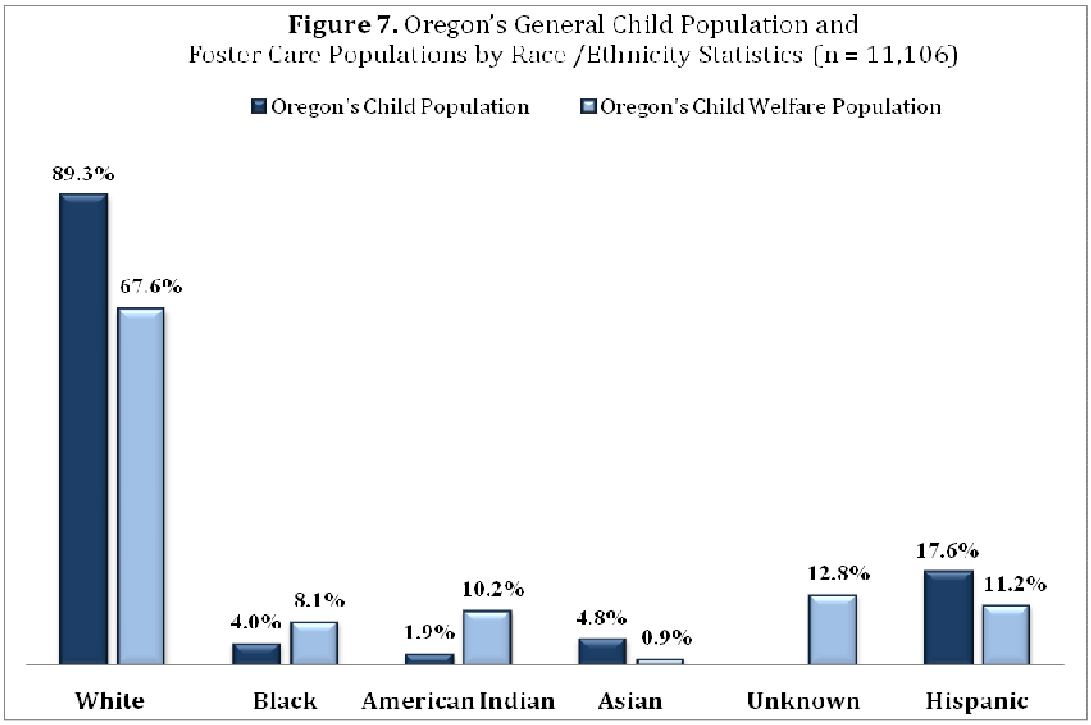
Table 5. Oregon's General Child Population and Foster Care Population by Race and Hispanic Cultural Origin (n = 11,106)

Race	Oregon General Population	Foster Care Population
American Indian/Alaskan Native[2]	1.9%	10.2%
Black	4.0%	8.1%
Asian	4.8%	0.9%
Pacific Islanders	Not Included	0.5%
White	89.3%	67.6%
Unknown	–	12.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%
Hispanic	17.6%	11.2%

Figure 7. is a graphic representation of the extent/degree American Indian/Alaskan Native and Black children are disproportionately overrepresented in Oregon's foster care population as compared to their representations in Oregon's general child population. Moreover, it is possible

[2] These percentages do not include the American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA-eligible children who represent 3.3% of Oregon's child welfare population.

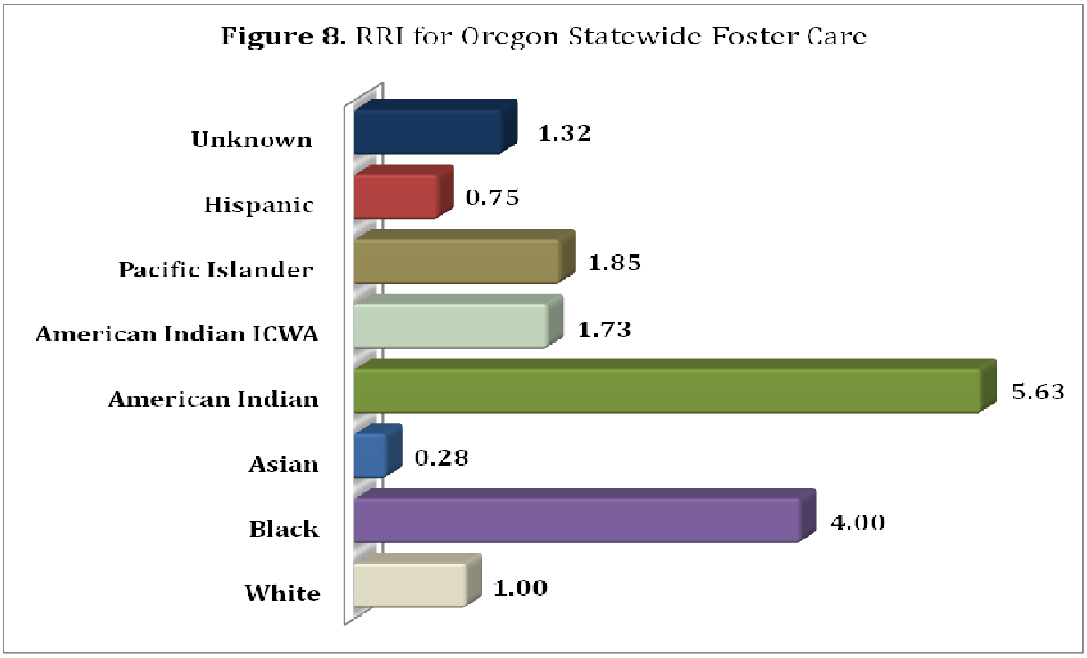
to view the extent that White, Asian, and Hispanic children are disproportionately underrepresented in Oregon's foster care population as compared to their representation in Oregon's general child population.



Note. There are no state statistics on the number of racially/ethnically "Unknown" designated children.

