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Characteristics and Decision-making: Implications for Child Welfare Practice

The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs
The Graduate School | Florida State University
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU HEAR: CHILD WELFARE

Baby Snatchers
Child Maltreatment
Abuse, Neglect, Sexual abuse
Child Fatalities

Bad Parenting
Foster Care

Every child deserves a family
DO YOU THINK ABOUT DISPARITY?

Black Children in the Child Population: 14%

Black Children receiving Out-of-Home Care Services (foster care): 23%

National research has shown that African-American families are more likely to face child removal and foster care than families of other racial groups.
BUT IS DISPARITY JUST ABOUT RACE?

It's not just race but...

- Income
- Incarceration
- Neighborhood
- Family Structure

*Intersectionality*

“overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination.”
FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS
FOUR VIGNETTES
N=54

22% of sample viewed:
• Vignette 1: White, Two Parent

30% of sample viewed:
• Vignette 3: White, Single Parent

28% of sample viewed:
• Vignette 2: Black, Two Parent

20% of sample viewed:
• Vignette 4: Black, Single Parent
How was disparity tested?

Florida Practice Model

**SAFETY**

- Safe: No Danger OR Care Sufficient
  - In-home Services: Family remains intact
- Unsafe: Danger AND Care Insufficient
  - Out-of-Home Services: Foster Care

(Family structure and race)
DECISIONS LEAD TO DISPARITY?
THE RESULTS

**Family Structure by Removal Decision**

- Out-of-Home Services
  - Single Parent Family: 75%
  - Two Parent Family: 25%

  Cramer’s Phi $\phi = .25$ (Medium Effect)

  Logistic regression: Exp(B) = .180; $p = .50; p < .05$

**Family Structure and Race by Removal Decision**

- In-Home vs Out-of-Home Services by Vignette Type

  - White Two Parent: 83.30%
  - Black Two Parent: 86.70%
  - White Single Parent: 36.30%
  - Black Single Parent: 27.70%

  Cramer’s Phi $\phi = .29$ (Medium Effect)

  Logistic regression: O.R. = 2.394; $p = .99; p < .05$
DISPARITY – SO WHAT?

Implications for Practice

• Changes to the practice model

• Training on the practice model

Implications for Research

• Broader understanding of disparity

• Intersectionality

“overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination.”

There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.

Audre Lorde