

Permanency Enhancement Project
Illinois Department of Children & Family Services
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

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Addressing Permanency

While permanency rates have improved in Illinois in recent years, discrepancies in permanency rates continue to exist across the state of Illinois:

- The number of out-of-home child care cases decreased by 15.5% statewide from FY 03 to FY 06
- During this same period, caseloads for children in out-of-home care in the specific region of Southern Illinois increased by 9.01%

Addressing Permanency Continued...

Focus groups were held in order to identify and assess barriers to permanency in Southern Illinois. The focus groups were assembled through the collaborative efforts of:

- Illinois Department of Children & Family Services
- Illinois African American Family Commission
- Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
- Illinois African American Advisory Council

Addressing Permanency Continued

The 11 focus groups included participants from the following groups:

- Birth Parents
- Foster/Adoptive Parents
- Community-based Organizations
- Public Child Welfare Professionals
- Child Welfare Professionals in Private Agencies
- Juvenile Court Judges
- Court Personnel
- Law Enforcement
- Former Wards

Barriers Identified by Focus Groups

- Court Barriers
- Service Barriers
- Agency/System/External Barriers



Court Barriers

- Cost of termination hearings
- Insufficient preparation for termination hearings by DCFS Workers
- Inconsistency in rulings
- Lack of trained court personnel in juvenile court cases
- Limited time to handle child welfare cases
- Lack of parental rights being heard in court

Service-Related Barriers

- Lack of available services for families
- Lack of sufficient transportation (including access to public transportation)
- Unrealistic service plans
- Inadequate investigations

Agency/System/External Barriers

- Unrealistic service plans
- Inadequate investigations
- Lack of foster home placements for older children
- Complex DCFS system
- Overriding of workers' recommendations by supervisors
- Abrupt parent-child separations
- Housing biases
- Caseworker biases

Results from the Focus Groups: Six Recommendations for DCFS

- Increase collaboration with agencies, court personnel, law enforcement, birth parents, fathers, paternal families and foster/adoptive parents
- DCFS caseworkers & investigators should articulate one voice within agency and in community
- DCFS should review & develop a policy to look at the impact of separating siblings and coordinating children's' wishes and feelings

Recommendations Continued....

- Revisit the definition of “minimum parenting standards” and provide training to all DCFS workers and other collaborators
- DCFS should develop a collective vision of permanency, “best interest of the child” and disproportionality
- Review services that are critical to the removal and return of foster children



Southern Region Symposium



Phase II: Developing Action Teams

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Role in the Permanency Enhancement Project (PEP)

The PEP is administered by Drs. Brown and Lawrence. Specific responsibilities taken by the SIUE Faculty Team include:

- Guiding development of action plans
- Action plan review and re-formation
- Meeting with action teams
- Technical assistance
- Training of key stakeholder groups
- Ongoing evaluation of permanency barriers
- Develop Baseline data indicators for assessment of outcomes

Action Teams Established With Four Major Goals:

- Goal 1 – Improve Remain Home Permanency Outcomes
- Goal 2 – Improve Return Home Permanency Outcomes
- Goal 3 – Improve Adoption/Guardianship Outcomes
- Goal 4 – Improve Cultural Responsiveness to Reduce Overrepresentation of African-American Youth in Foster Care

Action Teams Established to Address Permanency

Team Moderators	Counties Represented
Cairo Region- Gloria Pounds	Alexander/Johnson/Pulaski/ Saline/Gallatin
Carbondale Region- Donna Wilson	Franklin/Jackson/Perry/ Williamson
Effingham Region- Connie Luthe & Henry Over	Crawford/Edwards/Effingham/ Fayette/Jasper/Richland/Wabash
Madison/Bond Region- Anne King & Cindy Lolley	Madison/Bond
Mt. Vernon Region- Diane Woods	Clay/Clinton/Gallatin/Jefferson/ Hamilton/Marion/Wayne/White
St. Clair Region – E. St. Louis Dianne Parker	Monroe/Randolph/St. Clair/ Washington
St. Clair Region - Belleville Vendetta Dennis & James Toolles	Monroe/Randolph/St. Clair/ Washington

Action Team Goals

The Planning Process

During the action planning process, teams were requested to:

- Focus on the goals and outcomes
- Keep in mind that improving permanency is central to all goals and outcomes
- Select measurable success indicators that are appropriate for their team
- Develop their own success indicators that can be measured

Action Team Goal 1: Improving Remain Home Permanency Outcomes

- Provide judges with training on permanency
- Design integrated assessment tools for judges re: DCFS policies and parental rights
- Provide quarterly training to DCFS workers on service plan review



Action Team Goal 2: Improve Return Home Permanency Outcomes



- Meet with contracted child welfare agencies to establish uniform understandings regarding “best interest of the child”
- Set up mentoring sessions with community leaders to access what new services are needed
- Utilize new Hoyleton Intact Family Support Services (SOS)

Action Team Goal 3: Improve Adoption/Guardianship Outcomes

- Provide training for DCFS workers regarding court processes
- Organize family oriented fair that provides activities, resources and education on the adoptive & foster care process and DCFS services



Action Team Goal 4: Improve Cultural Responsiveness



- Invite judges to diversity trainings
- Plan and hold community fair to increase public awareness on disproportionality
- Provide cultural sensitivity and poverty training
- Design training curriculum on bias in perceptions and documentation

Challenges Identified Across All Action Teams

- A need for better collaboration between court systems and DCFS
- Integrated training & assessment tools needed for agencies and service providers
- Cultural competency training needing in order to better address and understand the impact of disproportionality in the Southern Illinois Region
- Community support

Challenges Continued...

