



CONNECTICUT

Children & Families

2026 Legislative Summary

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Significant Public Acts

- PA 26–26 An Act Concerning Child Welfare Accountability and Transparency
- PA 26–37 An Act Concerning the Provision of Parent–Managed Learning
- PA 26–48 An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Department of Children and Families and the Data Link Connecticut System
- PA 26–68 State Budget
- PA 26–70 An Act Concerning Oversight of Efforts to Prevent Human Trafficking and the Use of Confidential Crisis Hotlines at Correctional Institutions
- PA 26–92 An Act Concerning Judicial Branch Operations

Other Public Acts

- SA 26-5 An Act Establishing a Task Force to Study the Voluntary Surrender of Infants
- PA 26-25 An Act Concerning Municipal Camp Safety
- PA 26-27 An Act Requiring Transparency and Additional Oversight of the Distribution of Certain Legislatively Directed Funds and Appropriations for Other Expenses
- PA 26-47 An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee Working Groups
- PA 26-62 An Act Implementing Recommendations of the Transforming Children's Behavioral Health Policy and Planning Committee
- PA 26-102 An Act Establishing a Nonprofit Provider Advisory Board and Prohibiting Auto Insurance Penalties on Volunteer Drivers Providing Transportation to Nonprofit Organizations

PA 26–26 An Act Concerning Child Welfare Accountability and Transparency

- House priority focused on providing supports and transparency for child welfare
- Originally House Bill 5004
- DCF leadership was involved in negotiations throughout the evolution of the proposal
- Contains 23 sections

PA 26-26 An Act Concerning Child Welfare Accountability and Transparency

- Sections 1 – 3 Kinship Caregivers (October 1, 2026)
 - Requires DCF to place children with kin. If no suitable kin are available, staff must document in writing the reasons for not placing with kin
 - Individuals denied foster care licenses must receive the reasons for denial in writing from the Department
 - Provides individuals denied a foster care license the ability appeal the decision to the DCF commissioner or designee
 - Similar provisions of written rationale for not placing with kin must be provided to the court and why the placement serves the best interest of the child
 - Establishes a grant program to provide kinship caregiver up to \$625 upon an emergency placement. Guidelines established by January 1, 2027

PA 26–26 An Act Concerning Child Welfare Accountability and Transparency

- Sections 4 and 5 Other Grant Programs
 - After school programs
 - Childcare services
 - Paid social worker internship program
 - First-year social worker mentorship program
 - Mentors will be eligible for stipends
- The Department must establish applications and eligibility criteria for these programs by January 1, 2027

PA 26–26 An Act Concerning Child Welfare Accountability and Transparency

- Sections 6 – 8 Mandatory Trainings (January 1, 2028)
 - Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorder
 - Collaborate with DMHAS on developing the training
 - Human Trafficking
 - Training exists but mandates all DCF staff to attend
 - Cultural Sensitivity and Implicit Bias
 - Training exists under the mandatory pre-service racial justice training
- Staff must complete trainings by December 31, 2028

PA 26–26 An Act Concerning Child Welfare Accountability and Transparency

- Sections 9 and 10 Postsecondary Education (PSE) Program
 - Codifies the current PSE policy in statute
 - The Department must submit a report to the Committee on Children on July 1, 2027 about the implementation of the program
 - Another, more in-depth report is due January 1, 2028
 - Directs the Auditors of Public Accounts to audit the program by July 1, 2028

PA 26–26 An Act Concerning Child Welfare Accountability and Transparency

- Sections 11 and 12 Online Data Dashboard (January 1, 2027)
 - Requires an online dashboard that includes data that is determined by working group that must issue its recommendations by October 1, 2026
 - Requires additional information to be posted on the DCF website (much of it is currently posted)
 - Ex. Office of Community Relations, how to make a report to the Careline
 - Mandated Reporter training

PA 26–26 An Act Concerning Child Welfare Accountability and Transparency

- Section 13 Child Leaves the State (October 1, 2026)
 - Affects a child subject to an investigation, under protective services or resides in a home with another child who meets such criteria
 - If a child will be out of state for more than 14 consecutive days, the parent or guardian must notify DCF at least 48 hours before the child leaves
 - If DCF is not notified, DCF must attempt to contact the parent or guardian to determine where the child is located. If the location is determined, DCF must:
 - Contact the child welfare agency or local law enforcement and request a well child check
 - Follow up with local authority for 3 consecutive days to ensure the check was conducted and to discuss any findings
 - Send a staff member to visit the child in-person (or virtually if in-person is not feasible)
 - All activities must be documented

PA 26-26 An Act Concerning Child Welfare Accountability and Transparency

- Sections 14 and 15 Mental Health Treatment and Consideration of the Child's Expressed Opinion
 - Section 14 prohibits DCF from using evidence of a person seeking mental health treatment as the sole reason to pursue any action (From passage)
 - Section 15 requires that DCF staff consider the opinion expressed by a child concerning whether or not they have been abused or neglected (October 1, 2026)

PA 26-26 An Act Concerning Child Welfare Accountability and Transparency

- Sections 16, 17 and 18 Emergency Device and Urgent Crisis Centers (UCC) and Child Welfare Policy and Oversight Committee (CWPOC)
 - Section 16 requires DCF to provide personal emergency devices for front line staff(January 1, 2027)
 - Section 17 requires DCF to establish a UCC in Stamford by July 1, 2027
 - Section 18 establishes CWPOC made up of legislators, court personnel and state agencies to review child welfare practices in the state (October 1, 2026)

PA 26–26 An Act Concerning Child Welfare Accountability and Transparency

- Sections 19 –21 Ad Hoc Studies and Parentage Information
 - DCF and Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to study ways to improve communication and practices for removing children from their homes.
 - DCF and the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) to study ways to ensure children are immediately removed from out-of-home placements made by DCF if they become a victim of physical or sexual assault
 - Both reports are due January 1, 2027
 - Permits Department of Public Health (DPH) to release parentage information to DCF (October 1, 2026)

