

SFY21 DISPROPORTIONALITY ACROSS THE CT CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM BY CT DCF AREA OFFICE

Reporting Methods and Definitions

Introduction

The following data depicts the race/ethnicity distribution of child welfare populations along with the general child population. These figures were drawn in an attempt to gain greater insight into the racial makeup of the Connecticut Child Protection System as it compares to the Connecticut child population as a whole. This data is shown both statewide and by region. The charts and graphs in this report outline the percentage of the populations that each racial category comprise. In addition, the report expresses how these percentages differ with regard to each level of child welfare involvement.

The degree of divergence for each racial/ethnic group between the general child population and the children at each stage of child welfare involvement represents the extent that children are disproportionately represented in the system at each stage, for the location represented. Each of the bars represents the set of all children observed within that stage, unique to each location during SFY21.

This data should help managers appreciate the degree to which children of various racial/ethnic groups are overrepresented or underrepresented at various points of intervention with DCF. Additional analysis will be provided in the near future that will help illuminate how to examine differences between racial/ethnic groups in a valid way.

Methods and Interpretation

While the levels of involvement within the child welfare system are often referred to as a “path through the system” it is important to understand the ways in which this system is a path and the ways in which it is not. The first bar in each graph shows the race distribution of the entire child population in the community while the following bars show the racial distribution of children subject to the particular child welfare event. Bars 2 through 7 represent a “path” in that each successive bar represents a deeper level of involvement with the child welfare system.

Progress into the child welfare system, however, is not always organized according to this linear path. Not all children who are removed from home are identified according to this path of referral, investigation, and disposition of allegation. Alternative paths can occur when information and concerns other than those identified in the precipitating report come to light during the course of the investigation. For example, while investigating a report concerning a specific child, other children at risk may come to light. There may never be a report on these other children, and yet a judge may determine that their safety requires removal from the home. This is but one example of how the “path” into child protective services may be one other than the discussed “path through the system.” Because children may “enter” the bars shown on this graph not having experienced the event represented in the preceding bar, successive populations are not always subsets of the preceding populations. Furthermore, it is very possible that in reality children may experience multiple instances of certain events (such as referral, substantiation and entry to care) during the time period, but they are represented in these data only once within each bar on the graph. It is also possible that a single child may experience the same event multiple times within different locations, and in that instance they are included in the populations of each relevant location.

Despite these discussed variables, the data presents a valid analytic opportunity to compare the race distribution represented in each child welfare event to the overall child population. This comparison reveals the extent to which the population of children experiencing that event is similar (or dissimilar) to the population of children in the general community with respect to race. In making this comparison, it is important to note that we have not controlled for any other possible variables. Additionally, except where the bars are true subsets (see below), it is inappropriate to think of the preceding bar as a risk set from which the event of interest occurs.

The following definitions and methods further explain how each of the bars was developed.

True subsets: The bar for Substantiations is indeed a subset of the bar for accepted referrals via Child Protective Services (CPS) response.

Race/Ethnicity:

There are three fields in LINK where race/ethnicity data is specifically collected. Social Workers may choose up to three different Race codes, two different Ethnicity codes, and check/not check the Hispanic/Latino checkbox to document this information in LINK. For the purpose of this analysis, data collected on the race and ethnicity of children were combined into a single, consolidated and exclusive variable. So for this report, whenever a SW chose more than one Race, "Multi-Racial" is indicated for reporting. Regardless of Race however, whenever a SW chose EITHER to check the Hispanic/Latino checkbox OR selected "Hispanic/Latino Origin" or "Other Spanish OR Hispanic" as an Ethnicity, the child was counted solely as "Hispanic, Any Race." It should be noted that this method is different from that used in the Population Projections in that their methodology, following the OMB standard, also maps several other ethnicities as Hispanic/Latino as well, including: Cuban, Dominican Republican, Mexican/Chicano/Mexican American, and Puerto Rican. Therefore, the level of disproportionality for those of Hispanic/Latino origin shown in these analyses would be even larger if we had used the OMB method.

State Fiscal Year 2020 (SFY21)

State Fiscal Year 2020 is defined as the period between 7/1/19 and 6/30/20.

2020 US Census

These figures were downloaded from the US Census website in 2021.

Children Referred via Child Protective Services (CPS) (SFY21)

This bar is comprised of all children identified as alleged victims in reports associated with CPS Investigation Responses completed during SFY21.

Children Referred via Family Assessment Response (FAR) (SFY21)

This bar is comprised of all children identified as alleged victims in reports associated with Family Assessment Responses completed during SFY21.

Children Substantiated As Victims (SFY21)

This bar is comprised of all children identified as substantiated victims in reports associated with investigations completed during SFY21.

Children In Cases Opened for Services (SFY21)

This bar is comprised of all alleged victims with reports associated with investigations completed during SFY21 on cases that were not already open for services, and for which their case had an assignment to an ongoing services worker that began on/after the report was accepted.

Children Entering DCF Care (SFY21)

This bar is comprised of all children that were removed from their parent/guardian's home into DCF care for the first time in their lives, or are re-entering care following a legal discharge from a prior episode, during SFY21. The population includes only CPS episodes, but excludes episodes where children are identified as "Committed Delinquent" or are receiving Voluntary Services. The population also does not include youth age 18 and over that re-enter DCF care voluntarily to receive Adolescent Services because by definition they are not children, but are adults.