- Achieving consensus across multidisciplinary teams
- Dueling standards – minimum standards for parents often conflict with minimum standards for children
- Locating accessible treatment services for parents (e.g. substance abuse services)
- Battling misconceptions about the Department of Children and Family Service's role, purpose and services
- Funding for implementation of action steps



Action Plans (Handout)

A Closer Look at Disproportionality



Disproportionality Defined

“Disproportionality refers to the differences in the percentage of children of a certain racial or ethnic group in the country as compared to the percentage of the children of the same group in the child welfare system.”

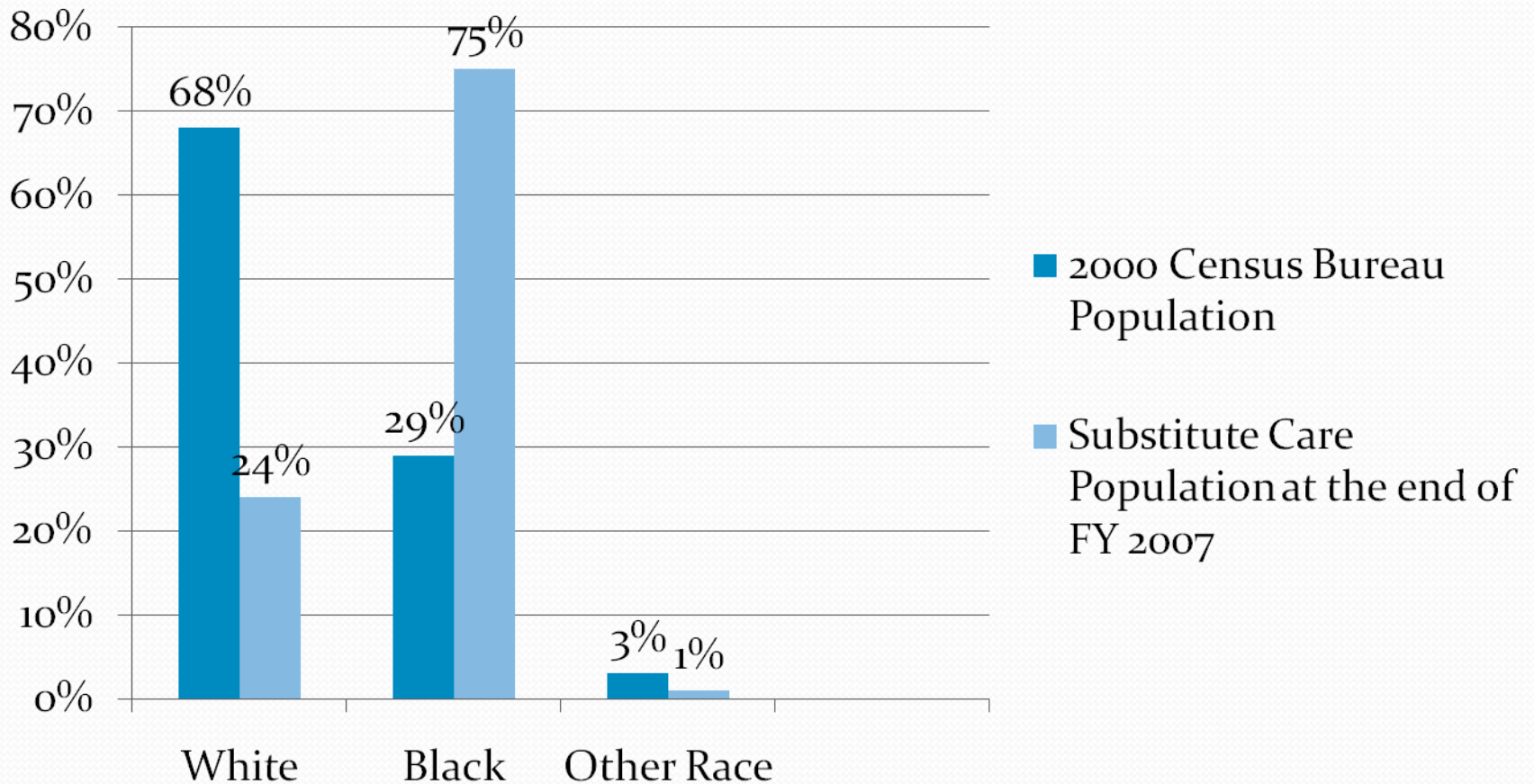
Casey – CSSP Alliance for Racial Equality in the Child Welfare System, 2006