PA 26-26 An Act Concerning Child Welfare Accountability and Transparency

- Sections 22 and 23 Investigations and Oversight of People Convicted of Certain Crimes Against Children (October 1, 2026)
 - After the third accepted report of a child in the same household within a 12-month period, a different intake social worker must investigate any subsequent report
 - If a person is on parole or probation for a specific crime against a child, the parole or probation authority must notify DCF within one week that the person is residing in a home with a minor child
 - Once notified, the Department will check to see if the child is receiving protective services. If yes, DCF must visit the home within one week of notice and assess the safety of the child.
 - If no, DCF must notify probation or parole, and they must check on the child every three months until the parole or probationary period is completed

PA 26–37 An Act Concerning the Provision of Parent-Managed Learning

- Starting with the 2028–29 school year, parents or guardians must annually complete an intent to educate form indicating whether their child will enroll in a public school, attend a nonpublic school, or be instructed through parent-managed learning (such as homeschooling)
- Starting with the 2027–28 school year, parents or guardians who withdraw a child from public school are required to go, in person, to the school district's office and sign a withdrawal form
- The forms will be developed by SDE and must be submitted to the school district where the parent resides by October 1
- School districts will use the existing DCF background check portal to conduct a check of every person 18 years of age or older who resides in the home to determine if they are on the central registry or subject of a DCF investigation

PA 26-48 An Act Concerning the Recommendations of DCF and the Data Link Connecticut System

- Consolidates several statutory reports into an annual report due October 15, 2027 and annually thereafter. The other reports are repealed as of July 1, 2026
- Combines 2 reports by the Behavioral Health Partnership submitted by DCF, DMHAS and DSS concerning the services and fiscal savings of the partnership
- Repeals the requirement that DCF report any missing or abducted child in DCF custody to the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC)
- Rename P20WIN to Data Link Connecticut

PA 26–68 State Budget

- The budget provides over \$12 million more to the DCF budget for FY 2027
- Much of the additional funding is for the programs and grants established by PA 26–26
- \$1.5 million in bonding for the data dashboard
- Additional staff for background checks and training
- \$1 million for increased foster care maintenance payments
- \$14,000 for Sherman Youth Service Bureau
- \$250,000 to expand Transitional Supports for Emerging Adults (TSEA) statewide
- \$250,000 for Pawcatuck OPCC
- \$618,000 for Mid–Fairfield Child Guidance

PA 26-68 State Budget

- The budget includes funding to cost or living adjustments (COLAs) for non-profit providers
- It also includes funding for COLAs and step increases for state employees
- Per state law, state managers receive the same increases as unionized personnel

PA 26-68 State Budget

- Section 222 requires health care providers who are employed by a state agency at a state-operated health care facility or institution, and that provide direct patient care, to receive state employee hazardous duty disability benefits if (1) they are injured as a result of being assaulted while performing their duties and (2) the injury is a direct result of the special hazards inherent in their duties.
- Requires the state to pay all necessary medical and hospital expenses resulting from the injury. In addition, if the employee is totally incapacitated due to the injury, the law requires that he or she receive 100% of their salary at the time of the injury, plus normal salary increases, for up to five years. If the employee is still totally disabled after five years, the benefit generally drops to 50% of their salary for as long as the employee remains totally disabled

PA 26-70 An Act Concerning Oversight of Efforts to Prevent Human Trafficking

- Expands OPM's responsibility to coordinate human trafficking efforts
- Amends 17a-106h to require mandatory human trafficking training for:
 - All DCF employees who have regular contact with children
 - All employees of DCF contracted providers
 - Trainings of all employees must be complete by July 1, 2027 or not later than 6 months after hire
- DCF shall establish MDT's within available appropriations
- Requires DCF, within available appropriations, to assist POST with developing a human trafficking training for law enforcement
- Establishes a Human Trafficking Prevention and Response Subcommittee of the Statewide Steering Committee to implement items from "A Blueprint to Strengthen Connecticut's Response to Human Trafficking"

PA 26-70 An Act Concerning Oversight of Efforts to Prevent Human Trafficking

- Requires all facilities as defined in 17a-93 to:
 - (1) Maintain policies covering its plans, program and services which shall be clearly stated in writing and reviewed for necessary updates not less than annually
 - (2) Maintain personnel policies for the training and education of employees
 - (3) Develop a plan for ongoing training which includes a written curriculum and a minimum number of hours of annual training
 - (4) Submit to the department not less than once every two years a written quality assurance plan
 - (5) Provide internal and external security measures necessary to ensure the safety of residents of the facility and
 - (6) Provide supervisory staff capable of ensuring (A) the health and safety of each child; (B) the security and well-being of each child; and (C) appropriate security of the facility while maintaining a home-like atmosphere

PA 26-92 An Act Concerning Judicial Branch Operations

- Allows the Judicial Branch to inform DCF about progress on, and compliance with, court-ordered intervention and services when there are open cases in both the branch's family violence intervention unit and DCF
- DCF Juvenile Justice Education Unit (JJEU) shall notify the local or regional board of education when a child is placed in a juvenile residential center operated by JB-CSSD

SA 26–5 An Act Establishing a Task Force to Study the Voluntary Surrender of Infants

- Establishes a task force to study the voluntary surrender of infants, including to determine if the Safe Haven law requires an update.
- A report of recommendations is due May 1, 2027

PA 26–25 An Act Concerning Municipal Camp Safety

- Adds paid municipal camp staff as mandated reporters

PA 26–27 An Act Requiring Transparency and Additional Oversight of the Distribution of Certain Legislatively Directed Funds and Appropriations for Other Expenses

