

Racial Disproportionality of African American Children in the Child Welfare System: *Prevention Strategies*

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From Dr. Hill's Presentation We Know:

- ❑ Black Children are not abused and/or neglected at higher rates than White Children
 - ❑ Black Children are overrepresented in the child welfare system throughout the country
 - ❑ Many factors contribute to disproportionality
 - ❑ The problems are multi-systemic, including, but not limited to – Public Welfare, MH/Substance Abuse, Special Education, Juvenile Justice and Housing
 - ❑ Institutional(Systemic) and Individual Racism exist.
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What Strategies Exist?

Below are six prevention strategies intended to support African American children and families in their communities in an effort to reduce:

- 1) the risk of child abuse and neglect, and
- 2) Child Welfare System entry

for African American children and Families

1. Develop programs collaboratively with the community, with families as partners to:

- ❑ Find out from families and community members what they feel they need
 - ❑ Learn from the community their strengths and resources
 - ❑ Involve Churches
 - ❑ Develop needed resources within the community
 - ❑ Create Community Awareness of the problem, and
 - ❑ Promote Community Development
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2. Develop Programs that help families gain financial self-sufficiency through

- Safe and Stable Housing
 - Living Wage Jobs
 - Child Care that meets the families' needs, and
 - Travel Accessibility
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3. Develop Alternative Response Systems

Create community programs that are available for children and families when they begin to have challenges that bring them to the attention of the child welfare system.

This can provide them supports and resources that serve as an alternative to child welfare system entry, and help to support them during challenging times.

4. Teach Service Providers about Racial Differences, Inequities and Bias

Train ALL AGENCY STAFF - from the CEO to the Secretary on

- Cultural Competence
 - Racial Equity, and
 - Race Bias
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5. Track Your Progress

From the moment you begin to implement new strategies, develop measures to:

- Get a baseline of where you started.
 - Track your progress, so you know the effectiveness of your strategy, and
 - To communicate the value of your intervention to others
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6. Examine Agency Policies for the Existence of Structural Racism

- Structural racism refers to “the many factors that work to produce and maintain racial inequities in America today. It identifies aspects of our history and culture that have allowed the privileges associated with “whiteness” and the disadvantages associated with “color” to endure and adapt within the political economy over time. It also points out the ways in which public policies, institutional practices and cultural representations reproduce racially inequitable outcomes.” [\[1\]](#)
- Structural racism is often the result of the unintended consequences of policies that are not developed to meet the needs of a particular racial or ethnic group. Example: Current federal child care policies are developed on the needs of white children because the supporting research took a random sample of children who are primarily white. As a result, a study by the Urban Institute shows, current child care supports do not meet the needs of African American families.

[\[1\]](#) Aspen Institute, Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives Project on Racial Equity and Community Building, 2003, *Operationalizing a Structural Racism Analysis: The Structural Racism Theory of Change Process*.

Thank you for your time!

**Please feel free to direct questions to me regarding any of
our presentations at dennettederezotes@westat.com**