Disproportionality at the State Level

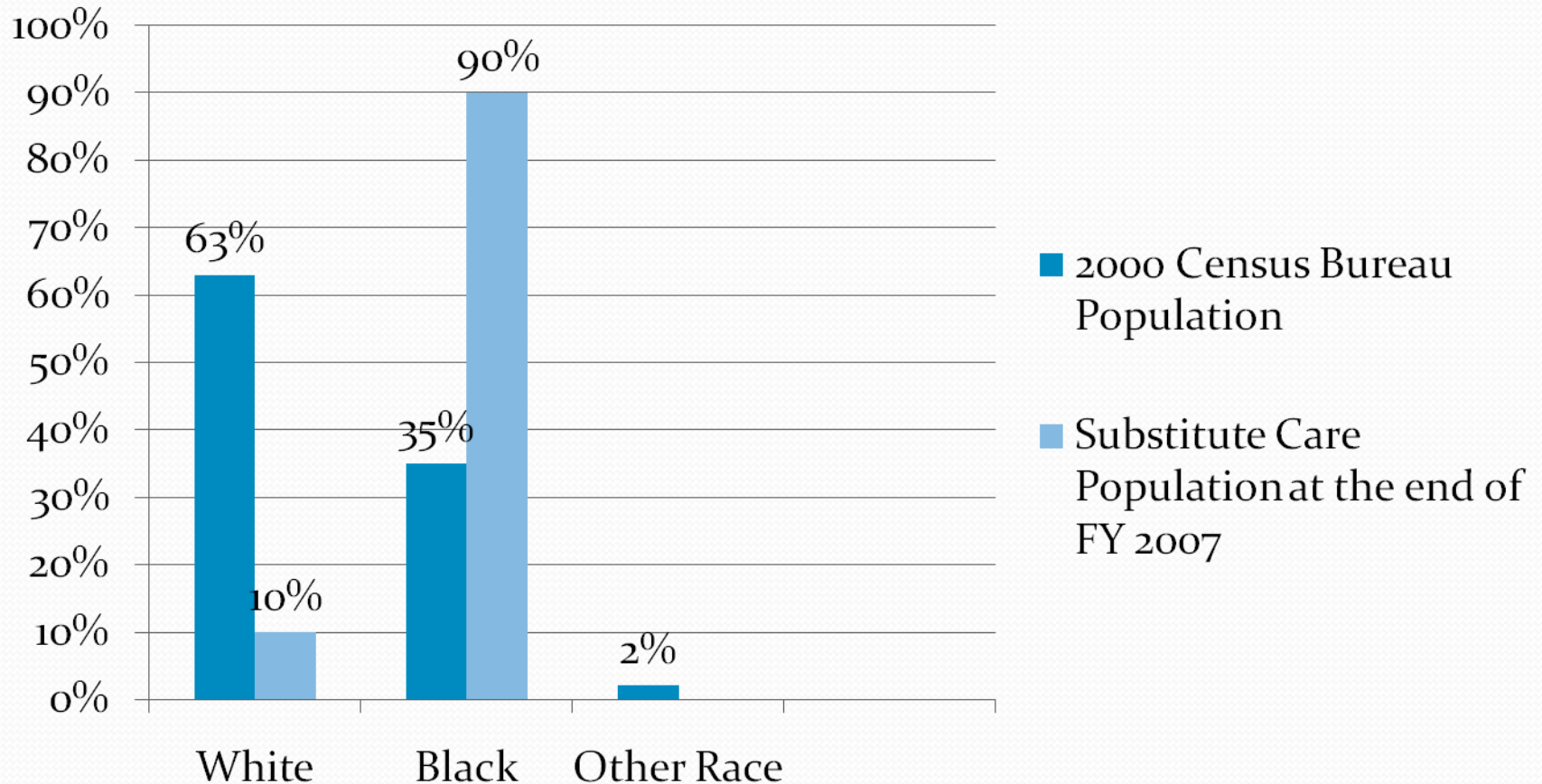
In 2005, 19,431 children lived in out-of-home care. Of this total:

- 63.6% were Black (Non-Hispanic)
- 28.4% were Caucasian (Non-Hispanic)
- 3% were *other*

