

Spring 2008

A Disproportionality Epidemic: An In-Depth Look at Increased Cultural Competence and Decision-Making to Decrease the Disproportional Number of African American Children Within Sacramento County Child Welfare Services

Zenae N. Scott

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.law.ggu.edu/capstones>



Part of the [Business Administration, Management, and Operations Commons](#)

GOLDEN GATE UNIVERSITY

A DISPROPORTIONALITY EPIDEMIC: AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT INCREASED
CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND DECISION-MAKING TO DECREASE THE
DISPROPORTIONAL NUMBER OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN WITHIN
SACRAMENTO COUNTY CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

By:

Zenae N. Scott

EMPA 396

Spring, 2008

Instructor: Dr. Joaquin Gonzales

LD
2001
.G43

CONTENTS

I. ABSTRACT.....	iii
II. INTRODUCTION.....	1
III. LITERATURE	6
IV. METHODOLOGY.....	18
V. RESULTS AND FINDINGS.....	24
VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.....	40
REFERENCES.....	46
APPENDIX A	
APPENDIX B	
APPENDIX C	
APPENDIX D (Power Point Presentation attached)	

ABSTRACT

Increasing numbers of children entering and re-entering the child welfare system is a matter of much concern. It is most frightening as services and social workers are limited in capacity to accommodate the high numbers of displaced children. This epidemic looks even bleaker from the perspective of race and ethnicity. As varied researchers look at the risk and safety factors as direct correlation to the increased numbers of children in the system, race and ethnicity have risen as an undeniable correlation to entering and treatment within the system.

This research paper will include an in-depth study of disproportionality within the County of Sacramento's Child Protective Services (CPS) Department, with a particular focus on increasing social worker capacity to effectively serve and overtime decrease the number of African American children within the system. This study will encompass research and findings from various resources including data analysis, random selected social worker questionnaires, literature reviews, and findings from internal quality assurance studies.

Equally, the research paper will serve the purpose of embarking into a road map and strategic plan to address disproportionality. Ultimately, this paper will assist in identifying and removing the found organizational and systemic factors that have greatly contributed to the disproportionality of black children

A DISPROPORTIONALITY EPIDEMIC: AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT INCREASED
COMPETENCE AND DECISION-MAKING TO DECREASE THE
DISPROPORTIONAL NUMBER OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN WITHIN
SACRAMENTO COUNTY CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

There are increasing numbers of children entering the child welfare system (foster care). Nearly 60 percent of our nation's children who live in foster care are children of color (Barth & Miller, 2001). These children come from ethnic minority families, even though children from minority communities make up less than half the children in the country. The disproportionate representation of minority children has been a puzzling phenomenon for some time. Research has not indicated that children of color are at greater risk for abuse and neglect than Caucasian children, nor are there any differences in incidences of maltreatment amongst them. An in-depth study of the overrepresentation of black children by Billingsley and Giovannoni (1972), *Children of the Storm: Black Children and American Child Welfare*, was among the first to look at the growing disparity amongst black children in the child welfare system. They reported that although black children were not at greater risk, they were in fact disproportionately reported as victims of child abuse and neglect and had substantiated reports at disproportionate rates. They are also more likely to be removed from their homes. All these things factor into increased numbers entering into the child welfare system as dependents.

It is necessary to note that the overrepresentation of minority children in the system have not always been the case. In the early 19th century, in the times of orphanages, history shows that black children were not only underrepresented but excluded. It wasn't until the 1950's and 1960's was there a rise of black children in the child welfare institutions. Many have challenged the reasons for this surge to segregation to integration, civil rights, and the move of black families from the rural communities to inner cities (Day, 1979).

In today's society, it is found that black children are 4 times more likely and American Indian children are 3.5 times more likely as Caucasian children to be in protective custody (CWLA, retrieved 2007). Children of color are also likely to stay in foster care for longer periods of time and less likely to return home or be adopted (CWLA, retrieved 2007). Research has also indicated that children of color receive inferior treatment once they come to the attention of child welfare and far worse treatment while in care (CWLA, retrieved 2007). It is also reported that upon leaving, these same children are less skilled and prepared for adulthood (CWLA, retrieved 2007). What are the causes of this minority disproportionality? Theories have surrounded three main causal factors: parent and family risk factors, community risk factors, and organizational and systemic factors (US ACF; 2003). For the purposes of this study and knowledge:

The parent and family risk factors theory refers to minorities being overrepresented in the child welfare system because they have disproportionate needs. These children stem from families that have risk factors such as unemployment, teen parenthood, substance abuse, mental illness, domestic violence, and poverty, factors

that can result in high levels of neglect and maltreatment (Wells & Tracy, 1996).

Community risk factors proponents posit that overrepresentation has less to do with race or class and associated more with residing in neighborhoods and communities that have many risk factors that make residents more visible to surveillance from authorities, such as high levels of poverty, welfare assistance, homelessness, single-parent families, crime, street violence, etc (Drake & Pandey, 1996). Lastly, theories about organizational and systemic factors contend that minority overrepresentation results from the decision making process of CPS agencies, the cultural insensitivity and biases of workers, governmental policies, and institutional racism (Bent-Goodley, 2003; McRoy, 2004).

The primary objective of this research paper is to present findings on the disproportionality and disparity of treatment and services of black children within the Sacramento County child welfare system. This objective reflects the fact the black children occur in most studies of disproportionality as the primary group and are consistently overrepresented. This paper's premise is relative to organizational and systemic factors being causal factors that equate to disproportionality of black children in the Sacramento county child welfare system. Disproportionality is a clear indicator that the child welfare system is not functioning equitably or fairly. It is written and should be inherent to child welfare to ensure that every child and family receives the best and appropriate support within each encounter with the system. This paper will present research, literature, and governmental policies with the assumption that utilization of effective decision-making tools and increased cultural competence, social workers will be better equipped to serve and reduce the number of black children

within Sacramento County CWS. This research paper will also present current practices Sacramento County is employing to mitigate the disproportionality epidemic. The three assumptions of this paper are:

- 1. Organizational gaps are the major contributors to disproportionality in Sacramento County CWS.**
- 2. Utilization of effective decision-making tools by social workers will reduce the over-representation of black children within Sacramento County CWS**
- 3. Increased cultural competence of social workers will reduce the over-representation of black children within Sacramento County CWS**

This paper will present information that supports Sacramento County's adoption of decision-making skills to positively impact social worker and the department's decision making. By focusing on disproportionality, there is an opportunity to improve the efficiency of the system by creating a more fair and equitable system, and improve the well-being of families of color by increasing competency and skills.

Definitions

For the purposes of this research paper and reference, the term *black* will be used more than African American, since increasing numbers of children in the system have parents that immigrated from South and Central America, the Caribbean, Africa, etc and may not identify themselves as African American (Hill, 2006). The term *cultural competence* is defined as, a person able to interact with people of various

cultures with a level of understanding and appropriateness. Cultural competence of black culture will be measured by Sacramento's county ability to effectively service those groups. This can be measured in cultural specific workers, cultural specific services, placement in cultural settings, etc. *Disproportionality* is defined as, a situation in which a particular racial/ethnic group of children are represented...at a higher percentage than other racial/ethnic groups (Green, 2002). Black children are over represented in the foster care population in all states except Hawaii and Indiana (Derezotes & Poertner, 2001). *Disparity* is defined as unequal treatment when comparing a racial or ethnic minority to a non-minority. This can be analyzed in many forms including decision making. *Race* is defined as the ethnic/color category a child is assigned upon entering the child welfare system. This does not take into account what the child/family considers their race to be. *Child welfare factors* are defined as the factors that the child welfare office would assess on family's need for child welfare intervention. This is measured by the reasons why children enter the system. For example neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and so on. These factors are affected by risk factors that are identified in the all three areas of theory. *The system* refers to the child welfare system, child protective services, or children services. A child *being in the system* refers to the child being a dependent to the respective county. A child having *intervention* refers to any interaction with the system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Disproportionality is an increasingly researched topic. This research encompasses Michelle Green's article, *Minority as Majority: Disproportionality in Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice*. Michelle Green references disproportionality as a bad math problem (Green, 1). Green posits that we must first come to terms with what disproportionality is and what it is not. Green sets out to define disproportionality in terms for the child welfare system and the juvenile justice system. Green states that disproportionality "refers to a situation in which a particular racial/ethnic group of children are represented...at a higher percentage than other racial/ethnic groups" (Green, 2). Green personifies the definitions with discussion from a Race Matters research forum, in which the disproportionality of African American children were debated in length.

Through the Race Matter forums, Green presents the difference and debate between the words overrepresentation and disproportionality. Both sides of the coin present a negative connotation in both child welfare and juvenile justice. Green looks at the debate as a numbers and treatment game. However the numbers do not equate when race injected as a factor. Two children of different races with the same neglectful situation do not have the same outcome in either child welfare or juvenile justice.

Green goes onto to present that risk factors are established through socio-economic issues such as poverty. Green posits that "children in poverty are more likely to come from a single parent working families, where there is a decreased likelihood of supervision at critical time during the child's day" (Green, 2). This equates to a child resulting into a neglectful or a delinquent situation. This factor can affect allegations of

abuse and the child's likelihood to enter the juvenile system. Green (2002) brings in that in communities of color are far more plagued with socio-economic issues that leave the community at a disadvantage. Green (2002) states that welfare policy, income, lack of resources, etc, all directly impact a family's involvement with the child welfare system.

Green (2002) goes on to provide the barriers that child welfare and juvenile justice face as they sort through disproportionality. Barriers such as reluctance to talk, lack of federal leadership, inconsistent or insufficient data collection, lack of cultural competency, insufficient diversion alternatives, and overwhelmed (underfunded) systems, collaboratively hold back progress in both systems (Green, 4).

Green's (2002) article is an excellent resource that speaks to the relative research. It gives insightful reasoning to plaguing epidemic across the country. Green (2002) provides barriers and assumptions that possibly can be dispelled through my research of disproportionality in Sacramento County child welfare system.