Relative Rate Index Analysis for Foster Care

Reported in Figure 8., there was disparate overrepresentation between White and American Indian/Alaskan Native and White and Black children in Oregon's foster care system. While tests of significance were not analyzed, there appeared to be clear significant differences between the rate of White children in foster care as compared to American Indian/Alaskan Native and Black children in foster care. Moreover, there were disparate overrepresentation of race/ethnic "Unknown" designations, Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaskan Native children as compared to the reference group, White children. The RRI calculations indicate that Asian children continue to be underrepresented throughout the child welfare continuum. Hispanic children are also disparately underrepresented as compared to White children in Oregon's foster care.



Decision Point 6: Type of Placement

In what type of foster home is the child placed?

When placement away from parents is needed the type of placement can have a significant impact on the child's sense of emotional and cultural continuity. The priority of child welfare is to find a placement that is as close to the child's family or cultural home as possible. Placement in a familiar setting can help mitigate the trauma of removal.

A kinship placement can provide a good foundation for emotional, relational, and cultural continuity. Research suggests that children placed with kin have better outcomes as adults than those with non-relative caregivers. The research question examined at Decision Point 6 was: *Are children of color more likely to be placed in some types of foster homes than others as compared to White children?*

The data shown in Table 6. indicate there were no racial or ethnic groups in kinship care at exceptionally high percentages. However, American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA-eligible children were the most likely to be placed in kinship care. Nearly one quarter of Native American/Alaskan Native ICWA-eligible children were in relative foster placements (24.9%). When combined with trial home visits almost 40% (39.2) were with family. Over 20% (20.3%) of American Indian/Alaskan Native children were in kinship care (36.5% if combined with trial home visits), followed by Hispanic children (18.8%), and Black children (17.8% in care with relatives). White children (15.7%) and Asian children (14.7%) had the lowest percentages in kinship care.

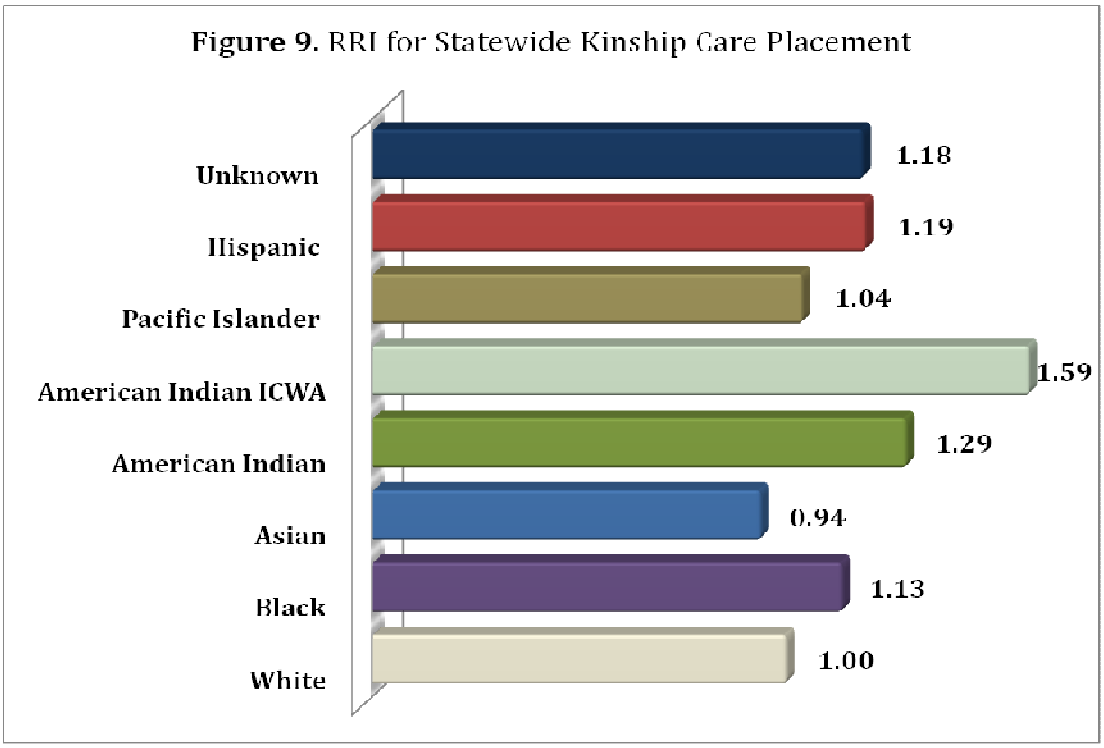
Of all children in foster care during this period, over half of the Black children (51.3%) were in non-relative foster care, compared to 46.3% of the White children.

Table 6. Foster Care Placement Setting by Race and Hispanic Cultural Origin (n = 11,106)

Group	Pre-Adoptive Home	Non-Relative Foster Care	Relative Foster Care	Institu-tional Setting	Independ-ent Living	Trial Home Visit	On the Run
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	11.3%	46.4%	20.3%	3.4%	0.6%	16.2%	1.8%
American Indian/ Alaskan Native ICWA	7.2%	44.4%	24.9%	6.3%	0.9%	14.3%	2.0%
Black	5.5%	51.3%	17.8%	3.7%	1.3%	18.3%	2.1%
Asian	9.5%	48.4%	14.7%	5.3%	1.1%	21.1%	0.0%
Pacific Islander	2.0%	51.0%	16.3%	4.1%	0.0%	26.5%	0.0%
White	7.8%	46.3%	15.7%	4.5%	1.0%	23.6%	1.2%
Unknown	11.1%	42.6%	18.6%	3.0%	0.6%	23.2%	0.8%
Total	8.4%	46.3%	16.7%	4.2%	0.9%	22.3%	1.2%
Hispanic	5.6%	40.9%	18.8%	2.0%	0.6%	31.3%	0.8%

Relative Rate Index Analysis for Kinship Care Placement

According to the RRI statistics, all racial and ethnic groups with the exception of Asian children were more likely to have a kinship care placement as compared to White children. (See Figure 9.)