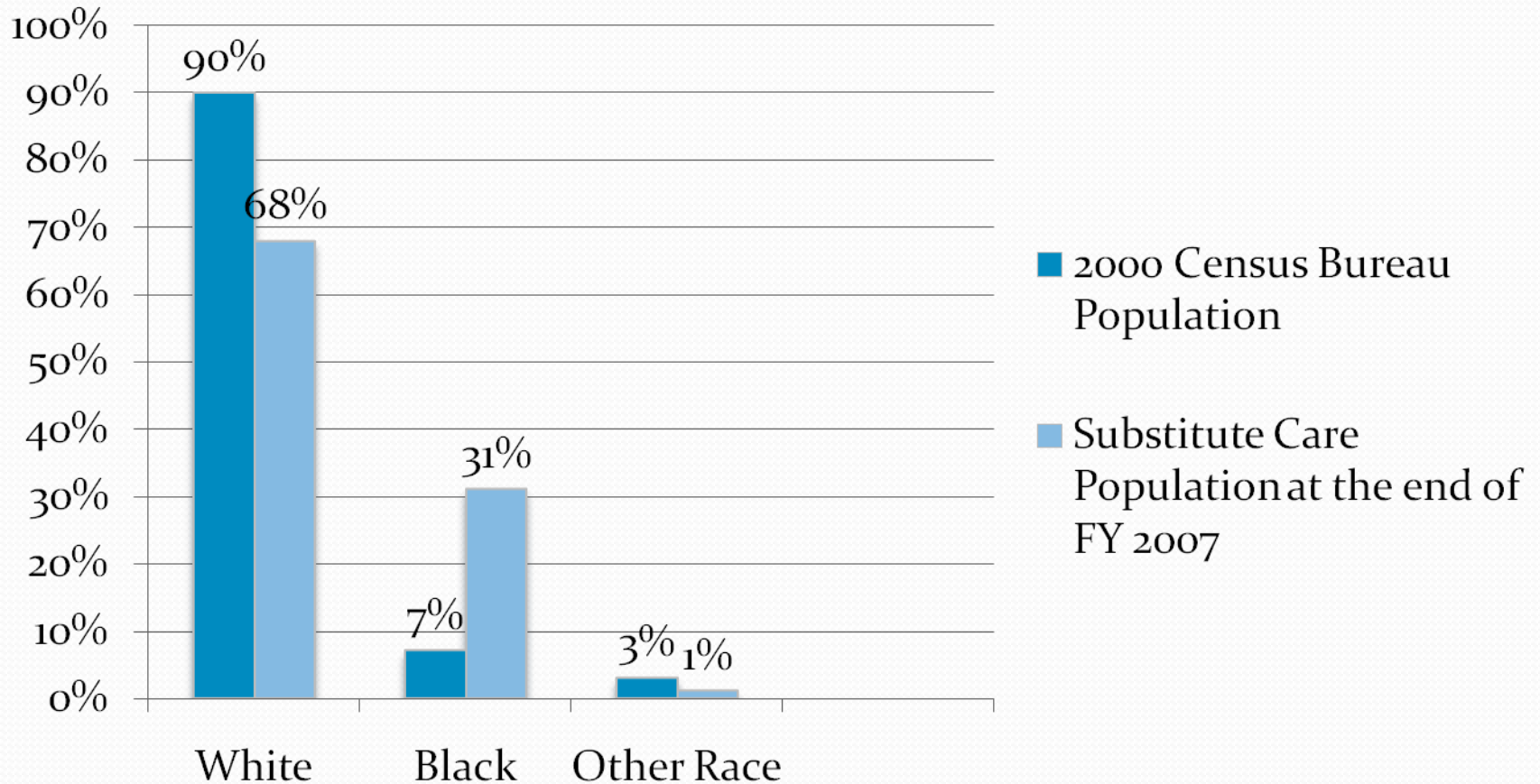
Disproportionality in the Region – St. Clair County



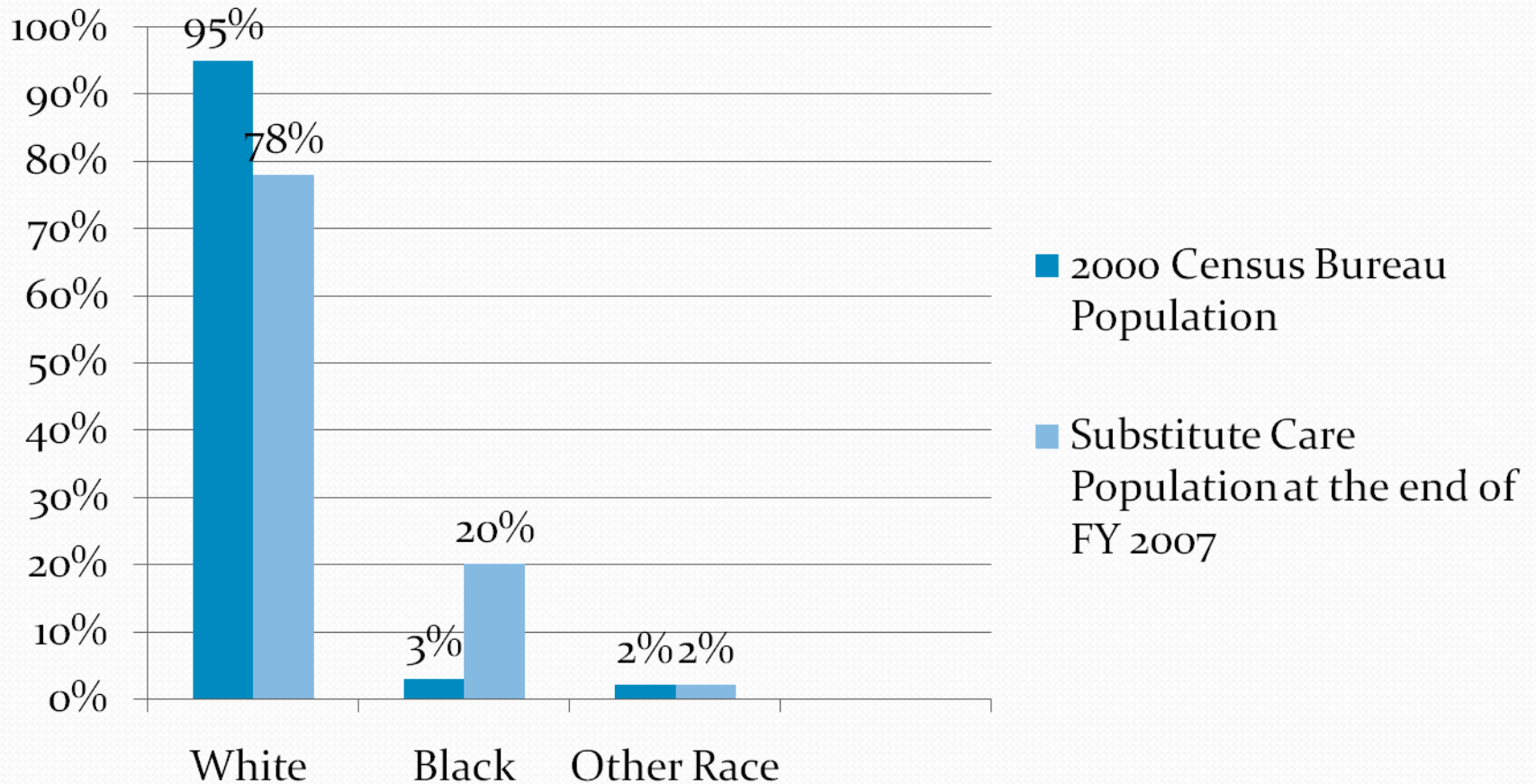
Disproportionality in the Cairo Region – Alexander County