Another resource to this research is Susan Dougherty's, *Practices that mitigate the effects of racial/ethnic disproportionality in the child welfare system*. Dougherty's (2003) article is written as a manual to increasing efforts into decreasing disproportionality. Dougherty (2003) talks about the first step being a vital step of collecting data to give insight into the exact problem and issue of disproportionality. The data should directly examine the outcome measures that came out of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA). This data should be used to examine ethnicity relative to the needs of children and whether those needs are being met in to proportion to the ethnicity representation in the system.

The article (2003) specifically looks at children that are placed in out-of-home care within the system and their services and supports received. The article provides insight into system practices that a child would flow through, while focusing on the back-end of the system. Dougherty (2003) reviews existing practices and strategies that CWS puts into place in finding permanency for children.

Dougherty (2003) focuses on the social worker diligently engaging families as practice in to decreasing disproportionality. By actively looking for kin, relative, friends, and other non-related friends of family, permanency rather than placement is the focus. As permanency becomes the focus rather than placement, the probability of children exiting the system prior to emancipation is more likely. Dougherty (2003) talks about a strategic recruitment effort. She mentions that child welfare has to have a strategic plan for permanency of children. A plan would allow all children to be subject to the same practice. She (2003) remarks on sibling placements, termination of parental rights, and active concurrent planning. Concurrent planning allows for a child to be involved in a plan of permanency and plan of reunification at the same time. Dougherty (2003) remarks that concurrent planning allows that if reunification efforts fail, there is time loss on permanency.

Dougherty (2003) goes on to comment that the child welfare system has to reach out to the community. She (2003) remarks that community can educate child welfare and increase cultural competency. Involving the community is very strength based and gives supportive and more positive outcomes. Dougherty (2003) concludes that it amalgamation of education, data, family involvement, timely permanency, diligent recruitment, culturally competent practices, reflect community and

neighborhood input, and more that will assist in mitigating disparate outcomes.

Dougherty's (2003) piece provides a wealth of information of practices that can be implemented at the staff level to mitigate disproportionality. Many of the practice areas she identified are currently employed in Sacramento; however there is still a missing link. Dougherty's (2003) piece exposes that efforts and initiatives are needed but policy is key to seeing results.

As both Green and Dougherty present articles on what disproportionality is and practices that mitigate disproportionality, many argue that black children have a disproportionate need because of poverty or the earlier mentioned parent and community risk factors (Wells & Tracy, 1996), an alternative view is offered through a study on illicit drug and alcohol use during pregnancy. An article featured in the New England Journal of Medicine, by Chasnoff and colleagues provided example that discrimination can be both internal and external of the child welfare (1990). The article highlighted that child abuse and neglect is reported by many different entities. There are discretionary and mandated reporters. The bulk of CPS reports come from mandated reporters (SafeMeasures, 2008). Chasnoff and colleagues' found that black and white women are equally likely to test positive for drugs, however black women were ten times more likely to be reported to CPS after delivery (1990). It was found that health personnel were more likely to suspect and report families of color because they believed that drug use was more common in minority homes (Chasnoff et al, 1990). This proved to have a tremendous affect on the over-representation in child welfare. According to the 1994 US GAO report, drug abuse is seen as a major reason for child welfare involvement with families. These implications allow for an

assumption that once entering the system, black children and families have existing adversities that leads to adverse treatment. Chasnoff et al (1990) argue that external partners play a large role in the overrepresentation due to reporting but also because of their participation in services and community groups. Critics to this theory argue that it Child Welfare that is not set-up or designed to support and serve minority populations as well as it largely the social worker's decisions that are highly influenced by race.

In Robert Hill's Synthesis of Research on Disproportionality in Child Welfare (2006), the connectedness of child welfare disproportionality and other systems were highlighted. It is reported that the bulk of children in foster care are from families that qualify for public assistance (Goerge & Lee, 2005). Hill (2006) linked the public welfare system intrinsically to the child welfare system. The connection with Title IVE federal payments and child welfare standards provides explanation for an overrepresentation of poor children in both systems. States are reimbursed for their Title IVE children because of their eligibility for TANF or in California, Cal Works. Hill summarizes that other systems have a huge impact on the disproportionate numbers of minorities in child welfare.

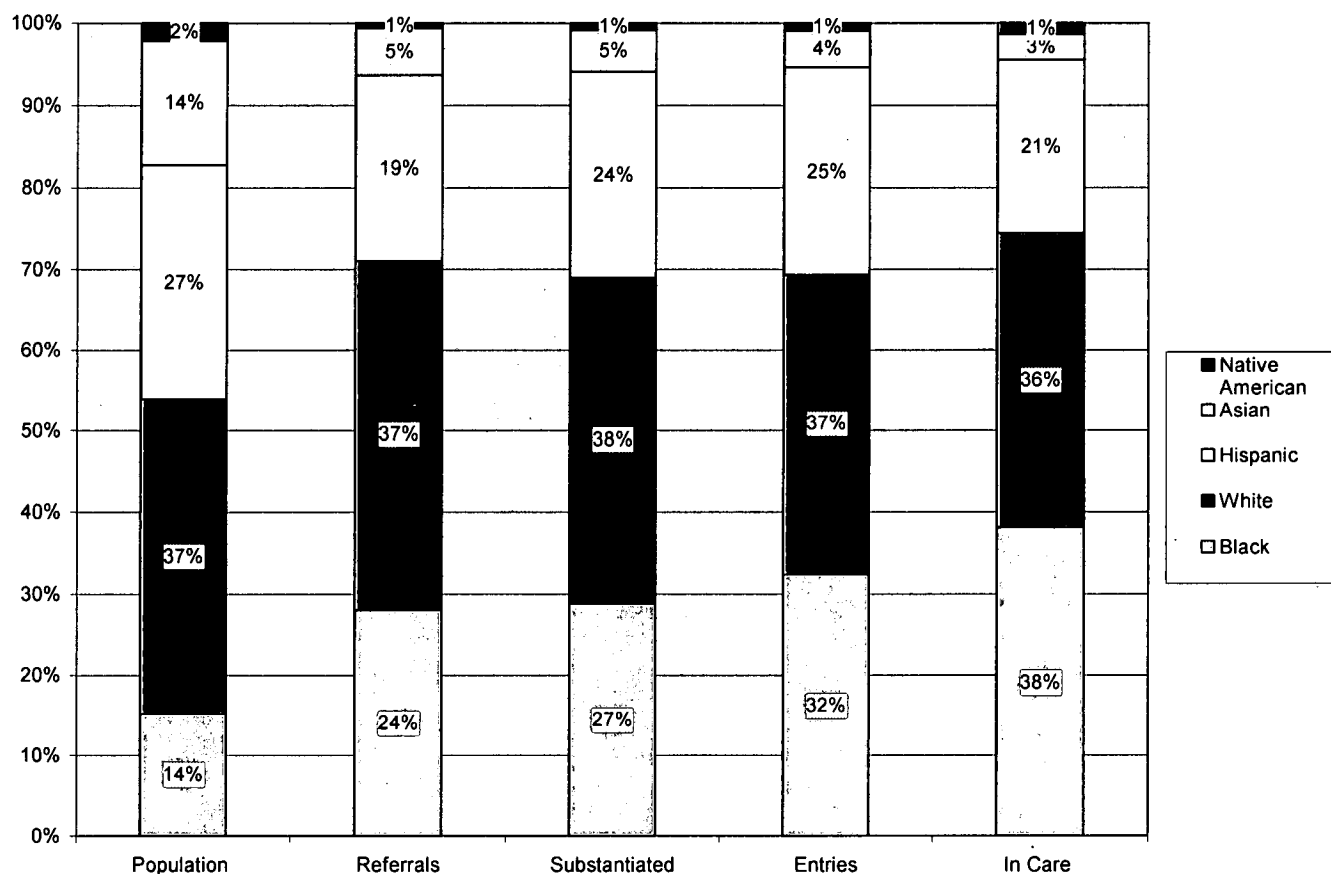
The trajectory of a child in the system is offered in the multiplicative theory by Barth and colleagues (2000). Barth et al intended to explain why over-representation of minority children is so pronounced at the end of the continuum. Barth and colleagues (2000) argue that there are substantially greater risk of child abuse and neglect for children of color due to their variety of risk factors. Because of the increased risk there is more probability that black children will enter and remain in the system. Barth et al (2000) explain that the difference at each level of the model have a cumulative effect

and result in larger disparity between black and white children in foster care.

Sacramento Disproportionality Status

Disproportionality is a national issue yet is a rampant through every juncture in the Sacramento Child welfare system. While black children represent over 30% of Sacramento County children living in foster care, other programs look similar in comparison (CWS/CMS, 2005). Black children are clearly the over represented population in any every major program outcome in Sacramento CWS. The following bar chart expresses the disparity of black children within Sacramento County in 2005. These trends have appeared to stay consistent in recent years. The bar graph highlights a consistent increase in data from each juncture to the next.

Figure 1



Sources: 2005 CWS/CMS data, Center for Social Services Research, UC Berkeley

Figure 1 also provides percentages of ethnic/racial groups and how their population correlates to the child welfare. It is clear that white/Caucasian children tend to mirror their population at every juncture while the Asian population seems to be under represented within the system. While the Asian population also can be categorized as disproportionality, the discipline views this as more of a positive than the over represented groups.

Figure 1 also highlights the disproportionality at the juncture of referrals. As

reporting and referrals is the gate to child welfare intervention, studies have demonstrated that not all maltreated children are reported. This issue is examined by the National Incidence Study (NIS). The NIS attempts to provide an accurate estimate of incidence of maltreatment by including a sample of families investigated by CPS, children who were screened out due to criteria, children seen by community partners that may or may not have been reported to CPS. In a third NIS study, a nationally representative sample was pulled from 42 counties, and did not find any racial differences overall. This study is inconsistent with the many researchers of the discipline belief that disproportionality stems from outside of the system. While black children are over represented at every juncture once in the system, the third National Incidence Study suggests that overrepresentation is not attributed to higher rates of abuse amongst blacks, but related directly to the system.

As there are many challenges to the NIS study, one critical challenge is that the NIS had a bias sample. Ards, Chung, and Myers (1999) posit that NIS failed to include decision-makers, family members, and community members that may have understood the family more so than the service providers. Barth et al (2001) that suggests that NIS was bias in an under-sampling of urban areas.