- Establishes stricter guidelines for legislatively directed funds or earmarks
- Requires OPM to adopt policies for agencies to administer the funds
- Key provisions:
 - Requires the legislature to identify the use of the funds and identifying information of the organization receiving the funds
 - Funds up to \$150,000 may be distributed at once. Those over \$150,000 may received an initial payment for stat up costs with the remainder distributed according to a written agreement
 - Administrative policies may not create a burden on recipients, and all payments must be made within 45 days after the recipient's expense claim is submitted
 - Subrecipients must be identified and may only be paid after the recipient received written approval from the agency and OPM
 - OPM must hold an annual pre-award conference by August 1st with each recipient and stat agency representative to describe the funding process

PA 26-62 An Act Implementing Recommendations of the Transforming Children's Behavioral Health Policy and Planning Committee

- Most of the act concerns eating disorders and establishing programs to identify and treat them
- DSS in collaboration with DCF, DDS, DMHAS, and the Office of the Behavioral Health Advocate, will study the feasibility of establishing an inpatient facility to provide psychiatric treatment services to children and young adults between the ages of 14 and 21, inclusive, who have intellectual or developmental disabilities. Report is due July 1, 2027

PA 26-47 An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee Working Groups

- Requires the Insurance Department to study the feasibility of creating a captive insurance plan to cover liability insurance for non-profit private providers

PA 26-102 An Act Establishing a Nonprofit Provider Advisory Board and Prohibiting Auto Insurance Penalties on Volunteer Drivers Providing Transportation to Nonprofit Organizations

- Establishes within OPM a Nonprofit Provider Advisory Board for the purpose of advising the Governor and OPM on the matters concerning the non-profit private providers



Any Questions

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CONNECTICUT
Children & Families

SAC Presentation: Data on Workforce and Racial Justice

June 2026

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Workforce

Workforce Outcome:
Support workers so they
can do their jobs well.

Measures (Lower is Better)	Prior Year (FY24*)	Latest year (FY25)
How full caseworkers' caseloads** are on a typical day	71%	72%
Of workers hired two years ago, workers leaving in the first two years	42%	40%

*FY = State Fiscal Year from 7/1 – 6/30

**The term “caseload” means the number of cases and children-in-placement a worker has been assigned. The term “workload” represents the amount of work all their cases require, and this can be quite variable over time depending on many factors and circumstances associated with the case.