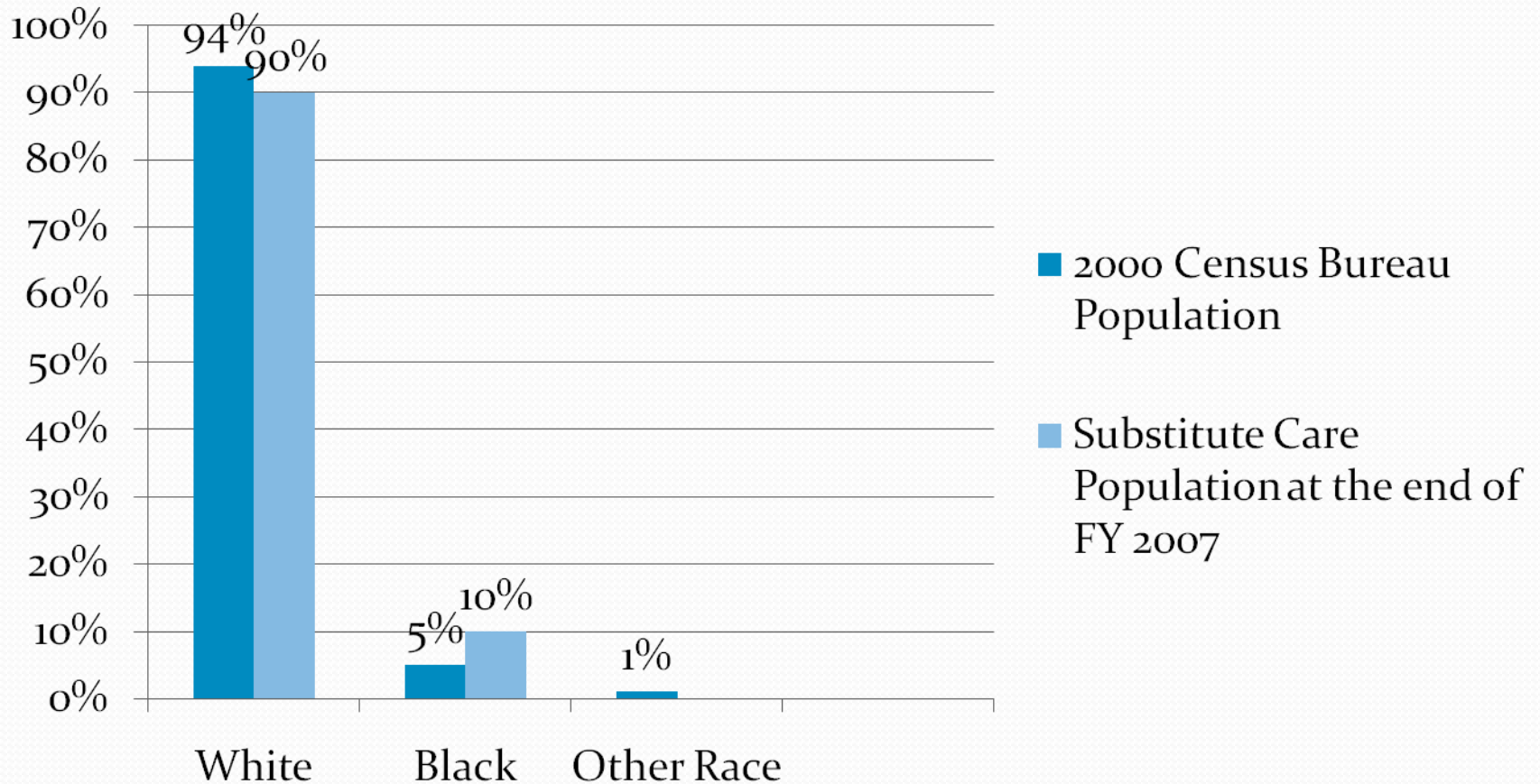
Disproportionality in the Region – Madison County