The end result of the competing theories of the National Incidence Study is that disproportionality and disparity do exist within the system as well as in the reporting of the abuse. Not enough research has been conducted to clarify whether there is disproportionality within the incidence of abuse. While incidence of abuse cannot be directly tied to race or poverty, it does encompass many environmental factors such as child rearing. Due to the many cultural differences, incidence of abuse can be linked to

historical and environmental factors (Ards, et al, 1999).

Other Counties

As many of the authors look at the effects and affects of disproportionality within the child welfare system, little research has been done on positive techniques that could possibly decrease the epidemic. The City and County of San Francisco conducted a report on disproportionality in San Francisco in November 2004 (Inter-City Family Resource Network, 2004). The study focused on researching how to reduce disproportionality for San Francisco. The study looked at the context of disproportionality within numbers and qualitatively. As San Francisco specifically studied their issue with disproportionality, they learned that black children were severely over represented at each juncture in their CWS. San Francisco convened work groups, focus groups, management and social worker input to result in the following recommendations from the San Francisco CWS task force (Inter-City Family Resource Network, 2004).

San Francisco found that much work was needed to be done in collaborating with local community partners. Figure 2 highlights and paraphrases San Francisco's 9 recommendations to deal with disproportionality (Inter-City Family Resource Network, 2004):

Figure 2 (Paraphrased, Inter-City Family Resource Network, 2004)

1. Implement a program to assist families in crisis.
2. Launch a focused positive messages campaign.
3. Develop effective family support strategies.

4. Strengthen inter-departmental collaboration to better support families.
5. Focus on youth permanency.
6. Implement policies and practices that continually support equity within programs.
7. Focus on preventative and culturally competent services.
8. Expand data systems.
9. Initiate and maintain inter-departmental services

The San Francisco task force provided 9 recommendations and created preliminary steps to implement the study's findings and recommendations. The San Francisco child welfare task force recommended that the CWS start by holding a public hearing on disproportionality, sponsor a legislated task force, and then present the task force's recommendations to the Board of Supervisor Human Services Commission (Inter-City Family Resource Network, 2004). The task force laid out a foundation for the San Francisco City and County to work on child welfare issues, specifically disproportionality. Each recommendation was laid out with a timeline and milestones to monitor each step. Since the inception of the overall plan, San Francisco has consistently been working on disproportionality (Inter-City Family Resource Network, 2004). There has not been a dramatic decrease within the CWS rates for black children, but there has been a sincere attempt at collaborating and educating.

Another noteworthy county is King County of Washington. In 2004, King County also began to look at disproportionality. Similar to San Francisco, King conducted a full scale research project looking at the factors, causal, evidence, practice, and policy within the County that impact the overrepresentation rates of black children.

King took an alternative approach within their research, by focusing heavily on where and to what extent disproportionality exists and what are the causes. King County was looking to define disproportionality and discovered that children of color constitute 1/3 of the child population, yet they constitute 50% of children within King Child welfare (Catalysts for Kids, 2004). King County sought to be the lead within the discipline as far as agencies addressing disproportionality. King County provided the child welfare system arena with a new set of lens to look at the issue. The King County research concluded that they must address the issue by first making the assumption that the system is bias. Through this acknowledgment there is room for rebuilding or revamping an “anti-racist” system (Catalysts for Kids, 2004). King’s County looked more towards the workers and supervisors to provide this system. As the King County child welfare system received more than nine recommendations, the suggestions surrounded adding culturally competent staff, providing training to the supervisory staff, training to staff on decision-making bias, holding each child welfare staff accountable for the disproportionality rates in the county, increasing community input, monitoring disproportionality at each juncture, and more(Catalysts for Kids, 2004). King County looked at the disproportionality as an issue for all workers. King County established the King County Coalition on Racial Disproportionality to lead the aforementioned recommendations and more at each level within their system (Catalysts for Kids, 2004). King County used a more comprehensive accountability approach that seemed to engage all staff as well as focusing on both cultural competence and decision-making bias. Within King County’s report on disproportionality, they set out to lead the field in improvements within child welfare, specifically disproportionality.

King County has provided a tremendous amount of input and insight into the disproportionality since their 2004 report. As King County continues to work on disproportionality and redesign of child welfare, promising practices are shared with the field. As they look to erode the rate of children of color within the system, Sacramento County looks to erode the over representation rates of black children in their own system. King County provided a qualitative baseline for this common need of work.

Throughout research and the included literature review it is observed that one critical shortcoming to the research is the lack of insight into the social worker professional's perception of disproportionality within the system. This research seeks to provide an opportunity to add, much like King County, the perception and recommendations of the line, supervisor, and management staff. Based on the survey of information in the field, Sacramento County does not need to recreate the wheel, however fine tune it specifically for the county.

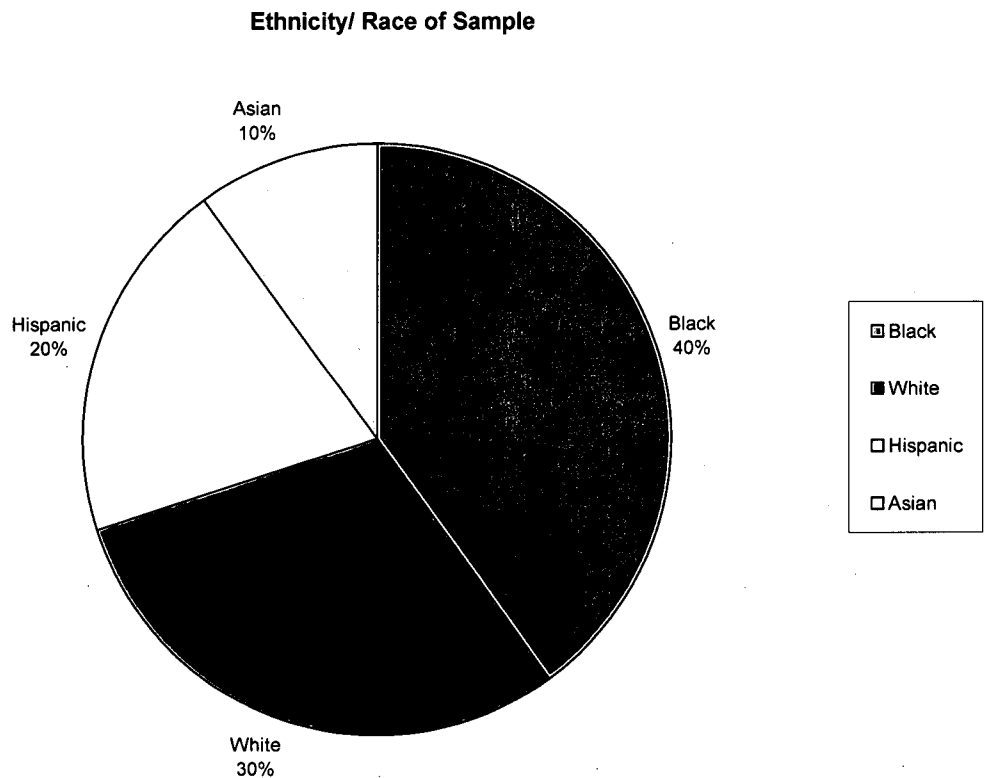
METHODOLOGY

The major assumption for this research state that higher standards of cultural competence and decision-making skills for social workers in the Sacramento County child welfare system will result in comparable and improved services to black children. The independent variables are higher standards of cultural competence and decision-making skills, with the dependent variables being comparable and improved services to black children. This report proposes to evaluate these assumptions by conducting a variety of research studies, utilizing primary and secondary data from child welfare systems, child management system, the University of California at Berkeley, Center for Social Services Research, and through key informant interviews. It was clear to gain the most pertinent and valuable information, that one to one interviews were needed. The assumptions look directly at a workers and supervisors' ability to make decisions and cultural competence. It was imperative that a portion of research was dedicated to hearing the workers and supervisors' voices.

In 2005, Sacramento County launched the Team-Decision Making (TDM) Initiative. TDM is a tool used for making placements and placement changes. TDM is team approach to making decision for the sufficiency and well-being of children. TDM is used as a tool to mitigate disproportionality. The first study encompassed a qualitative random sample of 10% (40) of child welfare cases that had received a team decision-making meeting at some time within their case. The selection came from the time period between October 2006 and May 10th, 2007. In addition to team decision-making meetings as criteria, cases were also selected based on having more than one placement change within their program. The cases were reviewed for race, reasons

entering CWS, current status (reunification or permanency, etc), treatment based on case notes, innovative engagement, and other efforts used to reduce length of stay, and types of treatment. The cases were reviewed using a standardized case evaluation guide (found in Appendix B case evaluation guide.). The cases were pulled directly from the California Child Welfare Systems/Child Management Systems (CWS/CMS) database. The findings are presented in an aggregate form with anonymity and confidentiality. The CWS/CMS database is not a public database. It is restricted to California CWS staff, with restrictions from county to county, levels of restriction for staff, and so on. In the time period there were 2706 child placement changes in the family reunification and permanency programs. There were a total of 393 Team Decision Making meetings held to address the placement issues. Figure 3 shows that 40% of the in children who had placement issue and TDMs are black children (CWS/CMS). The selection looks at treatment and case planning of all children. The sample only includes one child of the family, hence removes sibling sets from the sample.

Figure 3



The second study utilized the sample from the first study, however as key informant interviewees. The criteria included either social worker or supervisors that were involved with the case at the time of the TDM. The social worker or supervisor had to be currently employed by the County and willing to participate in the interview. The selection of workers and supervisors was pulled from CWS/CMS assignments to the cases, as well as case documentation. The workers and supervisors also had to be willing to speak about their own competency and practice on the specified case as well as in general. The second study is identified as Phase 2 results.

In September of 2007, five (5) supervisors and six (6) social workers were identified as the sample for Phase 2 results. Utilizing a questionnaire and interviewer, the eleven were asked for their input and insight on perceptions, utilization, and understanding of specifically team decision-making. Phase 2 intended to look specifically at decision-making rather than directly asking about disproportionality.