Decision 7: Length of Stay in Foster Care

Does a child stay in foster care an extended period of time or exit from foster care quickly?

Once children are removed, many are involved in processes that help determine their length of stay in foster care. Such processes include the provision of social services, case management, advocacy, and decision-making hearings conducted with court, caseworker, attorney, and Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) input to facilitate progress. Each of these processes influences the length of stay in foster care, which can vary for each child. The research question at Decision Point 7 was: *Do children of color have longer or shorter stays in foster care?*

To determine which children in foster care were likely to leave foster care more quickly or to remain in foster care longer, the research team examined two cohorts: 1.) Children who were s*till in foster care* at the end of a six-month analysis period and 2.) Children *who exited foster care* during a six-month analysis period (an exit cohort).[3]

Still in Foster Care Cohort

Table 7. shows that of the cohort of children still in foster care during the six-month period, Asian, Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaskan Native children were the most likely to be in foster care 2-4 years. Of children who were still in foster care, Asian American children had been in care 2-4 years at a rate of 31.8%, compared to 19.4% of White children. Pacific Islander children were in foster care 2-4 years at a rate of 22.5%. There were 24.8% of American Indian/Alaskan Native children and 23.7% of American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA eligible children in foster care 2-4 years compared to 19.4% of White children.

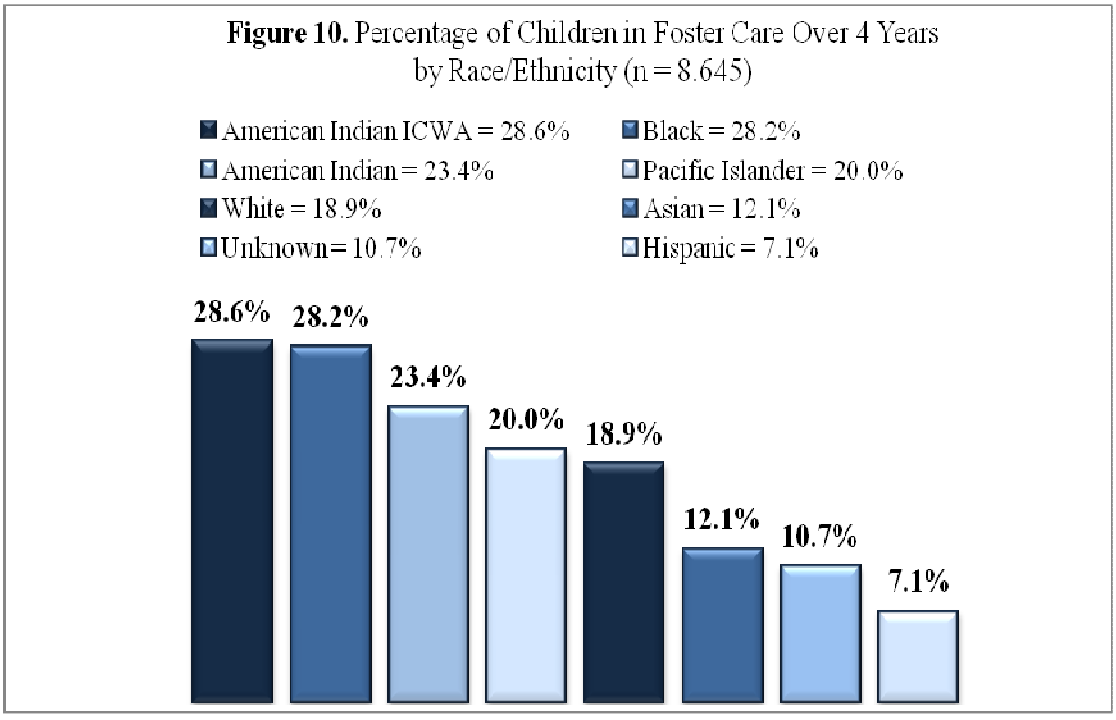
American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA-eligible (28.6%) and Black children (28.2%) were the most likely to be in foster care over 4 years. By comparison, 18.9% of White children had been in care over 4 years. Children of Hispanic cultural origin, regardless of race, were the least likely to remain in foster care over 4 years, with 7.1% experiencing extended stays in foster care. Of the children in this cohort who were still in foster care over 4 years, 10.7% had race/ethnicity designated as "Unknown."

[3] The 6-month reporting period to calculate length of stay was October 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009.

Table 7. Length of Stay in Foster Care for Children *Who Were Still in Foster Care* at the end of the six-month period by Race and Hispanic Cultural Origin (n = 8,645)

