



## USING DATA TO IDENTIFY THE MOST IMPACTED COMMUNITIES

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While the Child and Family Practice Model is a culturally sensitive, usable intervention for system-wide implementation in public child welfare, implementation and system supports for the Practice Model can only be effective if they are responsive to the cultural and community context and needs of the specific children and families being served within a jurisdiction.

Implementing jurisdictions began their practice model development and community partnership work with data mining and analysis to identify the children in their systems at greatest risk of disproportionate representation and disparate outcomes. The purpose of the data analysis was not to look at what is behind the data or to consider reasons for the disproportionate representation or disparate outcome—that is work they felt it was critical to do with community partners. Instead, the data were used to acknowledge the problem of disparate outcomes and the understanding that the agency was not effectively serving and supporting these children. Understanding locally specific data and their implications in this way enabled a targeted focus on partnering with the most impacted communities and Tribes to better understand, engage, and be responsive to the strengths and underlying needs of children and their families.

*The first step of Practice Model readiness is **USING DATA** to:*

*Identify the populations of children disproportionately represented in the local child welfare system;*

*Understand the specific child, family, and/or case characteristics associated with disparate outcomes.*

To identify the groups at highest risk of poor permanency outcomes in implementing jurisdictions, extensive State Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) data mining and analysis were conducted by the Center for Social Services Research, University of California at Berkeley, and federal PII evaluation partners. While many child and case characteristics (e.g., age of child at entry, gender, case plan goal) differentially (i.e., in one or more sites) had statistically significant relationships with achieving permanency, after considering additional fields (such as the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) pending or Tribal affiliation) to address the issue of an undercount of children identified as American Indian in the SACWIS system, African American and American Indian ethnic groups consistently emerged as the most robust predictor of poor permanency outcomes across the four jurisdictions.

The printout resource on the following page can assist replicating jurisdictions in considering similar areas for data mining and analysis. It is recommended that child demographics, including race, ethnicity, age, and gender, always be analyzed. For instance, jurisdictions can analyze in-care rates by race/ethnicity, age, and gender; review disparity indices; and consider what child demographics are associated with longer stays in foster care and non-permanent exits from foster care. They can also review data for any of the additional characteristics listed in the worksheet that are locally relevant, and/or add and review data for other child, family, or case characteristics that are important locally. In order to ensure integrated thinking and efforts, jurisdictions can also consider pertinent data and analyses from a current agency self-assessment, strategic plan, quality services review, Program Improvement Plan, and other recent local or regional reports and assessments.

## USING DATA: *Identifying the Most Impacted Children, Communities, & Tribes*

Characteristic	Evidence <i>(Attach evidence gathered to this worksheet.)</i>
Race/Ethnicity (such as in-care rates by ethnicity and disparity indices)	
Age	
Gender	
Sexual orientation/Gender identity	
Child welfare history (such as prior allegations and placement episodes)	
Removal reason	
Placement type	
Developmental disability	
Mental health diagnoses/needs	
Medical problems	
Internalizing/externalizing behaviors	
School problems	
Family history of domestic violence	
Family or child substance abuse issues	
Family homelessness/housing instability	
Other (specify):	

### **Summary of Child Populations/Characteristics:**

*The following populations of children (American Indian, African American, Latino, etc.) are at highest risk of disproportionate representation and/or disparate outcomes in our child welfare system:*

*The following child or case characteristics (child age, placement type, severely emotionally disturbed, etc.) are associated with higher risk of disproportional representation and/or disparate outcomes in our child welfare system:*

Thoughtful review and synthesis of the data analyses and information gathered will help child welfare leaders, staff and partners to better understand which race/ethnicity, gender, age, and other characteristics place children in the child welfare system at significant risk of disproportionate representation and disparate outcomes. It is then important to clearly articulate the target population of children who, without agency/community partnerships to guide system and practice changes to better meet their needs, are most likely to face negative safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes.

**COMMUNICATION TIP**

*Staff, agency, community, and system partners need to understand local data and how that data is informing local decision making.*

*By retaining the results of local data analyses, documenting the steps taken to arrive at the summary takeaways, and developing **key talking points** and accessible data tables/graphs, agency leaders can communicate in clear and consistent ways about issues, the target populations of focus, and next steps.*