In February of 2008, the third study of this project (Appendix C) included an additional set of key informant interviews on overall perceptions of disproportionality. This qualitative piece was critical to receiving input from staff on their feelings, belief, and understanding of the department's stance on disproportionality. Criteria for the "Perceptions Study" included:

1. Work for Sacramento County CPS as a line worker, supervisor, or a manager.
2. Willing to take the time to fill out a survey on disproportionality
3. Have access to the internet
4. Willing for results to be shared as part of the Capstone project

The survey was released via Survey Monkey on www.surveymonkey.com. The survey allowed the interviewee to finish questions on their own leisure. This third study was introduced to the research due to the first two encompassing enough questions specifically on disproportionality practices and policies within CPS. This survey was opened for 2 weeks, allowing respondents time to address the 10 short answer and multiple choice questions.

This research paper has also leaned on data and information gathered by the

University of California at Berkeley, Center for Social Services Research (UC Berkeley/Center). UC Berkeley provides aggregate data to all 58 counties of California. The Sacramento County CPS relies heavily on the analysis and breakdown of information by the Center. The Center has a website <http://cssr.berkeley.edu>, dedicated to data collected on child abuse and neglect. The Center also provides specific results and research specific to the Child Welfare Systems Improvement and Accountability Act (AB636). This legislation was designed to improve outcomes for children in the system while holding counties accountable for the outcomes achieved. Each county is responsible for reporting on eight umbrella outcomes, conducting a 3-year self-assessment, and submitting a yearly update to the 3-year systems improvement plan (SIP). Sacramento County conducted a self-assessment in 2005 and continuously updates the current SIP. Within the SIP and self assessment, Sacramento County has identified disproportionality as an area of concern and an area with future improvements. This research report utilized responses to the UC Berkeley's data reports along with Sacramento's qualitative report to analyze efforts and/or improvements in the area of disproportionality.

Identified Biases

Each of the 3 specified studies, are heavily dependent on perceptions, beliefs, social worker and supervisory input, and other qualitative means. This reported information is to be used as a qualitative and information, not statistically valid. Of the two key informant interviews, there are only twenty-three (23) respondents providing perspective on Sacramento County CWS who employs over 800 social workers and supervisors. It is also noted that there is bias within the responses, due to the

assumption that respondents of the key informant interviews meeting the criteria of being willing to participate because they had an investment, previous knowledge, or another motive for their participation. Realizing all of these biases, information is still assessed and gained as will be mentioned in the results and finding section.

Other Pertinent Information

The researcher utilized Microsoft Office Excel 2003 and Word 2003 as the primary recording databases.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

This Capstone project set out with 3 assumptions surrounding disproportionality.

1. Assumption #1: Organizational gaps are the major contributors to disproportionality in Sacramento County CWS.
2. Assumption #2: Utilization of effective decision-making tools by social workers will reduce the over-representation of black children within Sacramento County CWS.
3. Assumption #3: Increased cultural competence of social workers will reduce the over-representation of black children within Sacramento County CWS.

These assumptions were derived to provide insight into why and what Sacramento County CWS is doing to deal with the issue of disproportionality. As described in the methodology, three distinct research tools were utilized to gain this insight.

Secondary Data: Study #1

The first study utilized a case evaluation guide (found in Appendix B) to look into a case file and pull insight from the social worker and supervisors case notes. The actual case is the most reliable outside of the worker, to provide input on how cases are worked and the results. The social worker is required to input all case information into the CWS/CMS system. Within the first study forty (40) cases were pulled to provide insight guided by the case evaluation guide.

The first study speaks more to both assumption #2 and #3 in that it looks at the

utilization of TDMs and through case evaluation the cultural competency that is used on cases. As mentioned in the methodology, this sample consisted of a population of 40% of black children. Other interesting demographics include 55% females, and 55% between the ages of 12 to 17.

Through the case evaluation guide results the sample consisted of:

- 70% children were in the Family Reunification program
- 20% children were in the Family Maintenance program
- 10% children were in the Adoptions program

The program of the child provides the type of service components and level of care each child/ or family is receiving. With 80% of the sample between family reunification and adoptions, it can be assumed that most of the children are in care and have some type of plan of permanency. A permanency plan is the long term placement goal for the child. The children in family reunification under go concurrent planning because it is not assumed that their parent will reunify with them. It was also found that 70% of the sample was living in a foster or group home setting. The other 30% of the sample were in care with relatives.

It was identified that 80% of the children were experiencing a Team Decision Making meeting due to having a potential placement move, while 20% were at an imminent risk of losing the placement. This information is key because it speaks to the reason a social worker would initiate a TDM on a child. Once a TDM is initiated, the team comes together to provide a recommendation about the placement of the child. Within this sample, 90% of the children were recommended to remain with the caretaker. Regardless of this recommendation, 20 (50%) of the sample were moved into

another placement. The study also found that there was not much discussion of cultural factors within the case file; however the practice of placing with relatives in positive as in it provides a cultural connection for the child.

Translation and Implications on Assumptions

The abovementioned study is an interesting study to speak to the assumptions because it encompasses case notes, practice, and results from social workers and supervisors working on specified cases. As the above study is easier understood to CWS staff, the most pertinent information to gain is the following:

1. TDMs were utilized on all of the cases (stated within the criteria), however once the team made recommendations, 50% of the social worker still made their own decision.
2. Of the 50% (20), 90% (18) of this group were black children.
3. There was nothing specific in the case notes that spoke to the SW providing cultural competent services, or assessing cultural needs- other than the practice of placing with relatives and the standardized offer of a cultural competent worker.

The sample identified that TDM (effective decision-making tool) was utilized; however it appears that social workers were still making decisions based on their own expertise rather than leaning to the results of a group decision making model. It also appears from the sample that this practice is more prominent amongst black children than other ethnic groups. TDMs have been tested throughout the country amongst CWS staff. As evidence based method it has proven results to make the best placement decisions for children.

Through this first study, there was not a clear baseline to measure an increased cultural competence. It is Sacramento County practice to offer a cultural competence worker from the initial intervention. There is an indication that not enough is being done around cultural competency, however it was very difficult to compare and aggregate information from case to case.

A major finding to this first study is the impact on multiple placements for children. Most of these children were looking to reunify with their parents within 18 months of their case, however they were experiencing multiple placements within their temporary situation. Research stated that black children experienced more placements and longer times in care. This fact is detrimental to the well being of black and all children alike.

Primary Data: Study #2 (Phase 2) Key Informant Interview

After the conclusion of the case evaluation guide study #1, the Phase 2 key informant interview was conducted with 11 social workers and supervisors from the study #1 sample. The Phase 2 interviews provide insight into assumptions #1 and #2.

Demographics of Sample

- 4 of 5 (80%) supervisory interviewees have been a supervisor within their bureau for 2 or more years.
 - The other interviewee has been a supervisor for a year.
- 3 of 6 (50%) interviewees have been a social worker within their bureau for 2 or more years.
 - The other 3 interviewees have been social workers in the bureau for a year.

The bulk of social workers and supervisors were familiar with their programs for at least two years.

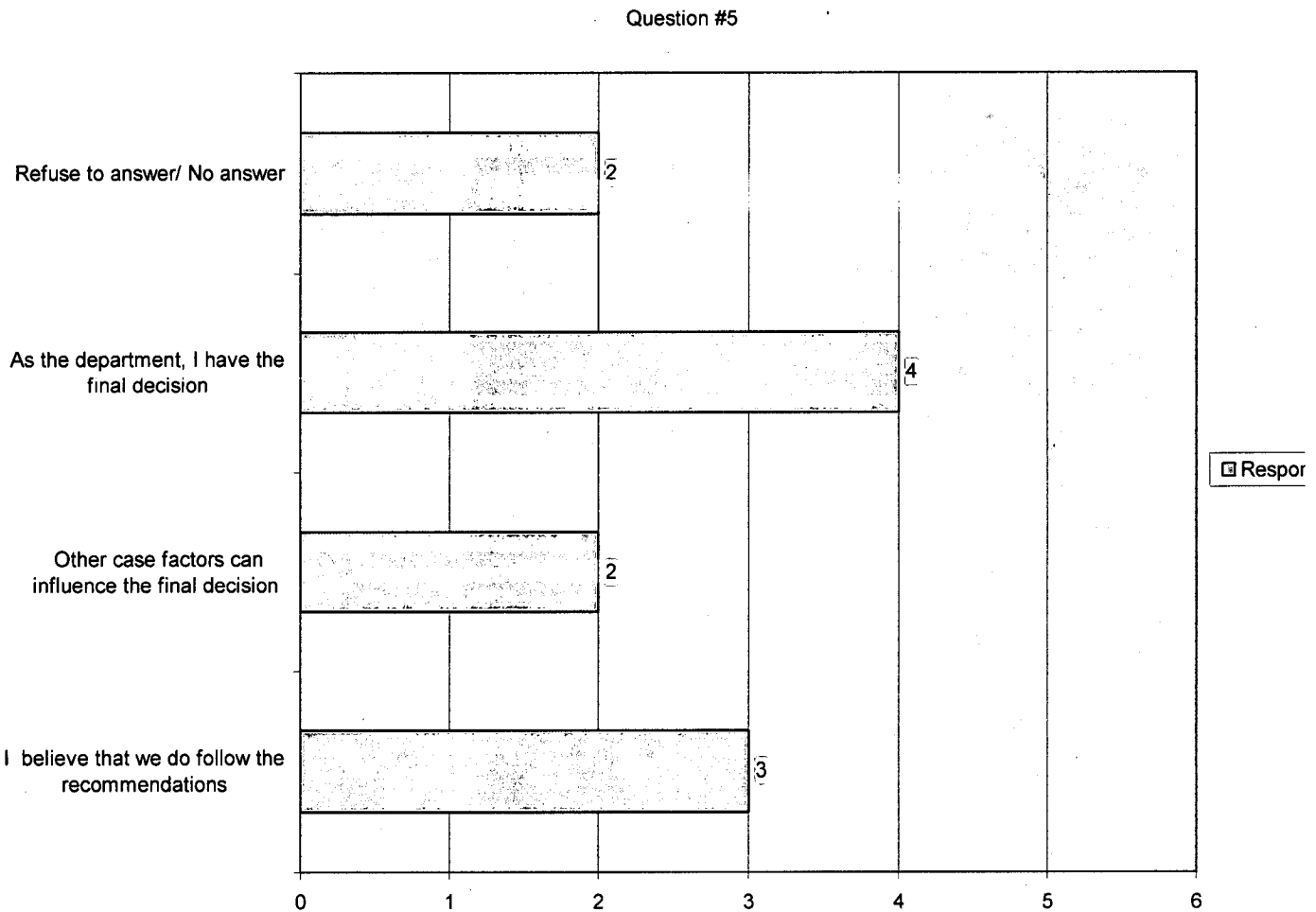
Responses

Question #1 asked both social workers and supervisors what was and if they understood the purpose for having a TDM. All eleven respondents answered that TDM is for placement issues and changes for children on their caseloads. The respondents understood the technical definition of TDM, but did not expand on how TDM is used as a tool for decision-making. Question #2 asked both social workers and supervisor who was the initiator of the TDM on the case. This question was looking to understand whether the social workers were embracing TDM as a tool or was it used a supervisory recommendation. All of the respondents replied that the social workers were initiating the TDM process. During this period of the interviews, the TDM process was an optional process. Sacramento County is establishing TDM as a mandatory process in March 2008.