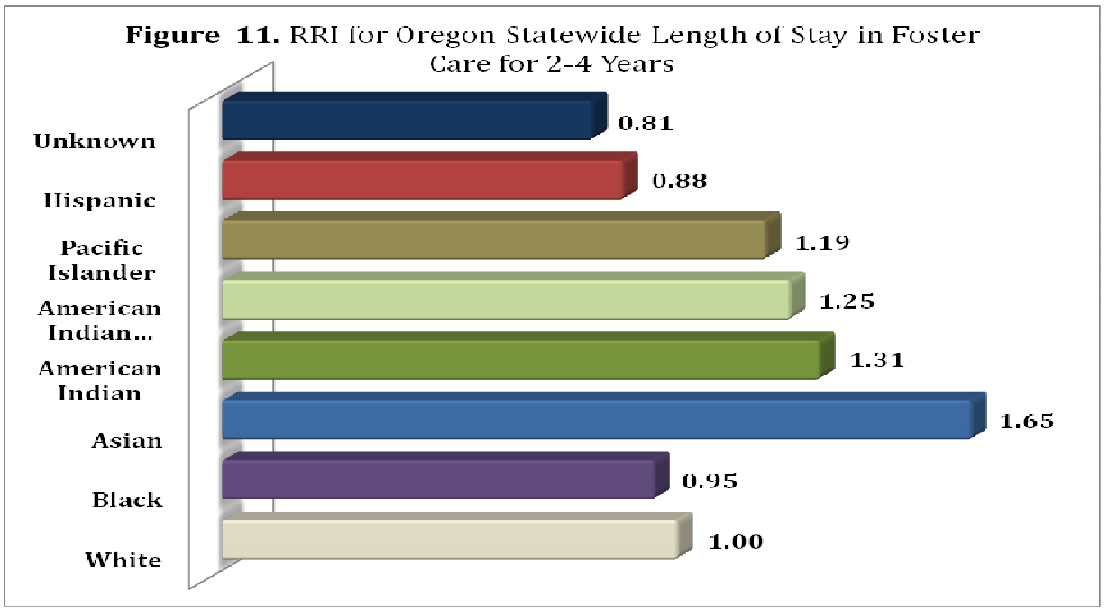
Group	0 – 30 days	1 – 6 months	6 months – 1 year	1 – 2 years	2 – 4 years	Over 4 years
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	3.6%	11.8%	17.4%	18.9%	24.8%	23.5%
American Indian/ Alaskan Native ICWA	2.3%	7.6%	16.4%	21.4%	23.7%	28.6%
Black	3.9%	16.8%	14.7%	18.1%	18.3%	28.2%
Asian	7.6%	9.1%	24.2%	15.2%	31.8%	12.1%
Pacific Islander	12.5%	5.0%	25.0%	15.0%	22.5%	20.0%
White	5.0%	17.8%	19.0%	19.9%	19.4%	18.9%
Unknown	8.0%	27.2%	22.1%	16.4%	15.7%	10.7%
Total	5.2%	18.1%	18.9%	19.1%	19.5%	19.2%
Hispanic	7.4%	22.2%	22.1%	24.1%	17.1%	7.1%

Figure 10. provides a visual of the differences in length of stay for children in foster care 4 or more years who were in the "still in foster care" cohort. White children were less likely to have remained in foster care over 4 years as compared to American Indian/Alaskan Native, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander, and Black children. However, the disparity between Pacific Islander and White children appeared to be less pronounced than the disparity between White children and the other aforementioned racial groups.



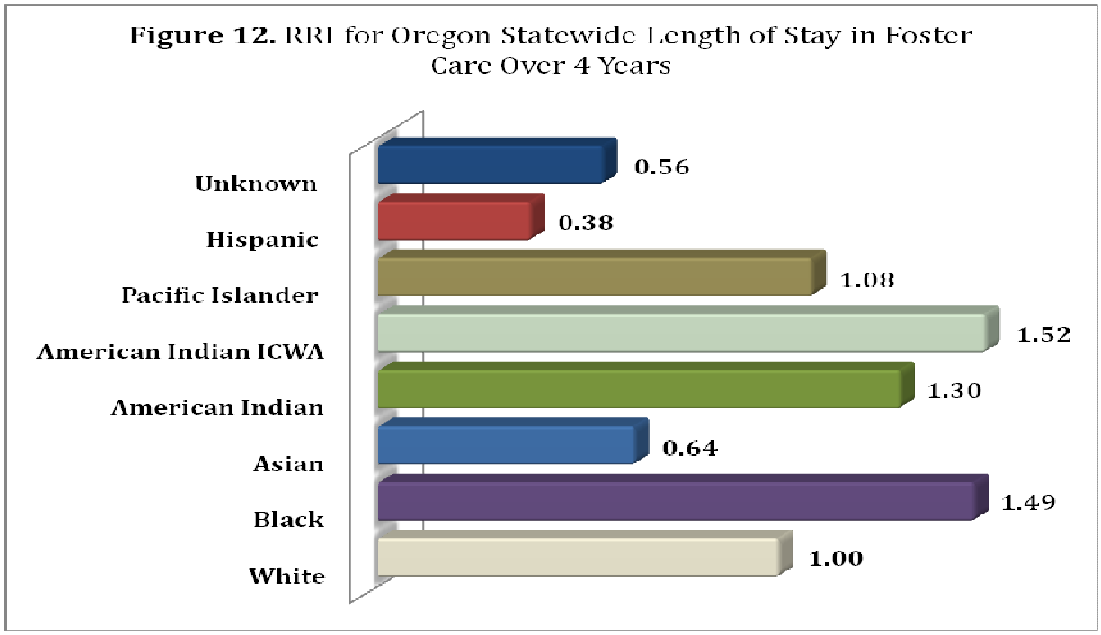
Relative Rate Index Analysis for Length of Stay in Foster Care 2-4 Years

According to the RRI statistics shown in Figure 11., there was a disparate overrepresentation of Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan Native, American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA, and Asian children represented in Oregon's foster care system 2-4 years as compared to the reference group, White children. The greatest disparity was between Asian and White children.



Relative Rate Index Analysis for Length of Stay in Foster Care Over 4 Years

Disparities were found at Decision Point 7 length of stay in foster care over 4 years for a number of children of color. The most notable disparate overrepresentation occurred between American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA and White children and Black and White children. (See Figure 12.)



Exited Foster Care Cohort

Table 8. reports that of the cohort of children who exited care, American Indian/Alaskan Native children, regardless of whether the children were American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA designated or not, were less likely to return home within 30 days than all other racial and ethnic groups. Further analyses of children who exited care within 30 days during the 6-month analysis period revealed that a small percentage of American Indian/Alaskan Native and American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA eligible children (2.9% and 1.4% respectively) exited foster care within 30 days. A larger percentage of exiting Asian and Pacific Islander, and race/ethnicity designated "Unknown" children (13.8%, 10%, and 12.1% respectively) did so within 30 days.

Of all the children who exited foster care during the six-month period, Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaskan Native children were more likely to experience foster care 2-4 years than all other races and ethnicities. Pacific Islander children who exited foster care stayed 2-4 years at a rate of 30% compared to 24.9% of White children. There were 30.9% of American Indian/Alaskan Native children and 32.4% of American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA eligible children exiting foster care who had been in care 2-4 years.

