

National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology

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Useful Metrics for Describing Disproportionality

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Two Common Ways to Report Disproportionality

- Rates of Disproportionality -- Tells us the extent of over- or underrepresentation of a population.
- Risk Ratio -- Tells us the relative disproportionality of one group compared to another group.



If you can divide, you can do this!

State A: 202,750 Children, of which: 150,000 Children are White 34,500 Children are African-American

What is the White %?

Answer: (show your work!)
150,000 White / 202,750 Total Children=.739

For simplicity: 74%



Disproportionality Rate Calculation

State A	% Child Pop	% FC Pop	Rate
	ΙΟΡ	ΙΟΡ	
White	74%	64%	64/74= .86
Afr-Am	18%	32%	32/18= 1.8

A number less than 1 represents UNDER-representation; larger than 1=OVER-representation



Risk Ratio Calculation

State A	%	% FC	Rate	Risk
	Child	Pop		Ratio
	Pop	_		
White	74%	64%	64/74	
			=.86	
Afr-Am	18%	32%	32/17	1.9/.86
			=1.9	=2.2

In this example, African-American children are in foster care at a rate that is 2.2 times higher than the rate for White children.

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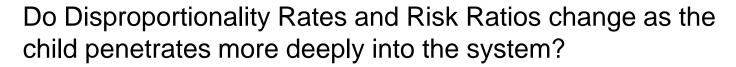
Where and How to Use Measures of Disproportionality?

Most commonly used with point in time data

Most helpful to use at decision points across child welfare



- Population
 - CPS Call
 - Indication
 - FC Placement
 - In Care



Looking at decision points gives you leverage for where to act, and clear information on whether you are gaining ground on solving a problem.

See D.M. Derezotes, et. al., (Eds), Race Matters in Child Welfare, Wash, DC: CWLA Press, 2005