Question #3 asked both groups whether supervisors were supportive to social workers in the TDM process. All 5 supervisors stated that they support their workers within the TDM process and try to come to each meeting if possible. All of the social workers agreed that their supervisors were supportive within the process. This is very important that supervisors are supporting and encouraging as workers use new tools as a new practice.

Question #4 asked both groups were asked about the quality of recommendations made as a team. All respondents replied that the recommendations were quality recommendations that were in line with case plans. The recommendations came from the entire team and were to be followed through by the social workers.

Question #5 asked both groups if they felt the placement recommendations were quality why would a different decision be made after the TDM.



As respondents showed surprise with the question, most respondents felt that they as a representative of the department had the final say on the case. This is sentiment is unordinary to the culture, practice, and policy of CWS.

Question #6 asked both groups if they felt TDM was a positive practice for Sacramento County. All respondents did feel that TDM was a positive practice but that the process should not go to mandatory. Respondents did not provide reasons for why they were against mandatory TDM.

Lastly, question #7 asks for any additional comments, specifically to TDM and how it can be incorporated as a tool to better serve black children. Respondents replied with many different comments. Social workers replied that they felt it could be a tool ever had thought about it as tool to mitigate overrepresentation of black children in the system. Some commented that they perceived TDM as a placement tool, not for ethnic and racial disparity issues. The supervisors had very different perspectives. The supervisors responded that TDM is used as a tool to mitigate disproportionality. The supervisors did feel that releasing the social worker from making all the decisions and allowing collaboration was a promising practice that would only help CWS in the long run.

Translation and Implications on Assumptions

As primary data, the Phase 2 provided tremendous insight to the three assumptions. As the reviewer, body language, comfort level, and reactions to questions assisted in better analyzing the results. Both the social workers and supervisors shed light on the organizational gaps that exist around the full implementation of TDM and disproportionality. The social workers and supervisors appeared that they used the TDM because it was an option to show effort on the case rather than the tool for decision-making. It was clear that the social workers did not see it as an opportunity to involve others in the decision-making process. Through the interviews, respondents were bothered and uncomfortable by question #5 and #7. Both #5 and #7 were questions that challenged the respondents and it appeared that they were hesitant or wanted more time to answer.

In regards to the second assumption (#2), the respondents utilized the actual

team decision meeting but may or may not embrace the recommendations. Again the practice is that it is part of the job, rather than viewed as a tool. The social workers and supervisors seemed to support TDM but there didn't seem to be a sincere buy-in. There is bias in this sample that was observed after the interviews. Due to being in CPS administration and the interviewer, the questions could have been seen as an interview to monitor staff.

Lastly, the cultural competence of staff seemed to be the most blurred information to gain from the sample. The staff responded that they try all efforts to engage families, however compared to the secondary data of the case files there is a major contradiction.

Overall the Phase 2 and the first study proved to be helpful in that the sample gave a comprehensive look at decision-making in regards to social worker practice. Both the social workers and supervisors gave insight into the lack of consistency of the message of disproportionality and how TDM as an effective decision-making tool can help mitigate. It seems that the overall feeling of TDM is that it is like another component or burden of the job.

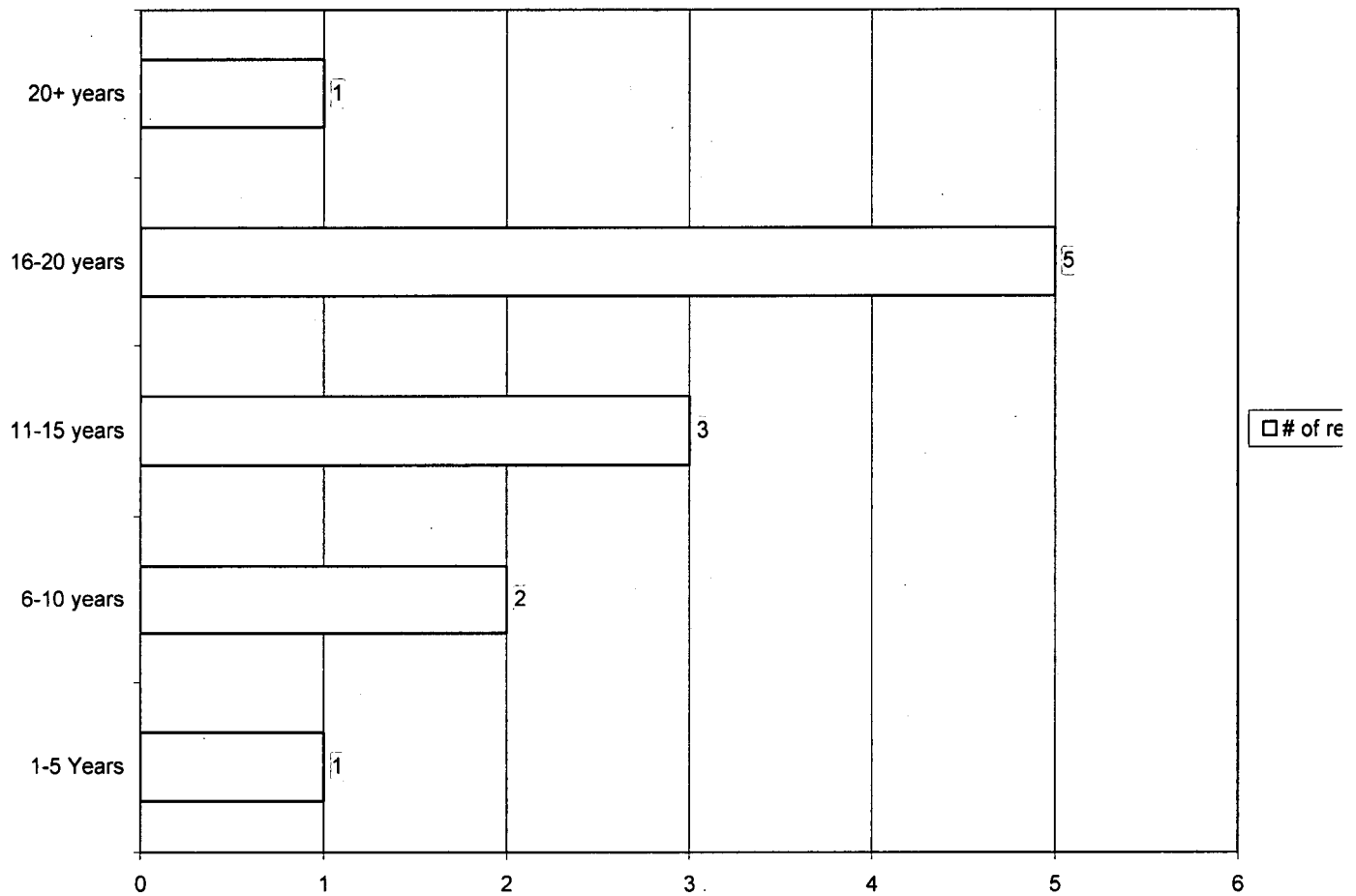
Primary Data, Study 3: Key Informant Interview

The last primary data that was gathered is the most informative and intentional to speak to the assumptions. In February of 2008, social workers, supervisors, and administration managers went to www.surveymonkey.com to answer questions Sacramento County's disproportionality. The third survey was designed to elicit the perceptions from agency staff on the overrepresentation of black children, including

their perception of Federal, state, agency, and individual factors that directly or indirectly impact disproportionality. These questions are deemed the priority and most important questions. Twelve respondents replied to survey.

As the survey was posted on Survey Monkey for anyone, the following is the respondent characteristics:

