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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 under-representation 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
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	% Child Pop	% FC Pop	Rate	Risk Ratio
White	74%	64%	$64/74$ =.86	
Afr-Am	18%	32%	$32/17$ =1.9	$1.9/.86$ =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.

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



Do Disproportionality Rates and Risk Ratios change as the child penetrates more deeply into the system?

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