



# Relative Rate Index of Disparities in Child Welfare Decision Points

*Office of Reporting, Research, Analytics and Implementation*

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April, 2018

## Background

Previous analyses have been conducted based on primary race<sup>1</sup> entered into OR-Kids<sup>2</sup>, which is known to inflate Hispanic representation and mask racial disparities of African American and Native American youth. In order to validate those findings, this study looked at racial identities alone or in combination with others, as well as ICWA eligibility status. The data are for a 5 year time period for the entire state of Oregon, from November 2012 to October 2017.

## Methodology

Data for a 5 year period were analyzed for Oregon, and all duplicate entries were removed. Children were recognized for each race indicated, resulting in a higher total of race than number of children. Children were also recognized as ICWA eligible or not, resulting in a total equal to the number of interactions, with no child counted as both eligible and not. Relative Rate Indices were calculated to recognize the parts of the child welfare system most responsible for disparate numbers of children involved in foster care. An example of a Relative Rate Index is: 26% of Native American youth who entered foster care exited the system through adoption; conversely, only 23% of White youth who entered foster care exited through adoption ( $26/23=1.16$  or 16% higher).

## Findings

The decision points in this period in Oregon with the biggest overrepresentation disparities for Native American and Black children are at the points of: reports being made to the Child Abuse hotline (33% higher for Native American youth, and 84% higher for Black youth relative to their White peers), investigations that were founded for child abuse/neglect (36% higher for ICWA eligible children than their non-eligible peers) Children Entering Foster Care (28% higher for Native American youth relative to their white peers, and 45% higher for ICWA-eligible children relative to their non-eligible peers) Children in Foster Care (126% higher for Native American youth, and 85% higher for Black youth relative to their White peers), Congregate Care (57% higher for Black youth and 27% higher for Native American youth, relative to their White peers), children who exited foster care through guardianship (115% higher for Native American youth relative to their White peers, and 139% higher for ICWA-eligible children relative to their

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<sup>1</sup> Primary Race designates one race for each individual, and if an individual is multi-racial it counts either the first racial category selected, or Hispanic/Latino if the applicable. This is based on the federal standard for recording race.

<sup>2</sup> OR-Kids is the Oregon Child Welfare Case Management System



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non-eligible peers), and children who exited foster care through adoption (98% higher for Hawaiian/Pacific Islander youth, 33% higher for Black youth, 25% higher for Asian youth, and 16% higher for Native American youth relative to their White peers).

Disparities are both the greatest (the biggest difference from White) and the most numerous (the most different steps have disparities) for Native children, compared to all other racial, ethnic, and designated groups. Black children also experience noticeably greater and more numerous disparities than other groups. With such dramatic differences, and such a consistent pattern of disparities, the results of this RRI suggest that there are three points that warrant further attention

### Summary

This analysis suggests length of stay in foster care is most concerning. The Relative Rate Index for 'In Foster Care' is much higher for Native American and Black youth, indicating that Native American and Black children are spending much longer amounts of time in foster care. In addition, there are many more Native American, Black, Asian, and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander children moving towards adoption than White children. Finally, while it is a smaller population, there is a larger percentage of both Native American and Black youth who are placed in congregate care while they are in Foster Care. Thus, the points along the life of a child welfare case warranting the more analysis include time in foster care, placement, and permanency achieved through adoption.



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## Oregon 5-year Relative Rate Index (RRI) for Race and designation, alone or in combination

Time Frame: November 2012- October 2017

	Native	Asian	Black	Hawaiian /Pacific Islander	Hispanic	White	Un-known	ICWA	Non-ICWA	RRI: Native to White	RRI: Asian to White	RRI: Black to White	RRI: Hawaiian to White	RRI: Hispanic to White	RRI: ICWA to Non-ICWA
<b>OREGON POPULATION 0-19*</b>	44,645	67,118	45,835	11,643	204,811	863,127		***	***						
<b>Reports</b>	Raw Number	24,807	6,032	35,019	3,430	56,828	359,368	13,253	10,521	410,558					
	Percent of Previous Step	56%	9%	76%	29%	28%	42%				133%	22%	184%	71%	67%
<b>ASSIGNED</b>		12,524	3,150	18,351	1,919	30,711	184,774	6,634	5,703	211,055					
		50%	52%	52%	56%	54%	51%	50%	54%	51%	98%	102%	102%	109%	105%
<b>FOUNDED</b>		3,045	635	3,656	430	7,734	40,888	1,385	1,685	45,734					
		24%	20%	20%	22%	25%	22%	21%	30%	22%	110%	91%	90%	101%	114%
Served In-Home		1,020	192	986	108	2,292	11,952	1,295	958	23,247					
		33%	30%	27%	25%	30%	29%	94%	57%	51%	115%	103%	92%	86%	101%
Entered Foster Care		1,457	197	1,333	159	3,012	15,305	461	909	17,069					
		48%	31%	36%	37%	39%	37%	33%	54%	37%	128%	83%	97%	99%	104%
<b>In Foster Care</b>		2,441	279	2,064	245	3,966	20,709	600	1,308	24,803					
(Includes all DHS custody except Trial Home Visit)		5%	0.42%	5%	2%	2%	2%				228%	17%	188%	88%	81%
<b>RELATIVE FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT</b>		891	110	709	88	1,550	7,845	220	506	8,555					
		37%	39%	34%	36%	39%	38%	37%	39%	34%	96%	104%	91%	95%	103%
<b>CONGREGATE CARE PLACEMENT**</b>		162	13	168	12	157	1,087	44	64	1,298					
		7%	5%	8%	5%	4%	5%	7%	5%	5%	126%	89%	155%	93%	75%
Exited Foster Care (all)		1,935	229	1,571	192	3,187	16,158	544	951	17,946					
(Percent of Entered Foster Care)		133%	116%	118%	121%	106%	106%	118%	105%	105%	126%	110%	112%	114%	100%
Reunified		957	124	707	89	1,984	9,250	383	550	10,271					
		66%	63%	53%	56%	66%	60%	83%	61%	60%	109%	104%	88%	93%	109%
Guardianship		267	11	117	10	252	1,306	43	180	1,416					
		18%	6%	9%	6%	8%	9%	9%	20%	8%	215%	65%	103%	74%	98%
Adoption		385	56	406	72	615	3,492	55	70	3,774					
		26%	28%	30%	45%	20%	23%	12%	8%	22%	116%	125%	133%	198%	89%

100% in all fields would show no disparity. Some variation is to be expected, large variation is concerning.

Areas of concern, greater than 15% difference from white, towards negative effects

\*Average 2012-2016 American Community Survey population estimates

\*\*Group Home, Residential Facility, Residential Home

\*\*\* It is an ongoing challenge to find a comparative base population, since ICWA eligibility is determined after a child enter the Child Welfare system

This table moves along the steps of decisions in a Child Welfare case. The sample size gets smaller as you move down the table, as more cases are closed and fewer children require that decision to be made. The percentages in red compare that step with the previous step. For example, at the bottom left corner of the chart, 385 Native American youth, or 26% of the number of those who entered foster care exited through adoption.