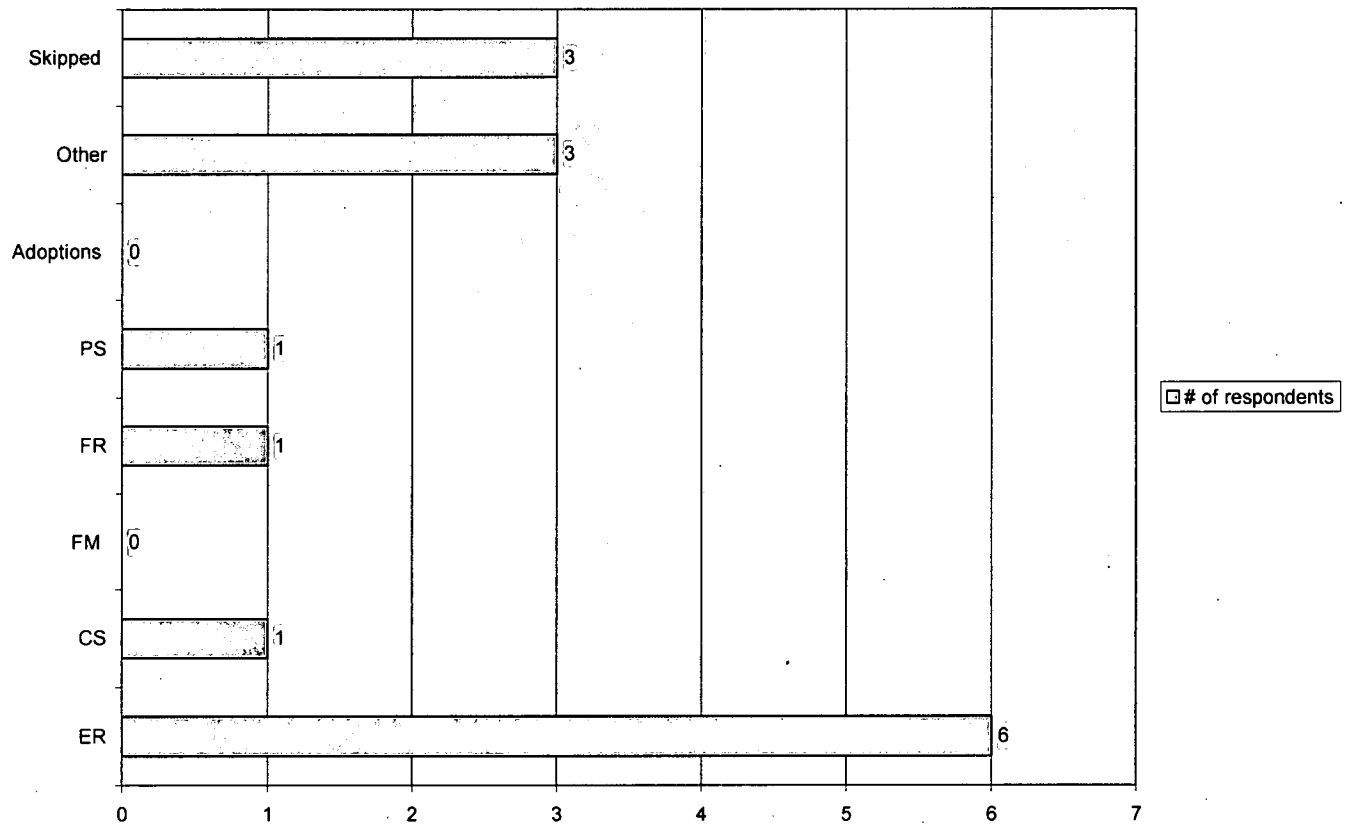
1. How long have you worked with Sacramento County Child Welfare Services?



The bulk of the respondents were veteran CWS workers.

Question #2 speaks to the area of service that the respondents are from.

2. In what service area have you primarily worked?



The bulk of respondents were from the Emergency Response program. Three respondents skipped this question, while three respondents chose other due to them having equal mix of programs.

Respondents were asked what their perception of disproportionality in Sacramento County is. (Why do you think African American children are over represented in Sacramento County CPS?). Respondents had a variety of answers to this question. Three of the twelve answered the socio-economic status and poverty was a major contributor to the numbers of black children within the system. Five respondents

attributed the over representation to an institutional racism. Respondents brought out the lack of training, cultural sensitivity, and decision-making. Of all the respondents there was a definite sense that there was disproportionality. One respondent had a particular comment that was of concern,

“I am aware from the data that a disproportional number of African American children have substantiated allegations and are removed from their caretakers. However, there is a disconnect between the disproportionality and how this can be directly attributed to my personal practices. In other words, I can see there is a problem but not how I personally contribute to that problem.” (SurveyMonkey respondent)

As this comment speaks to the lack of accountability by an individual worker, it speaks volumes to a sentiment that is shared amongst workers within the system.

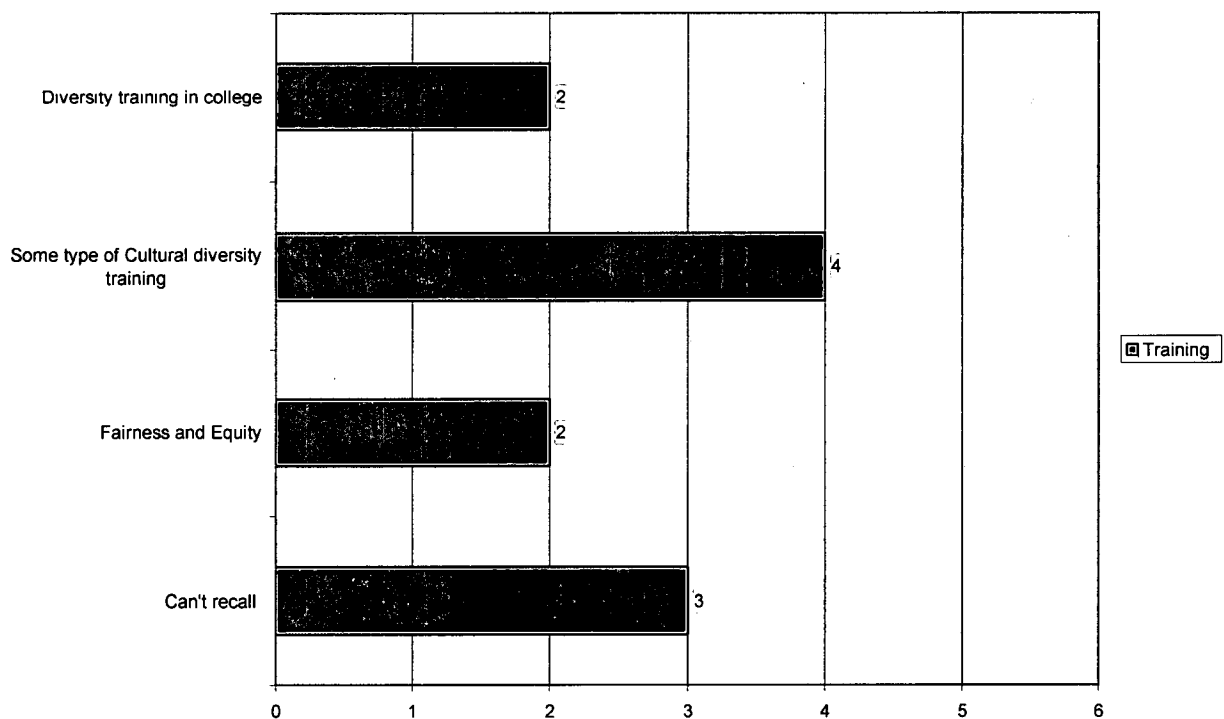
The question immediately following asked respondents, what the department has done to improve delivery services to black children. Three of the respondents did not feel the department had done any thing, while one respondent specifically stated that the “problem solved, integrated non-biased assessment tools, and has oversight for case management.” This comment, along with a comment regarding hiring black people into management stood out as evidence to lack of education and lack of understanding of the issue at large. Most commented that they could not specifically state what was being done, but sure something was being done. Again the lack of knowledge and an organizational gap is exposed through these responses.

The fifth question in the survey ask respondents what type of training, services, or programs are necessary to reduce the number of black children within the system. Eleven of the twelve respondents identified training was needed. The training recommendations from the eleven ranged from more diversity training for staff to

training on the issue and education of disproportionality. The respondent's answers seemed to be looking for assistance from the department. One respondent stated that a formalized plan was needed to address the issue, rather than hit or miss strategies. Two of the respondents added that additional work force was needed to reduce case loads so that workers could do quality work on each case.

Question #6 looked for respondents to specifically identify training that they had received from the county that assists in working with minority families.

6. What type of traing have you received from the county that has assisted you in working with minority children?



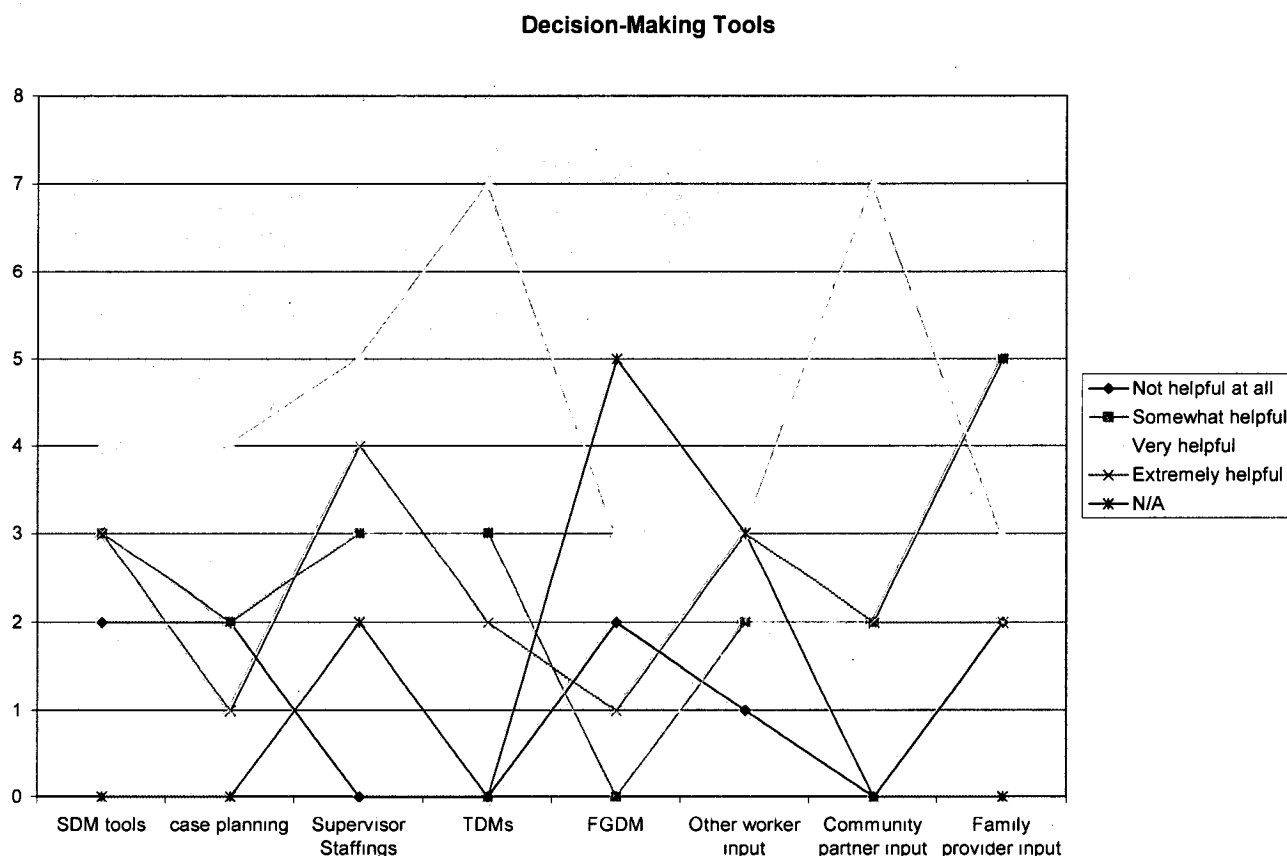
This question solicited very interesting answers in that only two of the respondents named an actual training offered by the CPS department. Two of the respondents answered that they had not receive any cultural diversity or sensitivity training at the

county. Between the four respondents that answered that they had some type of training, three could not recall what or when they had training, and two mentioned they had training in college. Through the responses it is clear that culturally competent training is lacking for the department. It is also interesting comparing that ten respondents were lacking in training while eleven of the respondents have been with the department over six years. This analysis exposes a serious organization gap as well a need for workers to be refreshed on working with different cultures.