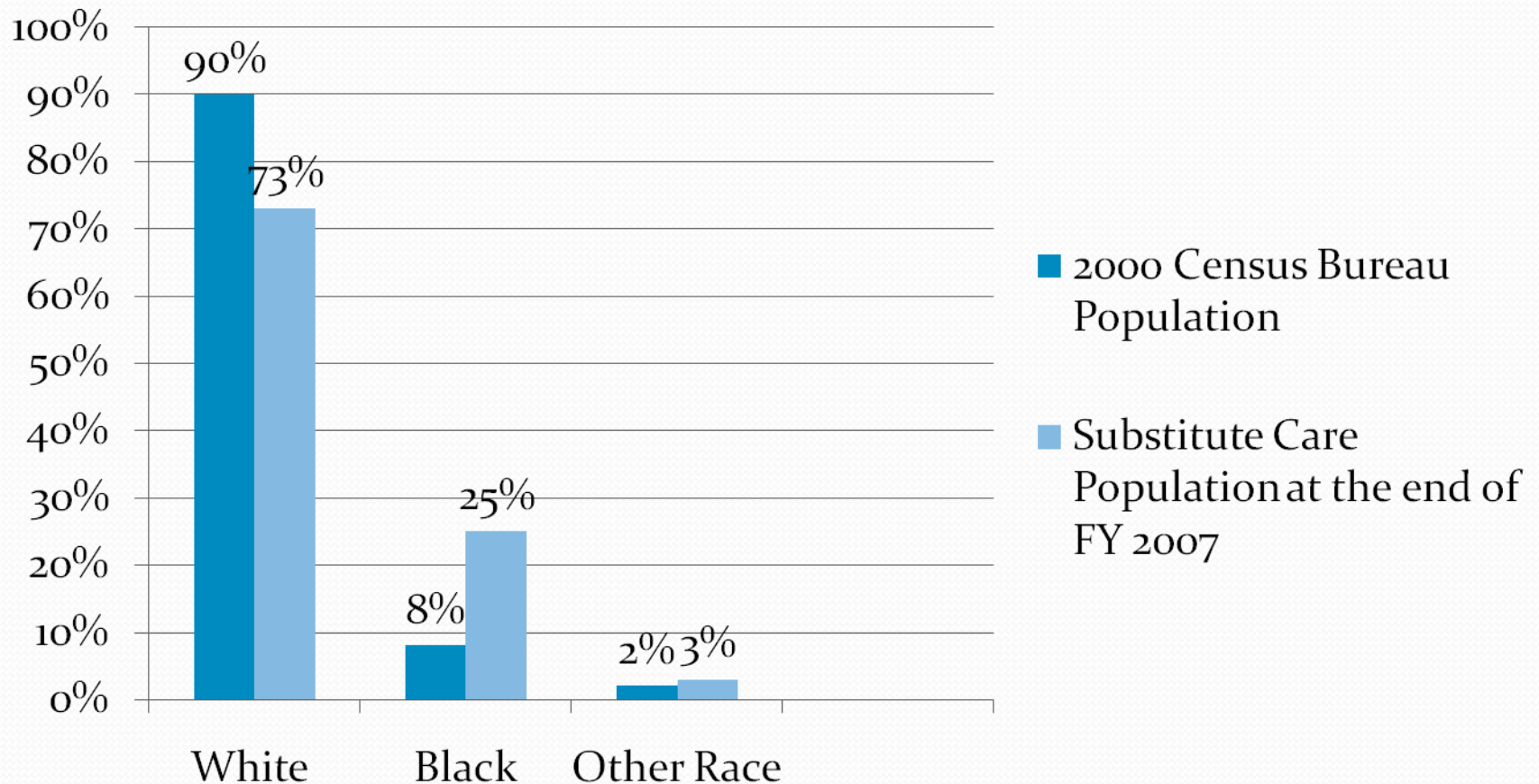
Disproportionality in the Carbondale Region – Williamson County



Disproportionality in the Effingham Region – Fayette County



Disproportionality in the Mt. Vernon Region – Jefferson County



Action Team Challenges when Addressing Disproportionality

- No united consensus that disproportionality is an issue in the state or region
- Color blindness – “I am doing my work, not looking at race”
- No united effort to own the problem of disproportionality
- Cultural acceptance in assessing cases
- Belief that African American families are incapable of parenting

Confronting the Challenges

- Open discussions on disproportionality in the action team meetings
- Recommend training to address how disproportionality is a national, state and regional problem
- Ensure that it is included in all action plans
- Develop baseline data to measure indicators of improvement



Assessment and Baseline Data

Guiding Questions for Baseline Measurements

- What is the total number of children in substitute care at the end of FY?
- Of all entry cohorts, what is the median length of stay by race (number of months)?
- We need some help with this slide...Vicki can you work on this one

Measurable Success Indicators for Remain Home Permanency Outcomes

- Reduce the number of youth removed from the home by _____%.
- Increase supportive service for families (list additional services) which leads to a reductions in the number of youth removed from the home by _____% (service examples include transportation, mental health, drug counseling, family therapy, etc.)