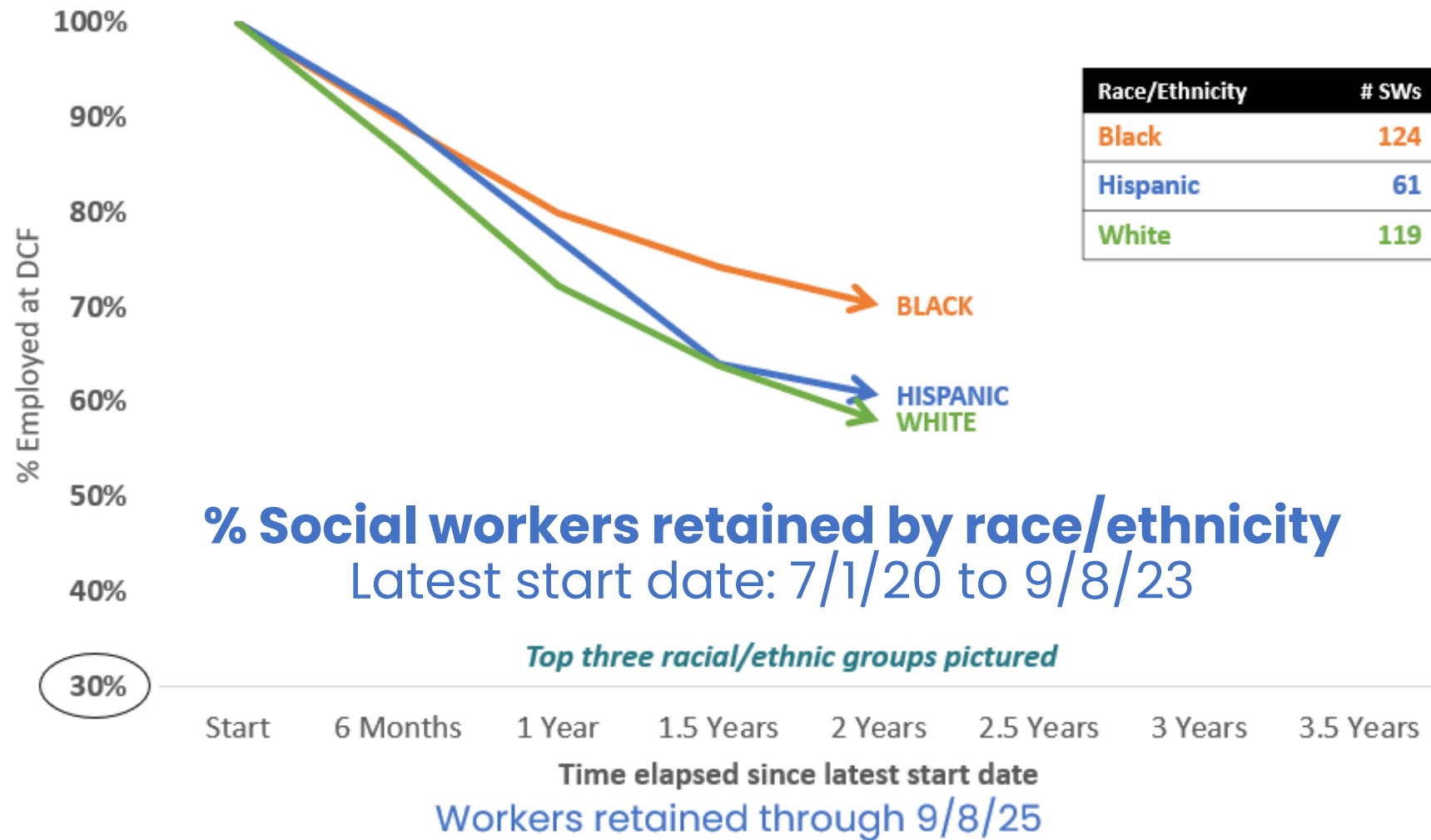
Caseload Weighting Methods

		Full Caseload Number of Cases		Single Case Percentage Utilization	
Service Category	Service Type	Prior <8/6/25	Current (≥ 8/6/25)	Prior <8/6/25	Current (≥ 8/6/25)
Intake	Family Assessment Response	17	10	5.9%	10.0%
	Investigation	17	10	5.9%	10.0%
	Special/Education Investigation	17	8	5.9%	12.5%
In-Home	CPS In-Home	15	13	6.7%	7.7%
	Probate	35	25	2.9%	4.0%
	Interstate Compact	49	44	2.0%	2.3%
	Voluntary	49	15	2.0%	6.7%
Out-of-Home (OOH)	CPS	20	20	5.0%	5.0%
	CPS OOH	20	18	5.0%	5.6%
	Adolescent Services	20	10	5.0%	10.0%
	Permanency Services	20	15	5.0%	6.7%
	Voluntary	20	20	5.0%	5.0%

SW retention trends by population characteristics

Population: All social workers & trainees who had a latest start date of 7/1/20 to 9/8/23

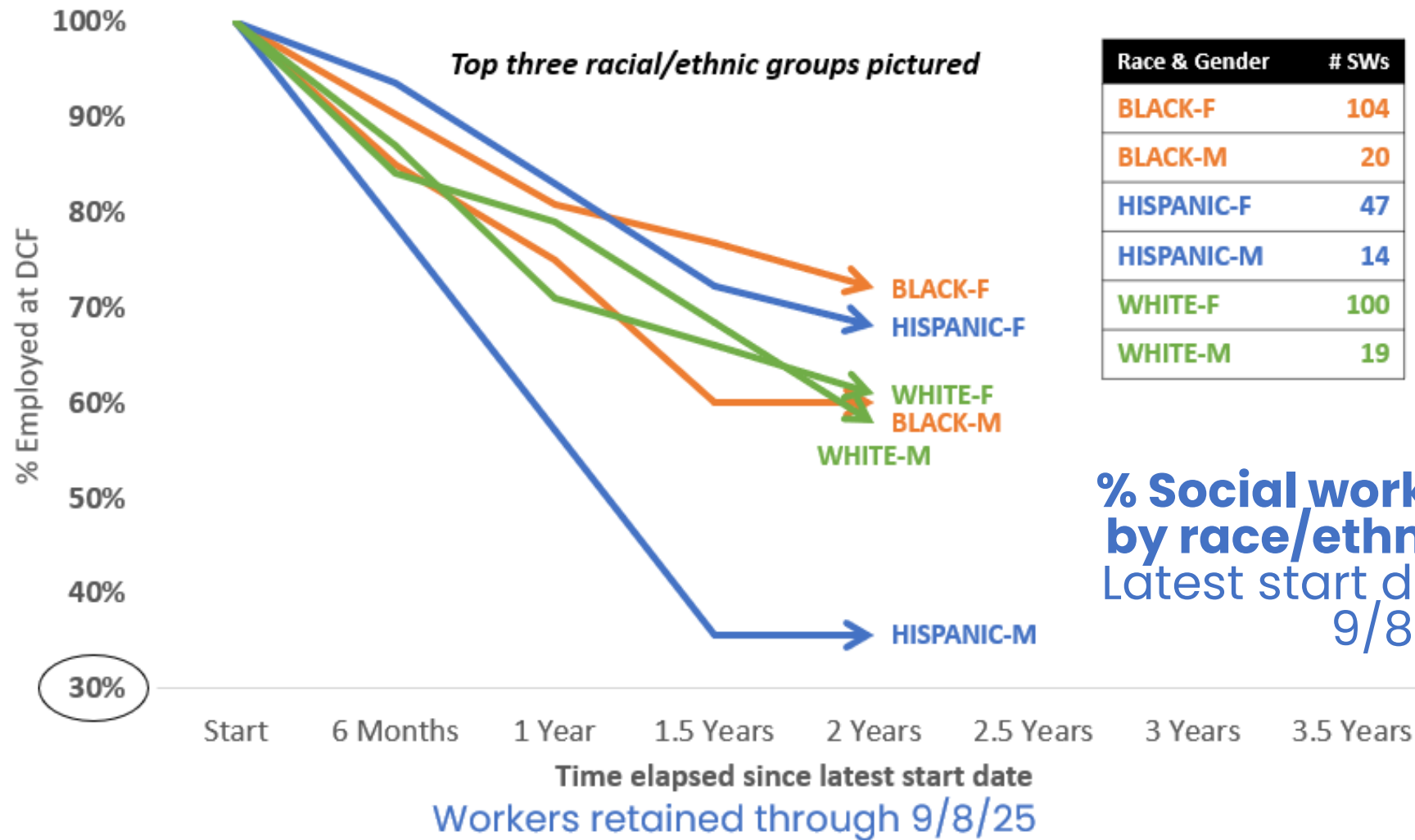
Black/African American workers stayed at DCF longer