The next short answer discussion asked respondents how federal and state policies and regulations change the way Sacramento County serves African American families. Half of the respondents stated they were not aware how the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act, the Adoptions and Safe Families Act, or state legislation AB636 impacted disproportionality. Each regulation does have an impact on the county's practice. Five respondents gave answers that were vague and did not speak specifically to the acts or legislation. One respondent did not answer the question.

Question #8 asked what the respondents personally do to increase effectiveness in working with minorities. Most respondents responded that they have to be more cognizant of the issues and treat people with respect. Two respondents felt they personally don't do anything. This question looked for staff to provide their own daily promising practices. Nothing stood out other than the few respondents stating they did nothing at all.

Question #9 asked respondents what tools they chose to assist in decision making and how helpful it is dealing with disproportionality.



Respondents were asked to rate each tool that Sacramento County utilizes and other counties, including San Francisco and King County of Washington utilizes as tools in dealing with disproportionality. None of the respondents identified any other tools. The most utilized decision-making tools were TDM and community partner input.

The last and final question asked respondents if there was anything that they felt was important to include to their responses regarding reducing disproportionality rates for black children. Respondents replied with some of the following:

1. "Fresh out of ideas"
2. More awareness and training on the issue
3. We need to assess the impact of service delivery
4. "Alleviation of inequities in socio-economic conditions is the most critical."

Respondents ended on the note that training was the most critical component needed to work with staff regarding disproportionality.

Translation and Implications on Assumptions

This primary data gave the most insight into where, when, and the need for Sacramento County to actively pursue working on the problem of disproportionality. Respondents varied on the factors and accountability; however there seemed to be clear sense of concern. The respondents also exposed that the County has not responded to the issue of disproportionality in a public or transparent way. As some respondents were identifying ways they thought were issue acknowledgement, it is clear that the County has not responded with a "call to action", regarding disproportionality. A few respondents did not seem to legitimize the issue of disproportionality as a child welfare issue but more as an issue of poverty for black people.

The key informant interviewees gave a breadth of insight considering that most of the staff are veteran CWS workers. Respondents could not identify training that specifically helps with dealing with families of other cultures. (None of the respondents were culture specific workers.) It also noted that the respondents can make a connection between the decision making processes as tools to combat the overrepresentation of black children. Most of the respondents were not aware the major legislation

regulations that assisted or impacted disproportionality. Lastly a few respondents replied they would assist in spreading the message and doing what they could do to impact the necessary changes.

CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

As stated in Dougherty's piece (2003), data can show areas in which outcomes are not being met or are different for individual groups. The gathered information has assisted in understanding the climate, the gaps, the tools, and the issue of disproportionality in Sacramento County. Disproportionality is an issue in every state across the country. The disproportionality of black children plagues 48 of the 50 states. California is unfortunately plagued by the over representation of black children and Sacramento County is no exception. As the state has not adopted a strategy, this research and conducted studies serve as the first step into Sacramento County embarking onto a strategic plan on disproportionality.

Disproportionality is an issue of much concern for Sacramento County CWS. This paper has conducted three studies, reviewed a host of literature, surveyed other counties to evaluate the current issue and begun to create preliminary recommendations and remedies. This paper started with three initial assumptions:

1. Assumption #1: Organizational gaps are the major contributors to disproportionality in Sacramento County CWS.
2. Assumption #2: Utilization of effective decision-making tools by social workers will reduce the over-representation of black children within Sacramento County CWS.
3. Assumption #3: Increased cultural competence of social workers will reduce the over-representation of black children within Sacramento County CWS.

The first assumption is heavily supported through the literature and through all three

conducted studies. Sacramento County CWS has organizational gaps in understanding the issue of over representation, the data to the issue, solutions to the issue, and the legitimizing of the issue and more. Through the key informant interviews it was uncovered that there are gaps in the amount and quality of resources the county has invested in to support decision making. There are also a host of untouched resources available in policy and practice to support social workers and staff engaging with families of various cultures.

Throughout the research and the studies it was uncovered that assumption #2 and #3 will take more time and research to prove its validity. As piloted and shared by other counties, such as San Francisco and Kings, decision-making tools can be effective. The key informant interviews revealed that workers are minimally utilizing the decision-making tools, as well as are not fully educated on the use and purpose.

The interviews also revealed that cultural competence is a very vague concept. Sacramento County has deemed that culturally competent is a cultural worker is a social worker that passes a culture specific test. Only a small percentage of Sacramento County social workers are considered culturally competent workers by definition. This is indeed a systemic and organizational gap in that by definition and practice most workers are lacking in validated cultural competence. From the interviews, there seemed to be gaps in available cultural training and services to black children. There also seemed to be differences in opinion by social workers for the reasons why attention should be given to the disproportionality of black children. Participants in the key informant interviews also showed a lack of understanding of the economic, social, and environmental needs of black children.

Through the three assumptions there are areas in need of further research and next steps needed to implement a viable strategic plan.

Recommendations

Sacramento County is implementing new initiatives and methods to mitigate the affects and effects of disproportionality as well as the overrepresentation of black children. The current research has exposed many areas in need of improvement as well as Sacramento CWS social worker perceptions. If Sacramento County CWS is interested in achieving better services for black children, better treatment, and less children in the system, next steps with implementation are needed to make way through an epidemic size issue.

Through viewing the research and conclusions the following are recommendations are pulled from the data.

1. A firm commitment is needed to validate disproportionality as a major issue in Sacramento.

The data from the key informant interview exposed the organizational gap that the County has not acknowledged or launched a full scale Campaign mitigating the impact of current disproportionality and reducing the rate of black youth within the system. Both San Francisco and Kings provided insight on how successful a commitment through transparency and education can provide agency consciousness and action.

2. Educate staff and community of policies and guidelines that impact disproportionality rates.

The data showed that involving the community is key to a successful strategy

against disproportionality. It was clear that the staff was in need of education on disproportionality, working with black families, and current policy that assist in better serving families through decision making.

3. Provide education to social workers on how and why to implement decision-making tools as practice.

Sacramento has employed many new practices to assist social workers and supervisors in the decision-making process. Staff need to have further training on how to use these processes as tools for better engagement and services to their clients. The processes also serve as a tool to provide equity in treatment to all families. The data uncovered that workers were unsure how and why to use the tools. Workers perceived the processes to be an added burden rather than tools.

4. Provide continual training to social workers that include cultural diversity training.

Sacramento County lacked a standardized training and refresher training for all staff on cultural diversity. Participants in the key informant interviews could not identify any mandatory training by name as a group. The key informant interviews also identified that workers would be receptive and were desiring additional training.

5. Strengthen relationships.

The data pulled from San Francisco, Kings, and other counties embarking on strategies dealing with disproportionality, have showed that increased and positive relationships with labor, community, stakeholders, parents, children,

foster parents, supervisors, management, and social workers assist in fixing the issue. This recommendation includes establishing a committee made up of all the aforementioned to brainstorm and conduct further research.

6. Further Research

This paper has served as introduction for Sacramento County. There is a need for further research within each of the three assumptions. Research has to move beyond the administrative level. An increased quantity of interviewed workers would assist in a better look into social worker perceptions. This study was primarily qualitative; a quantitative study would benefit Sacramento by creating benchmarks for improvement. Further research is needed to survey other counties and their practices that they are employing to undertake disproportionality. There is also need for research on other racial groups, such as the Native American and Asian populations to understand the under representation. An in-depth study of the quality of services at each individual juncture in CWS will also help provide a road map of what each program needs to employ as a strategy.

As Sacramento County begins to employ various decision-making techniques, provide additional cultural diversity training, and rally the workforce the number of black children in the system can be decreased. This research has given a glimpse of perceptions, research of literature and other areas, as well as a first comprehensive look into the issue of disproportionality. Sacramento County CWS will be able to make strides once the issue is taken on by management, implemented and embraced by social workers. The findings have shed light that both practice and policy need to reflect a

sincere effort to mitigate over representation of black children and increase equity in service.