Measurable Success Indicators for Return Home Permanency Outcomes

- Increase the number of youth returned home by ___%
- Reduce the amount of time youth spend out of home by an average of _____ weeks
- Increase supportive services for families which leads to less time spent in foster care for youth by ___ weeks
- Decrease the amount of time cases are held in the court system by _____
- Increase the input from fathers and other family members, by _____%, who work to improve permanency outcomes

Measurable Success Indicators for Adoption/Guardianship Permanency Outcomes

- Increase the number of youth in permanent adoption of guardianship placements by ___%
- Decrease the amount of time spent in foster care before adoption or permanent guardianship for youth by ___%
- Decrease the amount of time cases are held in the court system by _____
- Increase the number of families eligible for adoption/guardianship by _____

Measurable Success Indicators for Reducing Overrepresentation

- Decrease the percentage of children from African American families who are in foster care by ___%
- Improve cultural responsiveness by including ___% of collaborative partners in diversity training
- Increase the amount of time African American youth and families are given to discuss their particular situation with case workers by _____ hours



Summary by Region

Cairo Region Summary

- 85% of children served in intact family cases do not experience substitute care placement in the Cairo region, while the IL state average is 95% and the Southern Region average is 93%. The Cairo region meets or exceeds state and regional averages for the other measures of Goals 1-3.
- Alexander Co. has an African American population of 19%, but 90% of the children in substitute care are African American. This indicates a problem with disproportionality.
- Johnson County, with a population of 12,878 has 5 children in substitute care while Alexander County, with a population of 9,590, has 21 children in substitute care. The Cairo region action team group has a large number of counties with relatively small populations making

Cairo Region

Goal 4

Measure 1 –

What is the total number of children in substitute care at the end of FY 2007?

AA = African American

CA =Caucasian

OR = Other Race

County	Race	Number	Percent
Union <i>41 children</i>	AA	1	2%
	CA	38	93%
	OR	2	5%
Pulaski <i>11 children</i>	AA	5	45%
	CA	6	55%
Alexander <i>21 children</i>	AA	19	90%
	CA	2	10%
Massac <i>23 children</i>	AA	4	17%
	CA	19	83%
Johnson <i>5 children</i>	CA	5	100%
Pope <i>1 child</i>	CA	1	100%
Hardin <i>7 children</i>	CA	7	100%
Saline <i>68 children</i>	AA	10	15%
	CA	54	79%
	OR	4	6%

Cairo Region

Goal 4

County	Race	Months
Massac	CA	20
	AC	20
Johnson	CA	1
	AC	1
Pope	CA	2
	AC	2
Hardin	CA	10
	AC	10
Saline	CA	14
	AC	17
Union, Pulaski & Alexander counties, no data		

Measure 2

Of all entry cohorts,
what is the median
length of stay by race
(number of months)

- CA=Caucasian
- AC=All children

Carbondale Region Summary

- Franklin & Jackson County surpass IL state & Southern Region averages for Goal 1 (Remain Home) and Goal 2 (Return Home)
- Williamson County's Goals 1 & 2 outcome rates fall below state and regional averages
- For Goal 3-Carbondale region falls between the state and region averages
- Evidence of disproportionality in Williamson, Perry and Jackson Counties

Carbondale Region Goal 4

Measure 1

What is the total number of children in substitute care at the end of FY 2007 by race?

AA=African American

CA=Caucasian

OR=Other Race

County	Race	Number	Percent
Williamson 145 children	AA	29	20%
	CA	113	78%
	OR	3	2%
Franklin 72 children	CA	72	100%
Perry 21 children	AA	4	19%
	CA	17	81%
Jackson 70 children	AA	33	47%
	CA	30	43%
	OR	7	10%

Carbondale Region

Goal 4

Measure 2 –

Of all entry cohorts, what is the median length of stay by race? (number of months)

AA=African American

CA=Caucasian

AC=All Children

Racial groups are excluded if data is not available for the group

County	Race	Months
Williamson	CA	16
	AC	16
Franklin	AA	4
	CA	4
	AC	4
Perry	CA	16
	AC	16
Jackson	AA	12
	AC	19

Effingham Region Summary

- The Effingham region counties are close to meeting or exceeding state averages for goals 1, 2 and 3
- Effingham region action team have a large number of counties with few children served in each county-meaningful comparisons between counties are difficult
- The majority of children in substitute care in the Effingham region are Caucasian; disproportionality is not an issue

Effingham Region Goal 4

Measure 1 –

What is the total number of children in substitute care at the end of FY 2007 by race?