Female workers stayed at DCF longer

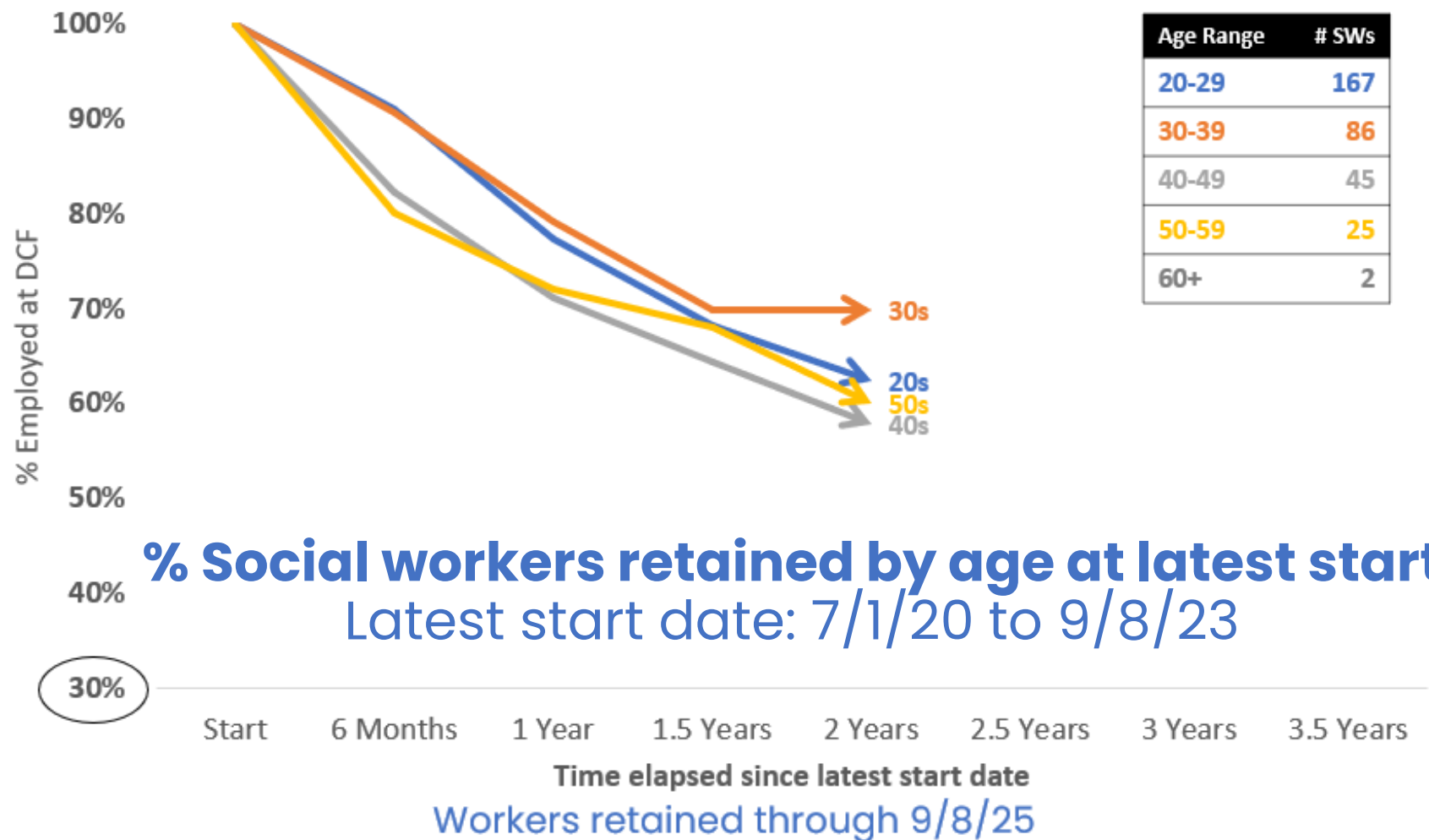


Black/AA and Hispanic/Latina Females stayed at DCF longest

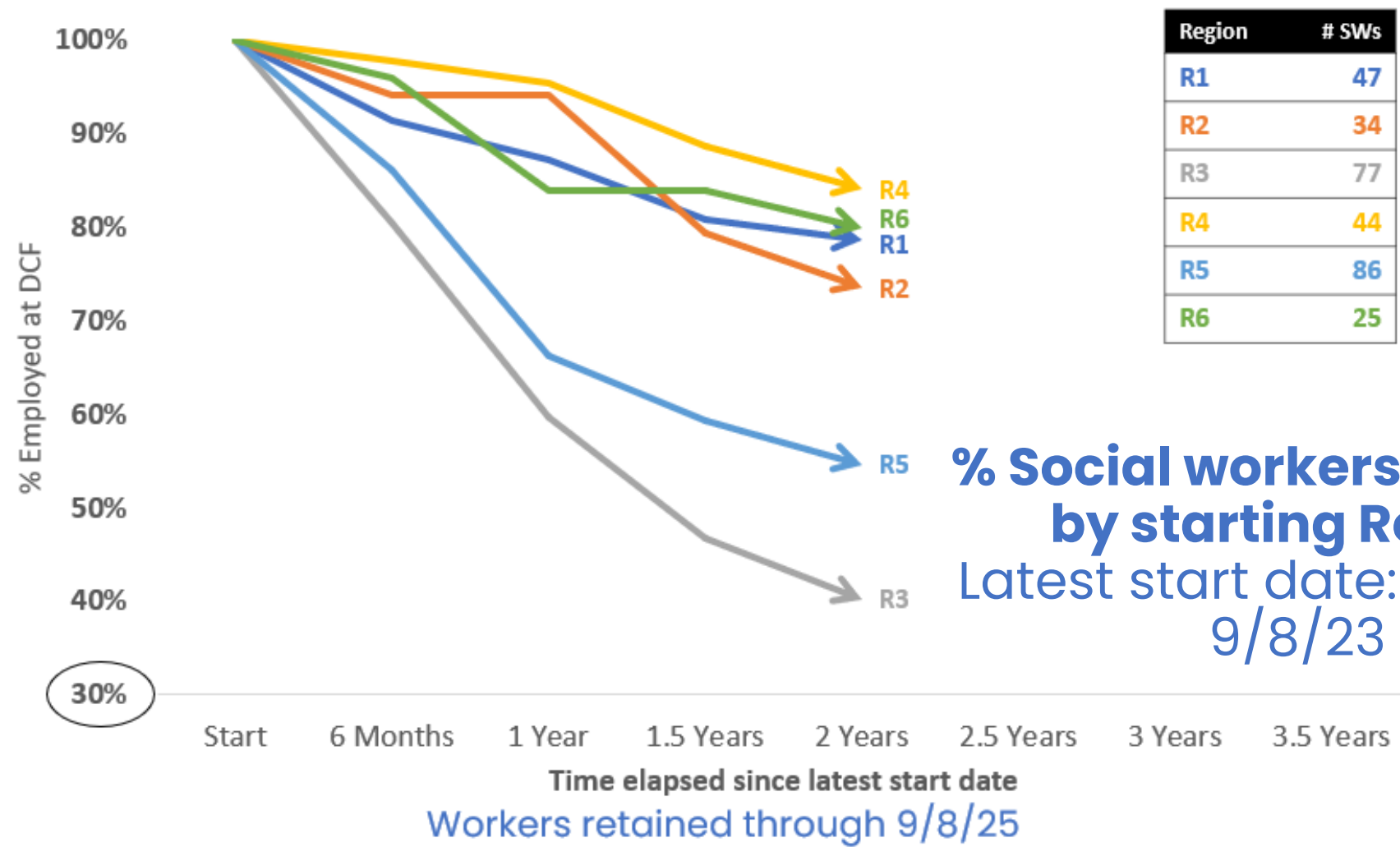


**% Social workers retained
by race/ethnic. & gender**
Latest start date: 7/1/20 to
9/8/23

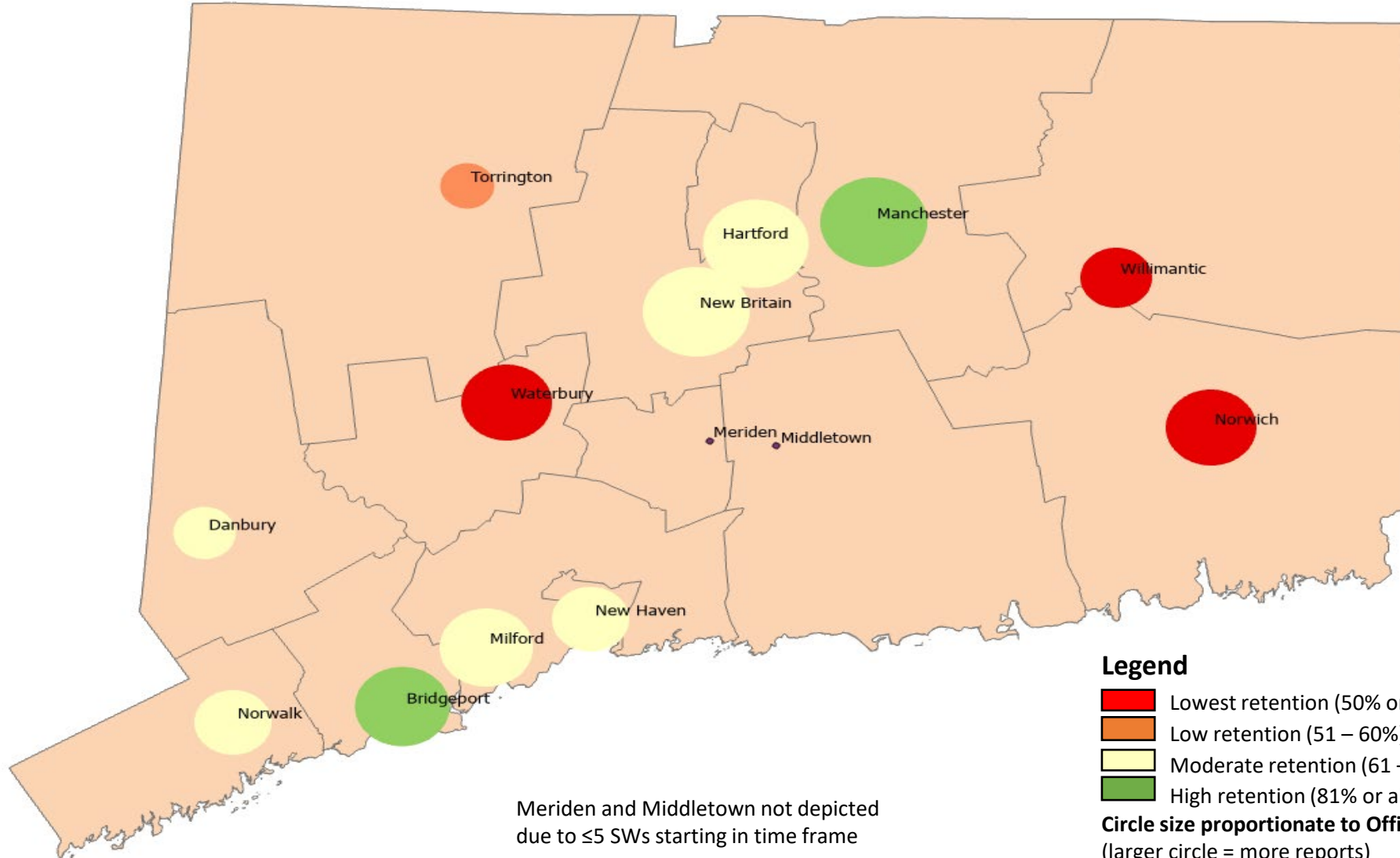
Workers that started in their 30's stayed longest



Four Regions relatively similar and stayed longest



Bridgeport and Manchester workers stayed longest



Social Worker retention after 2 years by DCF Area Office

Latest start date: 7/1/20 to 9/8/23

Legend

- Lowest retention (50% or below)
- Low retention (51 – 60%)
- Moderate retention (61 – 80%)
- High retention (81% or above)

Circle size proportionate to Office Caseloads
(larger circle = more reports)

Key Terms

- **Other Races:** American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, other, multi-racial, and missing/unknown/unable to be determined
- **Disproportionality:** Over- or under-representation of a race in child protection system compared to general state population; expressed as ratio:
$$\frac{\% \text{ Race } Y \text{ at Step } X}{\% \text{ Race } Y \text{ in total child population}}$$
- **Absolute Disparity Index:** cumulative effects of disparity for non-white Children throughout pathway; expressed as a ratio compared to White children.
- **Relative Disparity Index:** individual effects of disparity for non-White children at each step, expressed as a ratio compared to White children.

