

January 2025 Newsletter**CFRC Releases New Report on Racial Disproportionality
in the Illinois Child Welfare System**

The Children and Family Research Center is pleased to release the ***FY2024 Report in Response to HB2914*** and an ***Executive Summary***. Illinois House Bill 2914 (HB2914) requires the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services to submit an annual report regarding racial disproportionalities for children and families involved in the Illinois child welfare system. The report examines racial disproportionalities in key outcomes including investigations and indicated investigations for each type of abuse and neglect, protective custodies, children involved in safety plans, investigations screened by the court for each maltreatment type, substitute care entries, placement settings (kinship, traditional, and specialized foster homes, congregate care), lengths of stay in foster care, and permanency outcomes (reunification, adoption, and guardianship). This year's report analyzes the data at both the state and sub-regional levels.

The findings of the report pinpoint several areas of concern:

- At the state level, Black children were consistently over-represented across all stages of investigations, with a racial disproportionality index (RDI) of 2.11 for investigations, 2.30 for protective custodies, and 2.22 for substitute care entries. White children were proportionately represented and Latinx children were under-represented for all investigation indicators at the state level.
- When the investigation indicators were examined by the type of maltreatment allegations, the amount of over-representation for Black children varies considerably, with the highest RDI for investigations involving lack of supervision/lock out (RDI = 2.61). Conversely, White and Latinx children were proportionately or under-represented in most categories.
- At the subregion level, the Aurora subregion showed the highest disproportionality for Black children in protective custodies (RDI = 4.15), followed by Rockford (RDI = 3.16) and Champaign (RDI = 2.87). Other subregions, such as Marion, displayed lower but still significant disproportionality (RDI = 1.96).
- For the placement type indicators, state-level findings revealed that Black children were slightly under-represented in kinship foster care (RDI = 0.95) but over-represented in specialized foster care (RDI = 1.28) and congregate care (RDI = 1.21). White and Latinx children were proportionately represented in most placement types, except congregate care, where they were under-represented.
- The length-of-stay indicators measure the amount of time children spend in substitute care before achieving permanence. At the state level, Black children were under-represented among children who remained in care for less than four years and over-represented among children who remained in care for 60 months or more

(RDI = 1.34). Conversely, White children were over-represented among those exiting care within shorter timeframes, such as less than 12 months (RDI = 1.10) and under-represented among those who remained in care 60 months or more (RDI = 0.70).

- The permanency indicators assess the likelihood of children exiting substitute care through reunification, adoption, or guardianship. State-level results showed that Black children were under-represented in achieving permanence through reunification (RDI = 0.87), adoption (RDI = 0.85), and all three types of permanence combined (RDI = 0.89).

The report concludes with a list of recommended actions that the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services can take to address the over-representation of Black children in the child welfare system.

Take a Look at the Most Downloaded CFRC Reports of 2024

As we begin 2025, we invite you to take a look back and explore our most popular products released in 2024. You can find these reports and briefs, along with the many others we published, in the [CFRC's publication library](#).

Thank you so much for engaging with CFRC and our work in 2024. We look forward to continuing to build rigorous and relevant research with partners in 2025 and sharing what we learn.

1. Racial Disproportionality in the Illinois Child Welfare System: FY2023 Report in Response to HB2914

This legislatively mandated report examines racial disproportionalities in the Illinois child welfare system during FY2023 in key outcomes including investigations and indicated investigations for each type of abuse and neglect, protective custodies, children involved in safety plans, investigations screened by the court for each maltreatment type, substitute care entries, placement settings, lengths of stay in foster care, and permanence.

2. Examining Regional Trends in Disproportionality Among Black Children in the Illinois Child Welfare System

This research brief presents results from the 2023 *BH* Monitoring Report on seven-year trends in the over-representation of Black children in the child welfare system for Illinois as a whole and for each Department of Children and Family Services administrative region.

4. Conditions of Children in or at Risk of Foster Care in Illinois: FY2023 Monitoring Report of the B.H. Consent Decree

The FY2023 monitoring report uses child welfare administrative data through December 31, 2022, to describe the conditions of children in or at risk of foster care in Illinois. Following an introductory chapter, the results are presented in four chapters that examine critical child welfare outcomes, including child safety, continuity and stability in care, legal permanence, and racial disproportionality.

5. Caregivers of Black Children and Youth in Care: Their Experiences of Permanency Processes, Adoption, and Guardianship, Report of Findings from a Survey of Caregivers

The Illinois caregiver survey was designed to capture caregivers' perspectives on the permanency process, adoption, and guardianship. Caregivers shared their views on the communications they received about permanency options, the barriers that complicated and delayed permanency for a child in their care, their perspective on

3. Exploring the Role of Guardianship in Effective and Equitable Permanency: Policy Context and Lessons Learned

This report describes the policy context and lessons learned from a multi-component study of guardianship as a permanency option for children and youth in foster care in Illinois. The report references findings from four empirical research reports. It also reviews the history of guardianship in Illinois, and national policy that influences use of guardianship. It discusses implications of this research for policy and practice. Finally, it presents recommendations for improvements in permanency services and for new research.

racial inequities in the permanency process, and the support they would find helpful in caring for the Black youth in their care. The findings from this study suggest five strategies for improving outcomes for children in care, especially Black children.

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