AA=African American

CA=Caucasian

OR=Other Race

County	Race	Number	Percent
Richland 20 children	CA	20	100%
Wabash 30 children	CA	27	90%
	OR	3	10%
Edwards 7 children	CA	7	100%
Crawford 24 children	CA	23	96%
	OR	1	4%
Lawrence 28 children	AA	1	4%
	CA	27	96%
Effingham 47 children	AA	3	6%
	CA	44	94%
Jasper 8 children	CA	8	100%
Fayette 31 children	AA	3	10%
	CA	28	90%

Effingham Region

Measure 2 –

Of all entry cohorts,
what is the median
length of stay by
race (number of
months)

AA=African American

HI=Hispanic

CA=Caucasian

AC=All children

*Racial Groups excluded if the
number of children in that
group was zero and if there was
no data for that county*

County	Race	Months
Richland	CA	12
	AC	12
Wabash	AA	12
	CA	18
	AC	18
Crawford	AA	1
	HI	1
	CA	16
	AC	16
Effingham	CA	7
	OR	7
	AC	15
Jasper	CA	2
	AC	2
Fayette	CA	15
	AC	15

Madison-Bond Region Summary

- Madison and Bond Counties fall between state and Southern region averages for all measures on 1-3
- Madison County population is 7% African American
- 31% of children in substitute care in Madison County are African American; this indicates a problem with disproportionality

Madison-Bond

Region

Goal 4

Measure 1 –

What is the total number of children in substitute care at the end of FY 2007 by race

AA=African American

CA=Caucasian

OR=Other Race

County	Race	Number	Percent
Madison 321 children	AA	100	31%
	CA	218	68%
	OR	3	1 %
Bond 18 children	AA	2	11%
	CA	15	83%
	OR	1	6%

Madison –Bond

Region

Goal 4

Measure 2 –

Of all entry cohorts, what is the median length of stay by race? (number of months)

AA=African American

CA=Caucasian

AC=All children

County	Race	Months
Madison	AA	21
	CA	19
	AC	19
Bond	AC	16

Mt. Vernon Region Summary

- Mt. Vernon Region average for Goal 1 is lower than the state and Southern region averages for both measures
- 91% of children served in in-tact family cases did not experience substitute care placement
- 83% of children who obtained permanency remained with their families after two years
- For Goals 2 & 3, Mt. Vernon is close to meeting or exceeds the IL state and Southern region averages

Mt. Vernon Region Summary Continued

- Jefferson, Marion and Clinton Counties show significant disproportionality; these counties have higher numbers of African American children in substitute care than the county population numbers indicate
 - Jefferson County
 - Marion County
 - Clinton County

Mt. Vernon Region Goal 4

Measure 1 –

What is the total number of children in substitute care at the end of FY 2007 by race?

AA=African American

CA=Caucasian

OR=Other Race

County	Race	Number	Percent
Jefferson 114 Children	AA	28	25%
	CA	83	73%
	OR	3	3%
Clay 23 children	AA	1	4%
	CA	22	96%
Marion 95 children	AA	21	22%
	CA	73	77%
	OR	1	1%
Clinton 24 children	AA	5	21%
	CA	18	75%
	OR	1	1%
Wayne 10 children	AA	1	10%
	CA	9	90%
Gallatin 11 children	CA	11	100%
White 34 children	CA	34	100%
Hamilton 3 children	CA	3	100%

Mt. Vernon Region Goal 4

Measure 2 –

Of all entry cohorts,
what is the median
length of stay by
race? (number of
months)

CA=Caucasian

OR=Other Race

AC=All Children

County	Race	Months
Jefferson	CA	16
	AC	17
Marion	CA	18
	AC	18
Clinton	OR	2
	CA	22
	AC	22
Gallatin	CA	16
	AC	16
Hamilton	CA	13
	AC	13

St. Clair Region Summary

- St. Clair, Monroe, Washington & Randolph Counties compare favorably with Illinois state and Southern Region averages on Goals 1, 2, and the second measure on Goal 3.
- The counties fall below the Southern Region average for Goal 3, Measure 1 but still surpass the state average.
- St. Clair County is 29% African American with 75% of the children in substitute care being African American.
- The number of children in substitute care in Monroe, Washington & Randolph counties are too low for racial group comparisons.

St. Clair Region

Goal 4

Measure 1 –

What is the total number of children in substitute care at the end of FY 2007 by race?

AA=African American

CA=Caucasian

OR=Other Race

AC=All Children

County	Race	Number	Percent
St. Clair 357 children	AA	269	75%
	CA	84	24%
	OR	4	1%
Monroe 11 children	AA	0	0
	CA	11	100%
	OR	0	0
Washington 11 children	AA	0	0
	CA	10	91%
	OR	1	9%
Randolph 33 children	AA	4	12%
	CA	26	79%
	OR	3	9%

St. Clair Region

Goal 4

Measure 2 –

Of all entry cohorts, what is the median length of stay by race? (number of months)

AA=African American

CA=Caucasian

OR=Other Race

County	Race	Months
St. Clair	AA	15
	CA	15
Washington	CA	6
Randolph	CA	2



Phase III: Implementation

July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009

Recommendations

- Sufficient data on the length of stay for minority children
- Identify State success indicators
- Action teams to increase awareness of resources available to support outcome activities
- Action teams to continue community collaborative efforts
- Action teams are encouraged to be diverse in their recruitment of team members
- Teams are encouraged to move towards autonomy for sustainability