Population Data Change

- All our analyses depend on the proportions of race/ethnic groups in the state/office population that previously came from Census 2020.
- We changed to use the state population estimates from DPH for 2020–2024 because they are more current and accurate.
- The DPH estimates for 2020 vs. the Census found more White and Black children and less Hispanic children and children of other races than the Census.

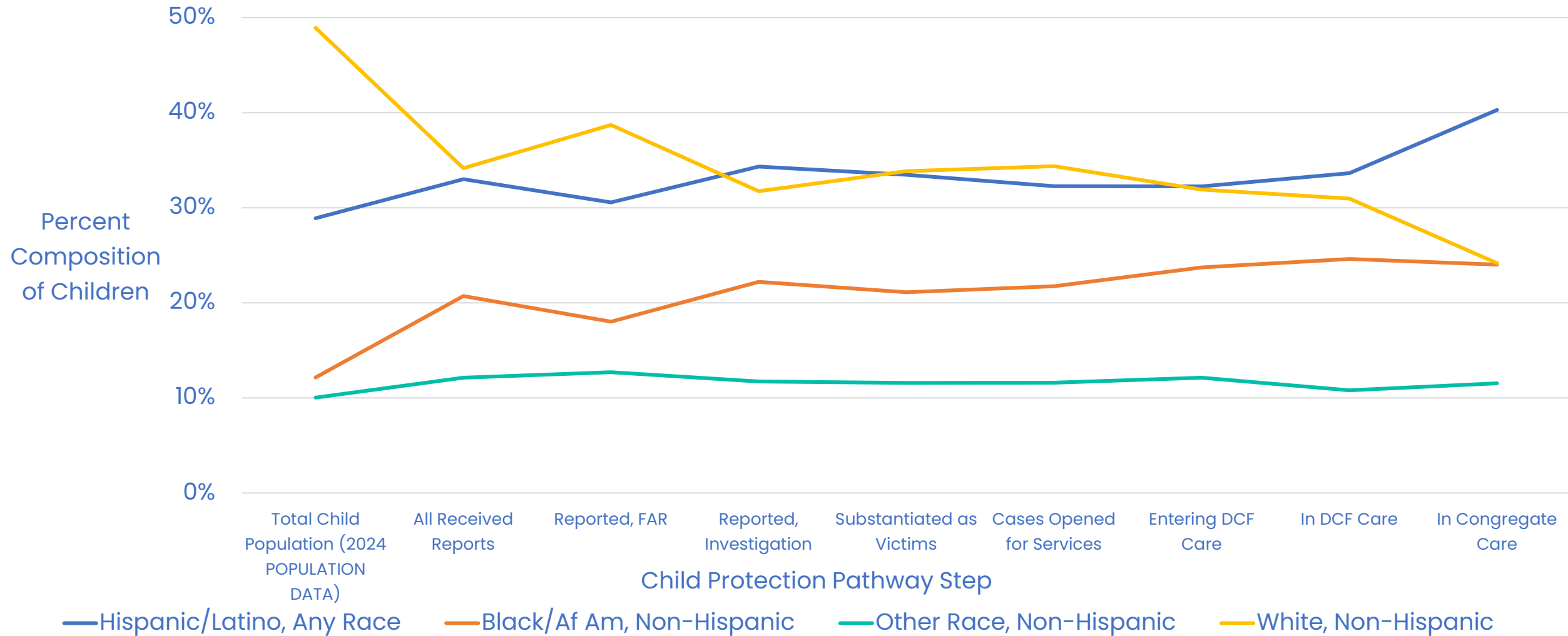
Racial Justice

Racial Justice Outcome:
Treat all races fairly.

Measures (Less Differences Within Year is Better)	Last year (FY24)		This year (FY25)	
How many Children of each race enter foster care (per 1,000 CT Children of that race)	Black	4.5	Black	4.1
	Hispanic	2.7	Hispanic	2.6
	Other	N/A	Other	1.5
	White	1.1	White	1.1
Children leaving foster care within 12 months, by race (%)	Black	22%	Black	24%
	Hispanic	23%	Hispanic	21%
	Other	N/A	Other	22%
	White	24%	White	21%