Within the cohort of children who exited foster care, American Indian/Alaskan Native and American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA designated were the most likely to have stayed in care over 4 years. There were 16.5% of American Indian/Alaskan Native and 18.9% of American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA-eligible children in care over 4 years compared to 11.3% of White children. Children of Hispanic cultural origin, regardless of race, were the least likely to remain in foster care over 4 years, with 5.4% experiencing extended stays in foster care. Of the children who exited foster care over 4 years, 10.7% had race/ethnicity designated as "Unknown."

Table 8. Length of Stay in Foster Care for Those Children *Who Foster Exited Care* (an exit cohort) by Race and Hispanic Cultural Origin (n = 2,468)

Group	0 – 30 days	1 – 6 months	6 months - 1 year	1 – 2 years	2 – 4 years	Over 4 years
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	2.9%	10.7%	15.8%	23.2%	30.9%	16.5%
American Indian/ Alaskan Native ICWA	1.4%	12.2%	13.5%	21.6%	32.4%	18.9%
Black	5.8%	12.2%	22.4%	25.0%	26.3%	8.3%
Asian	13.8%	6.9%	27.6%	13.8%	27.6%	10.3%
Pacific Islander	10.0%	30.0%	20.0%	0.0%	30.0%	10.0%
White	4.6%	8.9%	24.1%	26.1%	24.9%	11.3%
Unknown	12.1%	10.7%	24.2%	19.2%	23.1%	10.7%
Total	5.7%	9.7%	23.1%	24.5%	25.4%	11.6%
Hispanic	6.4%	16.1%	36.1%	21.1%	15.1%	5.4%

Decision Point 8: Plan for Permanence

What are the goals of the child welfare system concerning permanent plans?

The next decision point examined is the identified permanency plans that are pursued for children in foster care. The research question at Decision Point 8 was: *Do the permanency plans pursued for children in foster care differ for children of color than White children?*

In particular, the research team looked at which groups were most likely to have children with a plan of long-term foster care. Considered the least-permanent option, long-term foster care is also called "Another Planned Permanency Arrangement" (APPLA) and federal concerns have been expressed about over-use of this category of permanence in Oregon. As a matter of policy, reunification, adoption or guardianship are all considered preferable than growing up in foster care for any child.

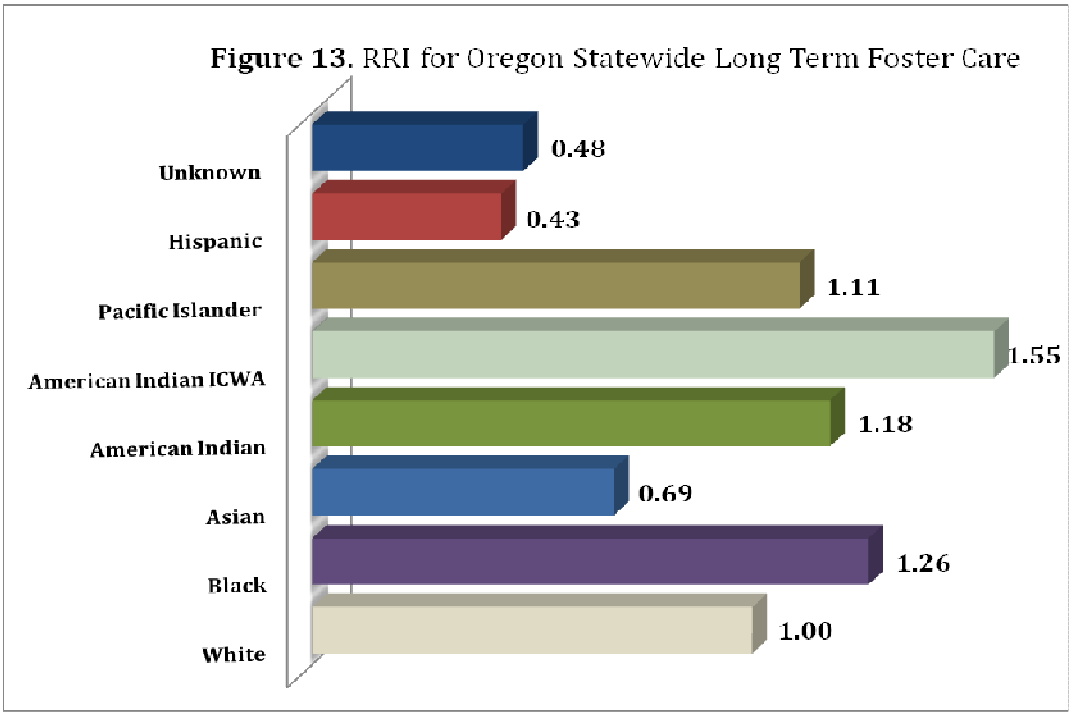
Approximately 17.7% of children in foster care had long-term foster care as a permanency plan during the 6-month study period. American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA-designated and Black children had the highest percentages of long-term foster care permanency plans, 27.5% and 23.3% respectively. By comparison, 18.4% of White children had long-term foster care permanency plans. Hispanic (7.9%) and designated race/ethnicity "Unknown" (8.8%) had the lowest percentages of a long-term foster care permanency plan. (See Table 9.)

Table 9. Long-Term Foster Care Plan by Race and Hispanic Cultural Origin (n = 1,987)

Group	Plan for Long-Term Foster Care
American Indian/Alaskan Native	20.3%
American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA	27.5%
Black	23.3%
Asian	12.6%
Pacific Islander	20.0%
White	18.4%
Unknown	8.8%
Total	17.7%
Hispanic	7.9%

Relative Rate Index Analysis for Long-Term Foster Care

According to the RRI statistics, there was disparate overrepresentation for children of color with long-term foster care plans. The greatest disparities were between American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA and White children and Black and White children. (See Figure 13.)



Decision Point 9: Exit Pathways

By what pathway (permanency or other pathway) does a child exit foster care?