Children In DCF Care (SFY21)

This bar is comprised of all children that spent at least one day in a DCF placement during SFY21. The population includes only children in placement for CPS reasons, but excludes placements during episodes where children are identified as "Committed Delinquent" or are receiving Voluntary Services. The population also does not include youth age 18 and over that re-enter DCF care voluntarily to receive Adolescent Services because by definition they are not children, but are adults.

Children In Congregate Care (SFY21)

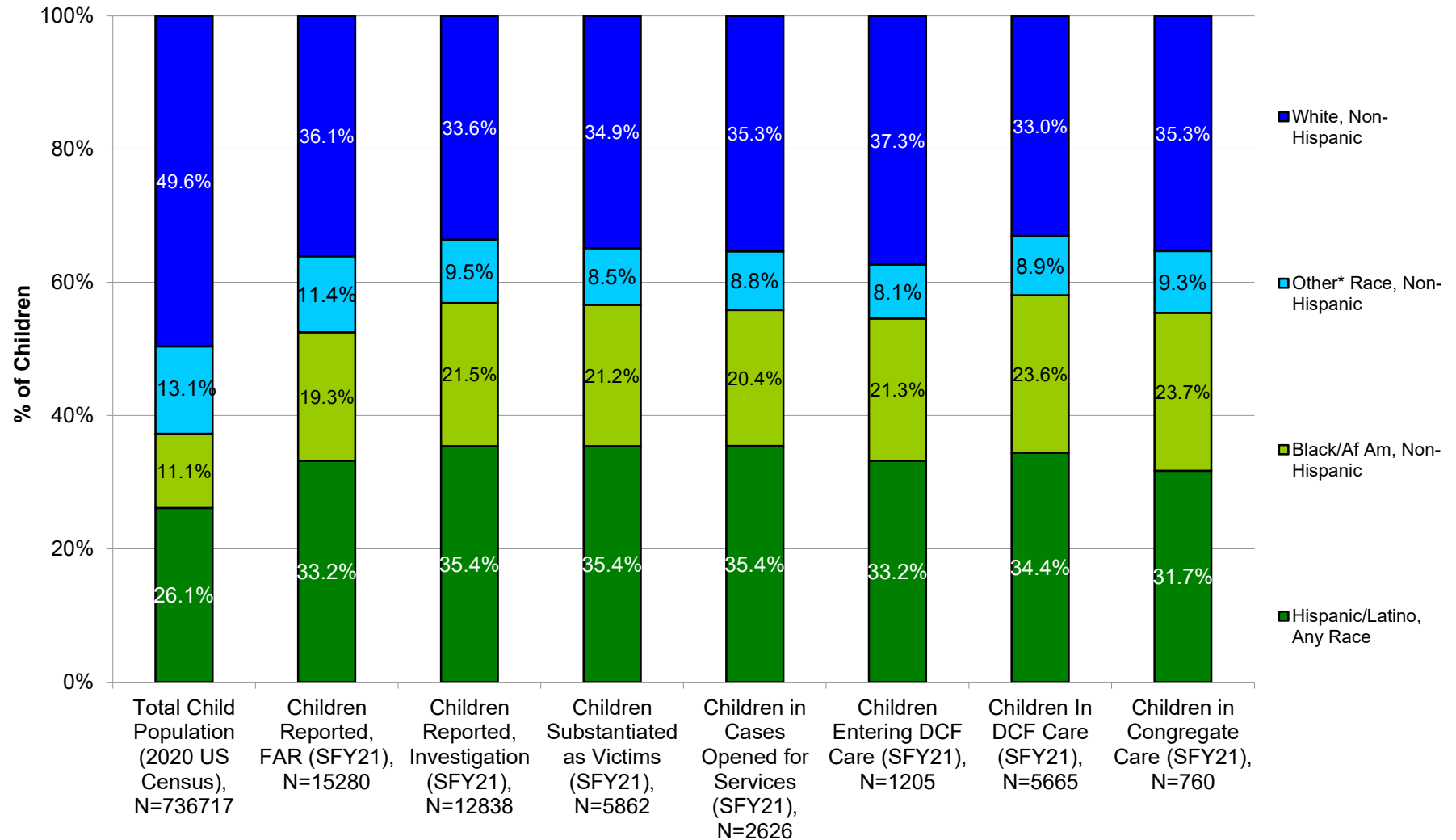
This bar is comprised of all children that spent at least one day in a DCF placement with a Placement Type of either S-FIT (formerly SAFE Home), Shelter, Group Home, Residential, Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF) or Hospital during SFY21. The population includes only children in placement for CPS reasons, but excludes placements during episodes where children are identified as "Committed Delinquent" or are receiving Voluntary Services. The population also does not include youth age 18 and over that re-enter DCF care voluntarily to receive Adolescent Services because by definition they are not children, but are adults.

Run Date:

These analyses are based on data extracted from the LINK case management system on 9/13/2021

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Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality Across The CT Child Protection System SFY21: STATEWIDE



*Other Race includes: American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Other, Multi-Racial, and Missing/Unknown/UTD

Data Run Date:
Statewide: 9/13/21