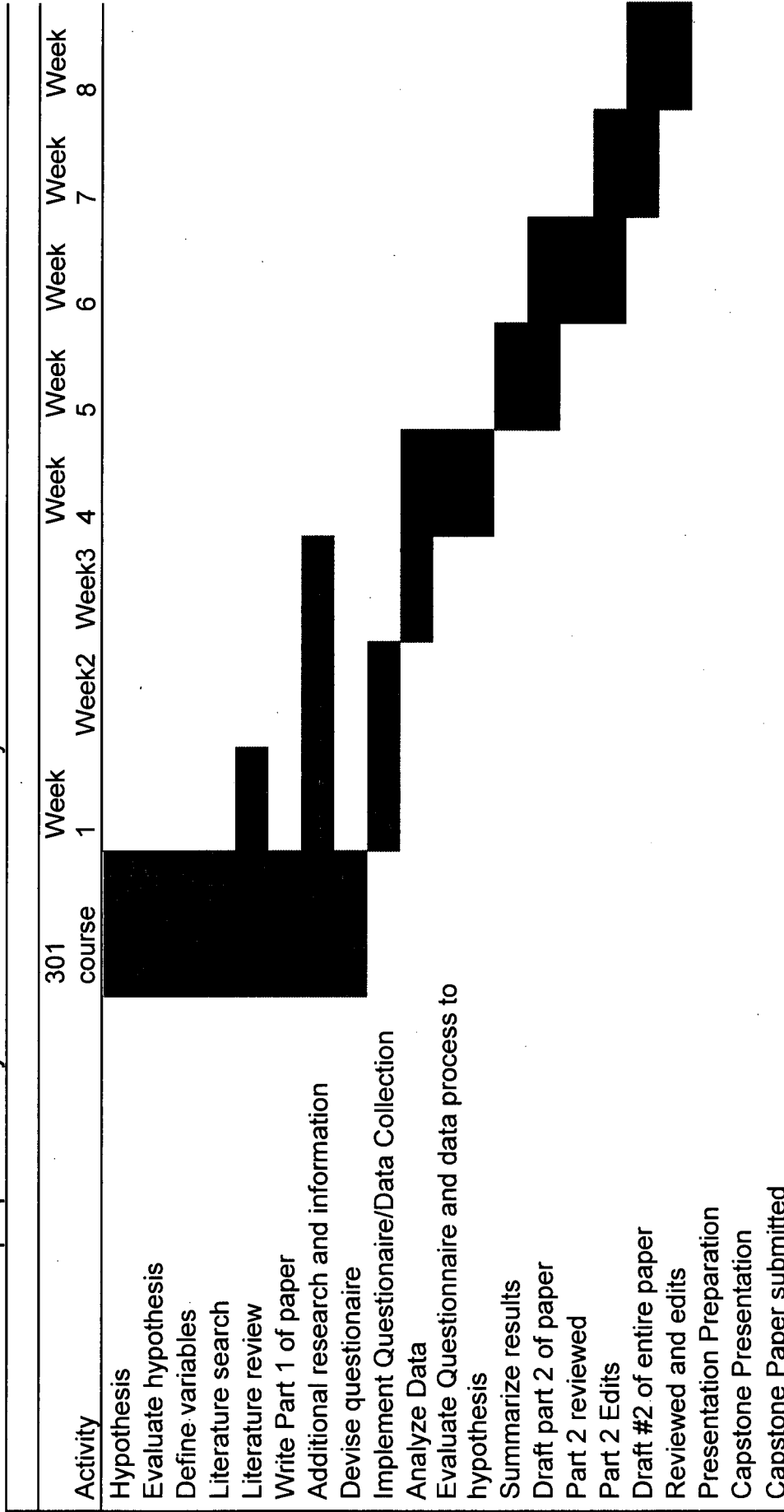
REFERENCES

- Ards, S., Chung, C., & Myers, S. (1999). The effects of sample selection bias on racial differences in child abuse reporting. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 23 (12)
- Barth, R.P., Goodhand, J., & Dickinson, N.S. (2000). Reconciling competing values in the delivery of child welfare services under ASFA, MEPA, and community-based child protection. In *Changing Paradigms of Child Welfare Practice: Responding to Opportunities and Challenges*. Washington D.C.
- Barth, R.P., & Miller, J.M. (2001) *Children of color in the child welfare system: toward explaining their disproportionate involvement in comparison to their numbers in the general population*. University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, School of Social Work
- Bent-Goodley, T. (2003). *African American social workers and social policy*. New York: The Haworth Press.
- Billingsley, A. & Giovannoni, J. (1972) *Children of the storm: Black children and American child welfare*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich
- Catalyst for Kids (2004), *Research Report Racial Disproportionality in Child Welfare System, King County*.
- Chasnoff, I. J., Landress, H.J., & Barrett, M.E. (1990). The prevalence of illicit drug and alcohol use during pregnancy and discrepancies in mandatory reporting in Pine County, Florida. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 322 1202-1206
- Child Welfare League of America-National Data Analysis System
http://ndas.cwla.org/research_info/specialtopic1a.asp. Retrieved December 15, 2007.
- Child Welfare Systems, Child Management Systems (CWS/CMS) database.
- Day, D (1979). *The adoption of black children: Counteracting institutional discrimination*. Lexington, MA: DC Heath.
- Derezotes, D & Poertner, J. (2001). *Factors contributing to the overrepresentation of African American children in the child welfare system: What we know and don't know*. Urbana-Champaign, IL: Children and Family Research Center
- Dougherty, S. (2003). *Practices that mitigate the effects of racial/ethnic disproportionality in the child welfare system*. Casey Family Programs.

- Drake, B. & Pandey, S. (1996). Understanding the relationship between neighborhood poverty and specific types of child maltreatment. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 20:1003-1018.
- English, R.A., & Brown, A.W. (1997). Education and preparation of a culturally competent workforce. *Removing risks from children: shifting the paradigm*. Silver Spring, MD: Beckham House Publishers
- Green, Michelle Y. (2002). Minorities as Majority: Disproportionality in Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice. *Children's Voice Article*, November/December 2002. 1-5 Retrieved November 20, 2007.
- Goerge, R & Lee, B. (2005). The entry of children from the welfare system into foster care: Differences by race. *Race matters in child welfare: The overrepresentation of African American children in the system*. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America
- Hill, Robert. (2006). Synthesis of Research on Disproportionality in Child Welfare: An Update Casey-CSSP Alliance for Racial Equity in the Child Welfare System, October 2006.
- Katz, L. (1999), Concurrent Planning: benefits and pitfalls. *Child Welfare*, 78
- McRoy, R. (2004) The color of child welfare. *The color of social policy*. Alexandria, VA: Council on Social Work Education.
- Safe Measures Database, data retrieved throughout 2007-2008.
- United States Government Accountability Office. (1994). Foster Care: parental drug abuse has alarming impact on young children.
- United States Government Accountability Office. (2007). African American Children in Foster Care: Additional HHS assistance needed to help states reduce the proportion in care.
- University of California, Berkeley, Center for Social Services Research
Website: www.cssr.berkeley.edu
- Wells, K. & Tracey, E. (1996) Reorienting intensive family preservation services in relation to public child welfare practice. *Child Welfare*, 75:662-692

APPENDIX A

Gantt chart for Disproportionality in Sacramento County CWS



Appendix B
Disprop. Questionnaire #1

ID# _____

1. Race/ Ethnicity:

White/Caucasian

Black/ African

Asian

Hispanic

Native American

2. What type of home does the child reside in? _____

3. How old is the child? _____

4. What is the child's gender? _____

5. What date was the TDM? _____

6. What program is the child in?

Family Reunification

Permanency Services

Guardianship

Adoptions

5. What was the reason for the TDM?

Imminent Risk of Placement

Exit from Placement

Potential Placement Move

Other _____

6. What was the recommendation, and did the social worker follow the recommendation from the TDM?

[Empty response box for question 6]

7. What engagement (culturally competent) activities were used to find homes?

[Empty response box for question 7]

8. Additional Notes:

[Empty response box for question 8]

Appendix C
Survey Monkey Interview Tool

- 1. How long have you worked for Sacramento County?**
- 2. In what are of service have you primarily served?**
- 3. What is your perception of disproportionality in Sacramento County CPS?
(Why do you think African American children are over-represented in
CPS?)**
- 4. What has the department done to improve the delivery of services to African
American children and families?**
- 5. What types of services, programs, or policies do you think are necessary to
reduce the disproportional number of African American children in the
system?**
- 6. What type of training have you received or does the county provide that
assists you in working with minority children and families?**
- 7. How have federal and state policies such as AB636, Multi-Ethnic Placement
Act (MEPA), and the Adoption and Safe Families Act changed the way in
which your agency serves African American families?**
- 8. As a child welfare worker, what do you do to increase the effectiveness of
your work with minority families?**
- 9. What tools assist you in decision-making for all families that you serve?**
- 10. What else do you feel is important in reducing the disproportional number of
African American children in the system?**

Disproportionality: The Epidemic

A look at the over-representation of black children within Sacramento County Child Welfare Services

Zene Scott
EMPA 396 Spring, 2008
Dr. Joaquin Gonzalez

Extreme Disproportion

California:
Black Children

7.5% in population

31.0 % in Foster Care

Race	% in Population	% in Foster Care
Black	7.5%	31.0%
White	~65%	~15%

Sacramento Disproportion

Black Children

14.5 % in Population

39% in Foster Care

Race	% in Population	% in Foster Care
Black	14.5%	39%
White	~65%	~15%
Hispanic	~20%	~46%

Causal factors

- Parent and Family Risk factors
- Community Risk Factors
- Organizational and Systemic Risk Factor

Assumptions

Organizational gaps are the major contributors to disproportionality in Sacramento County CWS

Utilization of effective decision-making tools by social workers will reduce the over-representation of black children within Sacramento County CWS



Increased cultural competence of social workers will reduce the over-representation of black children within Sacramento County CWS

Methodology

- Case Evaluation Guides
 - 40 cases reviewed
- Key Informant Interviews
 - 11 on utilization of decision-making tools
 - 10 on overall perceptions of disproportionality (still open)
- Data Extraction

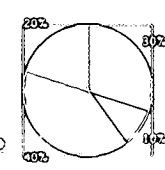
Organizational Gaps

Agency Identification
Agency Communication/Call to Action
Causal Factors
Agency responsibility
High Caseload






Organizational Gaps

What has the department done to improve services for African American children and families?



<input type="checkbox"/>	Nothing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mandatory Training
<input type="checkbox"/>	Certified SW
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Engaged



Social Worker Decision Making

Effective?

Team Decision-Making	7
Family Group Decision-Making	6
Supervisor Input	4
Differential Response	3
Other Workers Input	2
Case Planning	1
	0

NH SH VH EH



TDM
DR
Staff

Cultural Competence



Increased?

Sensitivity Training
Fair and Equity Training
African-American Cultural Worker Management
"none"
"Treat families with respect"

Recommendations

1. A firm commitment is needed to validate disproportionality as a major issue in Sacramento.
2. Educate staff and community of policies and guidelines that impact disproportionality rates.
3. Provide education to social workers on how and why to implement decision-making tools as practice.
4. Train staff on use of available decision-making tools.
5. Provide continual training to social workers that include cultural diversity training.
6. Strengthen relationships w/ community partners and providers.

Thanks Jay.
Please let me know
if you need any
add'l doc regarding
the funeral I attended.
Zenal Scott
9162011347

Jay,
Enclosed are 2
copies of my final
captive paper. Thank
you for your regard of
my situation.