Child welfare's priority goal is to reunify children with safe and supportive parents. However, children exit the child welfare system by a variety of pathways, including relative care, adoption, emancipation, guardianship, and transfer to another state's child welfare system. Sometimes children exit child welfare in undesirable ways. The research question at Decision Point 9 was: *Are there differences in exit pathways from foster care between children of color and White children?*

While there were a number of different potential pathways, the research team chose to highlight three: reunification, adoptions, and guardianship. Table 10. illustrates the results of several additional pathways as well.

Hispanic children (77.2%) were the most likely to exit by reunification. White (62.3%) and Black (65.8%) children exited by reunification in similar percentages. Asian (58.6%), Pacific Islander (55.6%), and designated race/ethnicity "Unknown" (56.6%) children were less likely to exit by reunification than the average for all races/ethnicities (60%). American Indian/Alaskan Native children (46.6%) and American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA (40.3%) were the least likely to exit foster care through reunification.

American Indian/Alaskan Native and race/ethnicity designated "Unknown" children were the most likely to exit foster care through adoption at rates of 33.6% and 29.7% respectively. These percentages are significantly higher than those of White children who exited by adoption at a rate of 22.7%. Pacific Islander children (11.1%) were the least likely to exit foster care via adoption.

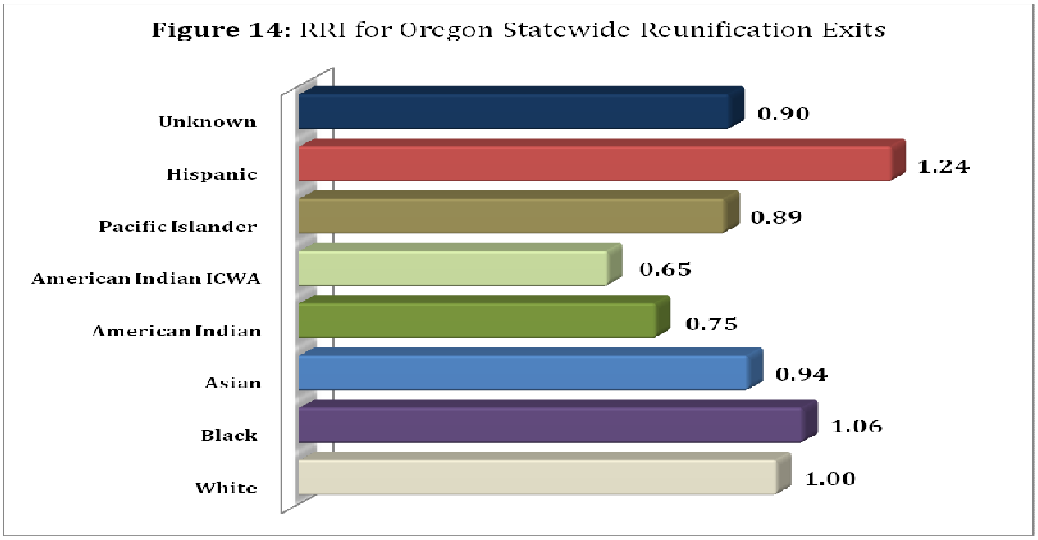
Guardianship is an exit pathway that allows children to maintain emotional permanence while avoiding a termination of parental rights. American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA children exited via guardianship more often than other race/ethnicities (17.9%). The same percentage of Black and White children exited via guardianship (4.7%).

Table 10. Foster Care Permanency Exit by Race and Hispanic Cultural Origin (n = 2,413)

Group	Reunify	Relative Care	Adop-tion	Emanci-pation	Guard-ianship	Trans-fer	On the Run	Death
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	46.6%	0.8%	33.6%	5.26%	10.9%	0.8%	1.6%	0.4%
American Indian/ Alaskan Native (ICWA)	40.3%	0.0%	27.0%	7.5%	17.9%	3.0%	4.5%	0.0%
Black	65.8%	0.7%	18.8%	6.7%	4.7%	2.7%	0.7%	0.0%
Asian	58.6%	0.0%	24.1%	6.9%	10.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Pacific Islander	55.6%	0.0%	11.1%	11.1%	11.1%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
White	62.3%	0.5%	22.7%	5.5%	4.7%	2.2%	1.9%	0.2%
Unknown	56.6%	0.8%	29.7%	2.8%	4.5%	4.2%	1.4%	0.0%
Total	60.0%	0.7%	24.3%	5.1%	5.6%	2.4%	1.7%	0.2%
Hispanic	77.2%	1.0%	13.3%	2.7%	4.1%	0.7%	0.7%	0.3%

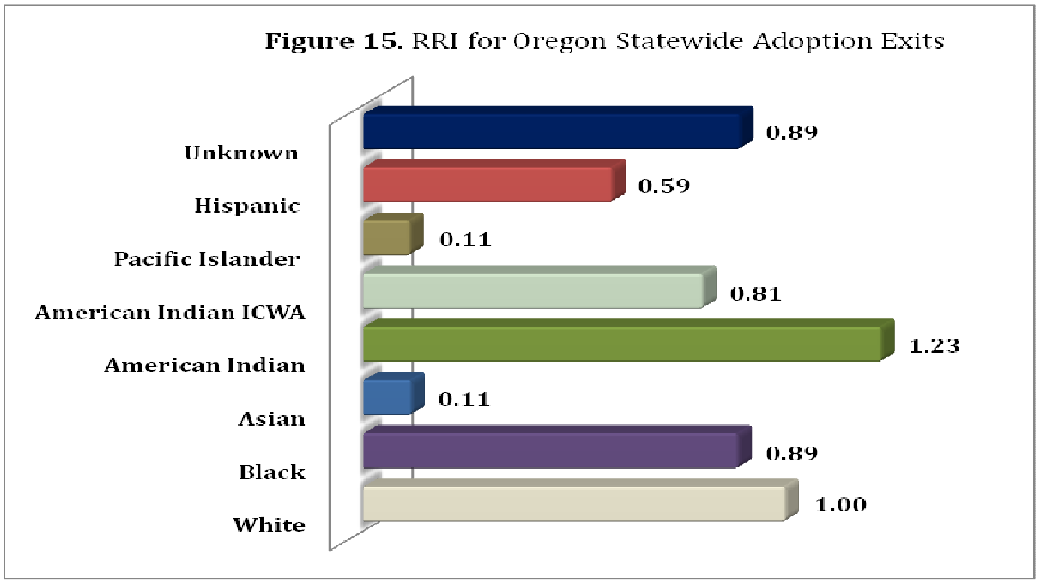
Relative Rate Index Analysis for Reunification Exits

Children of color, with the exception of Hispanic and Black children, were disparately underrepresented in reunification as an exit pathway as compared to White children. The greatest disparity occurred between American Indian/Alaskan Native and White children. While statistical significance is not indicated, the disparate overrepresentation between Hispanic and White children who exited foster care through reunification should be noted as a potentially significant finding. (See Figure 14.)