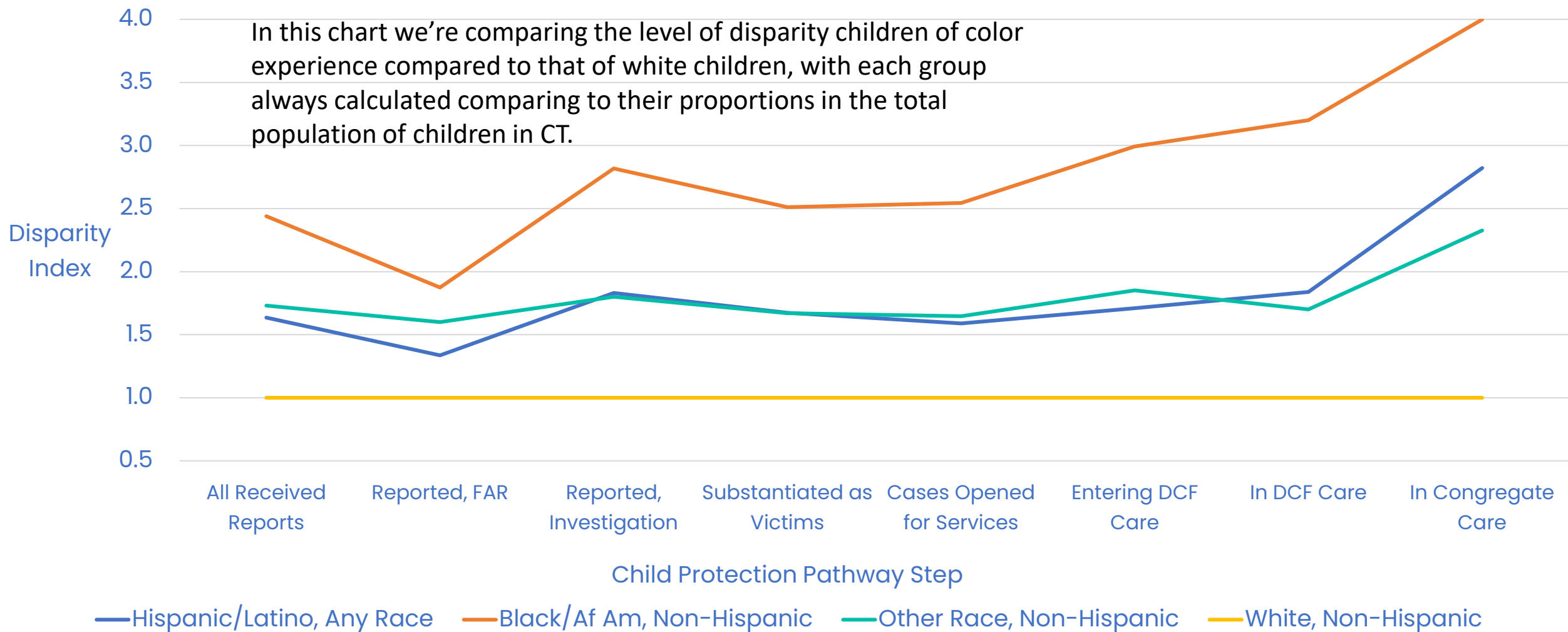
Statewide Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality

Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality Across CT Child Protection System: STATEWIDE SFY25



Statewide Racial/Ethnic Absolute Disparity

Absolute Disparity Index: STATEWIDE SFY25

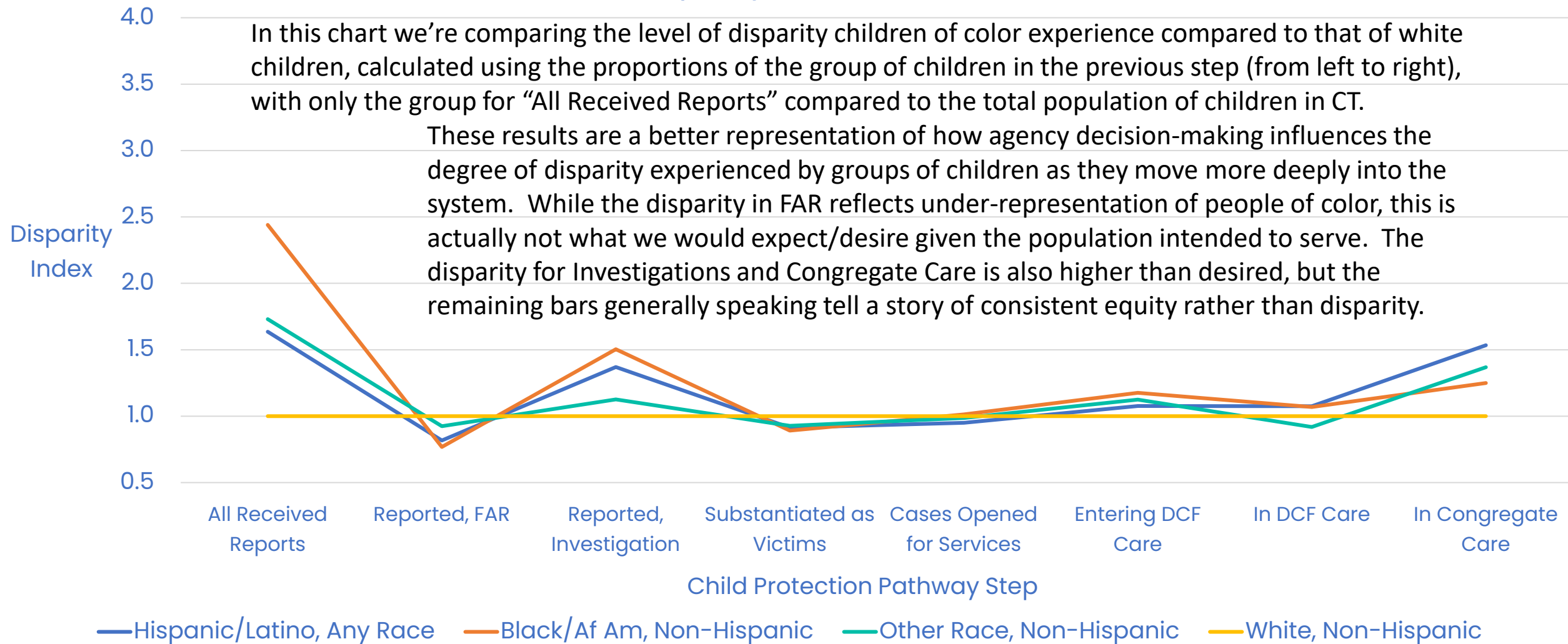


Statewide Racial/Ethnic Relative Disparity

Relative Disparity Index: STATEWIDE SFY25

In this chart we're comparing the level of disparity children of color experience compared to that of white children, calculated using the proportions of the group of children in the previous step (from left to right), with only the group for "All Received Reports" compared to the total population of children in CT.

These results are a better representation of how agency decision-making influences the degree of disparity experienced by groups of children as they move more deeply into the system. While the disparity in FAR reflects under-representation of people of color, this is actually not what we would expect/desire given the population intended to serve. The disparity for Investigations and Congregate Care is also higher than desired, but the remaining bars generally speaking tell a story of consistent equity rather than disparity.





Questions?

Thank you for your time
today!