Relative Rate Index Analysis for Adoption Exits

Figure 15. shows that children of color, with the exception of American Indian/Alaskan Native children, were disparately underrepresented in adoption as an exit pathway as compared to White children. The greatest disparity occurred between Pacific Islander and White children and Asian and White children. Of note, American Indian/Alaskan Native were more likely to exit foster care through adoption than all other groups.



Decision Point Analysis Quantitative Report: Summary of the Oregon Statewide Report

Decision Point 1: Intakes/Reports to CPS

Calls to Child Protective Services about the safety of child(ren) in families.

The first Decision Point on the child welfare continuum is Intake/Report to Oregon's Child Protective Services (CPS). During the six-month reporting period that the analyses were completed, statewide citizens made over 54,000 reports to the CPS hotline. The research question at Decision Point 1 was: *Do racial and ethnic minority families receive more reports of abuse or neglect than do White families?*[4]

Answer: Yes, for some racial and ethnic minority families. Compared to their representation in Oregon's general population:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native families are nearly 2 times to have CPS reports.
- Black families are nearly 2.5 times more likely to have CPS reports.
- Asian families are 4.5 times less likely to have CPS reports.
- To note, 21.9% of families were designated race/ethnicity "Unknown."

Decision Point 2: Screening

Is the report serious enough for an assessment or should the report be screened out?

Once a report is made to the Child Protective Services Hotline, the person receiving the call uses specific screening criteria to decide whether the report appears serious enough to refer for a full assessment/investigation. While the intake decision of whether to 'refer for an assessment' is the second decision point in the child welfare continuum, it is the first decision point that actively involves families in the child welfare system. The research question at Decision Point 2 was: *Are families of color less or more likely to be screened for a child welfare assessment than White families?*

Answer: The findings are mixed as it depends on the racial/ethnic group.

- White (54.9%), American Indian/Alaskan Native (53.3%), and Black (57.3%) families were referred for an assessment at similar rates.
- Asian (66.7%), Pacific Islander (70.2%), designated race/ethnicity "Unknown" (67.7%), and Hispanic (65.8%) families were more likely to be referred for an assessment than White families.

Decision Point 3: Disposition

Upon assessment, was there reason to be concerned for the safety of the children in their home?

The next point in the decision-making pathway is based on findings from assessments conducted with children, families, and collateral contacts. While services may be provided to any family who comes to the attention of child welfare, the most active child welfare response happens when an assessment disposition is founded. The research question at Decision Point 3 was: *Are families of color more or less likely to have disposition findings of founded–the disposition category that leads to greater involvement with child welfare?*

[4] At Decision Point 1, the adult caregiver's race and ethnic identities were represented.

Answer: The answer is mixed as it depends on the race/ethnicity. The greatest apparent disparity for founded disposition decisions was between American Indian/Alaskan Native and White families.

- American Indian/Alaskan Native families (29%) were more likely to have founded dispositions than White families (24.5%).
- White and Hispanic families (25.1%) had close to equal founded dispositions.
- Black (20.2%). Asian (20.4%), and designated race/ethnicity "Unknown" (20.1%) were the least likely to have a founded disposition compared to all other races/ethnicities.
- To note, approximately 25% of all families assessed at Decision Point 3 had designated race/ethnicity as "Unknown."

Decision 4: Removal/Hold

Is the situation serious enough to remove a child or keep the child from going home?

The next decision point is the determination of whether a child becomes less or more involved in child welfare (i.e., placed in foster care or not). The research question posed at Decision Point 4 was: *Are children of color more or less likely to be removed from their families than White children when abuse or neglect has been founded?*

Answer: It depends on the racial/ethnic group.

- American Indian/Alaskan Native (51.4%), Pacific Islander (56.8%), and Black (43.3%), children were removed from their parents at a higher rate than are White children (40.1%).
- Asian (26.9%), Hispanic (31.6%), and designated race "Unknown" (28.2%) children were removed at a lower rate than White families (40.1%).

Decision 5: Foster Care

Comparison of Oregon's general child population and Oregon's foster care population.

A comparison of the racial/ethnic representation of Oregon's child population to the racial/ethnic representation of children in the foster care system was analyzed. At Decision Point 5 the question was: *Are children of color more likely to be represented in the foster care population than they are in the general population?*

Answer: Of all children in Oregon's foster care population, approximately 19.7% were racially designated children of color (excluding Hispanic ethnic designated children). Black and American Indian/Alaskan Native were represented disproportionately in foster care than they were to be found in the general population.

- Black and American Indian/Alaskan Native children represented 4% and 1.9% respectively, of Oregon's population, yet made up 8.1% and 10.2% of the foster care population.
- Asian American children represented 4.8% of Oregon's child population and represented 0.9% of the foster care population.
- White children represented 89.3% of the general population and 67.7% of the foster care population.

- Hispanic children made up 17.6% of the child general population and represented 11.2% of the foster care population.
- Children with racial/ethnic designations of race "Unknown" represented 12.8% of the foster care population have a racial/ethnic designation as "Unknown."

Decision Point 6: Type of Placement
In what type of foster home is the child placed?

While in foster care, a key decision is the type of placement. The research question examined at Decision Point 6 was: *Are children of color more likely to be placed in some types of foster homes than others as compared to White children?*

Answer: There were no racial/ethnic groups that were in kinship care at exceptionally high percentages. However, there were some racial/ethnic group differences. American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA children were the most likely to be placed in kinship care than all other racial/ethnic groups.

- Nearly one quarter of American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA children were in relative foster placements (24.9%).
- When combined with trial home visits almost 40% (39.2%) were with family.
- There were 20.3% of American Indian/Alaskan Native children were in kinship care (36.5% if combined with trial home visits), followed by Hispanic children (18.8%), and Black children (17.8% in care with relatives).
- There were 15.7% of White children were in kinship care and only 14.7% of Asian children in kinship care.
- Black children (51.3%) were in non-relative foster care, compared to 46.3% of White children in non-relative foster care.

Decision 7: Length of Stay in Foster Care
Does a child stay in foster care an extended period of time or exit from foster care quickly?

Once children are removed, many are involved in processes that help determine their length of stay in foster care. Such processes include the provision of social services, case management, advocacy, and decision-making hearings conducted with court, caseworker, attorney, and Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) input to facilitate progress. Each of these processes influence the length of stay in foster care, which can vary for each child. The research question at Decision Point 7 was: *Do children of color have longer or shorter stays in foster care?*

Children *who were still in foster care* during a six-month analysis period.

Answer: American Indian/Alaskan Native children, regardless of whether the children were American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA designated or not, were the least likely to return to homes within 30 days than all other racial and ethnic groups.

- American Indian/Alaskan Native and American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA designated children were 3.6% and 2.3% respectively exited foster care within 30 days.
- Asian, Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and race/ethnicity designated "Unknown" children 7.6%, 12.5%, 7.4%, and 8% respectively were the most likely to exit foster care within 30 days as compared to White children (5%), Black children (3.9%).

Answer: Asian, Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaskan Native children were more likely to experience foster care 2-4 years than all other races/ethnicities.

- Asian American children still in foster care 2-4 years at a rate of 31.8% as compared to 19.2% of White children.
- Pacific Islander children were in foster care 2-4 years at a rate of 22.5% compared to their White counterparts (19.2%).
- There were 24.8% of American Indian/Alaskan Native children and 23.7% of American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA eligible children in foster care 2-4 years compared to White children who 19.2% were in foster care 2-4 years.

Answer: American Indian/Alaskan Native and Black children were more likely to remain in foster care 4 or more years.

- There were 28.6% of American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA-eligible and 28.2% of Black children in foster care over 4 years as compared to 18.9% of White children still in care over 4 years.
- Hispanic children were the least likely to remain in foster care over 4 years, with 7.1% experiencing extended stays in foster care.
- To note, there were 10.7% had race/ethnicity designated as "Unknown."

Children *who had exited foster care* during a six-month analysis period.

Answer: American Indian/Alaskan Native and American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA eligible children were least likely to exit foster care within 30 days than all other races/ethnicities.

- American Indian/Alaskan Native and American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA eligible children were 2.9% and 1.4% respectively exited foster care within 30 days.
- Asian and Pacific Islander, and race/ethnicity designated "Unknown" children 13.8%, 10%, and 12.1% respectively were more likely to exit foster care within 30 days.

Answer: Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaskan Native children were more likely to experience foster care 2-4 years than all other races and ethnicities.

- Pacific Islander children who exited foster care 2-4 years at a rate of 30% compared to 24.9% of White children who exited foster care within 2-4 years.
- There were 30.9% of American Indian/Alaskan Native children and 32.4% of American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA eligible children had exited foster care within 2-4 years as compared to their White counterparts (24.9%).

Answer: American Indian/Alaskan Native and American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA-eligible children in care over 4 years compared to White children.

- There were 16.5% of American Indian/Alaskan Native and 18.9% of American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA-eligible children in care over 4 years compared to White children (11.3%).
- Hispanic were the least likely to remain in foster care over 4 years, with 5.4% experiencing extended stays in foster care.
- To note, 10.7% had race/ethnicity designated as "Unknown."

Decision Point 8: Plan for Permanence

What are the goals of the child welfare system concerning permanent plans?

The next decision point examined is the identified permanency plans that are pursued for children in foster care. The research question at Decision Point 8 was: *Do the permanency plans pursued for children in foster care differ for children of color than White children?*

Answer: The findings are mixed as it depends on the racial/ethnic group.

- American Indian/Alaskan Native ICWA-designated and Black children had the highest percentages of long-term foster care permanency plans, 27.5% and 23.3% respectively.
- Hispanic (7.9%) and designated race/ethnicity "Unknown" (8.8%) had the lowest percentages of a long-term foster care permanency plan.

Decision Point 9: Exit Pathways

By what pathway (permanency or other pathway) does a child exit foster care?

One of child welfare's priorities is the goal to reunify children with safe and supportive parents. However, this goal is not always possible and other exit pathways from the child welfare system are pursued. Additional exit pathways include relative care, adoption, emancipation, guardianship, and transfer to another state's child welfare system. Sometimes children exit child welfare by running away or due to death while in care. The research question at Decision Point 8 was: *Are there differences in exit pathways from foster care between children of color and White children?*

Answer: The findings are mixed as it depends on the racial/ethnic group.

- White (62.3%) and Black (65.8%) children who exited by reunification had similar percentages.
- American Indian/Alaskan Native children (48%) were the least likely to exit foster care through reunification.
- Asian (58.6%), Pacific Islander (55.6%), and designated race/ethnicity "Unknown" (56.6%) children were the least likely to have reunification exits, less than the total for all races/ethnicities (60%).
- American Indian/Alaskan Native and race/ethnicity designated "Unknown" children were the most likely to exit foster care through adoption at a rate of 30.6% and 29.7% respectively.
- American Indian/Alaskan Native (11.8%), Pacific Islander (11.1%), and Asian American (10.3%) children exited via guardianship as compared to White children (4.7%).