Engaging Communities in Taking a Stand for Children and Families

Leadership Development and Strategic Planning in the Texas Child Welfare System

May 2002–April 2007 | Casey Family Programs Texas State Strategy and Texas Child Protective Services

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The mission of Texas Child Protective Services is to protect children and to act in the children's best interest. To seek active involvement of the children's parents and other family members to solve problems that lead to abuse and neglect.

www.dfps.state.tx.us

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Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter.

~ Dr Martin Luther King, Jr.

The work documented in the following pages of this chronicle reflects a passion for addressing disproportionality that has grown within my inner being for the past 10+ years. Throughout my career, this passion has been fueled both by personal experiences outside of the system and by my experiences working in the system. I have used every opportunity to raise the difficult issues in all areas that might contribute to a greater awareness of this ugly issue and its impact on children and families.

Almost three years ago, I was at the peak of one of the most exciting times in my career. I was part of a movement in my home community that would address issues that were contributing to African American families coming to the attention of the child welfare system in Jefferson County. We had the support of County and City officials, other state agencies, community organizations, the faith-based community, university partners, parents, youth, and residents of the target community.

The commitment level among the staff and our partners was very high, and we were on our way to building new practice models for addressing disproportionality in Child Protective Services. I was so excited because the target site was the community I grew up in—a community that once thrived. I so wanted to be a part of a revitalizing effort for the families in this area.

It was during the height of this work in April 2004 when the opportunity to become the Assistant Commissioner for the Child Protective Services was presented to me. It was difficult but timely and felt so right! I would be given the opportunity to take my passion and excitement for addressing disproportionality to the State level. Within one month, I was at the table with Carolyne Rodriguez to add this topic to the Texas State Strategy work with Casey Family Programs. She was so willing and ready for this work in Texas. Ralph Bayard, who leads the Casey Family Programs' Office of Diversity, and Gloria Burgess, who directs Casey's Organizational Learning Alliance, have been invaluable in their technical assistance and facilitation of leadership development of CPS leaders and managers in support of this work in Texas. We are most grateful for their efforts.

And so here we are about three years later. I could not be more proud of our accomplishments and the difference our work is making in the lives of children and families. I am equally proud of the Texas leadership team and their commitment to addressing disproportionality through our vision of Children First: Protected and Connected and our values of Respect for culture; Inclusiveness of families, youth, and community; Integrity in decision making; Compassion for all, and Commitment to reducing disproportionality.

I would like to sum up our commitment to this work in Texas with a quote from Robert Kennedy:

> *Each time a man stands up for an ideal, acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope. And crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples can create a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.*

Count on hearing from Texas on this issue for many years to come!

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Introduction

Children First: Protected and Connected
A Story to Behold

Not so very long ago, there was a community of people who held a particular belief. It began with their village storyteller, their champion, who planted this seed of belief where it flowered among its own. Eventually, the wind discovered its progeny of seedlings and took them to other places. With time, the whole realm understood and championed the belief: That their children would be first, would be protected, would be connected.

Four years ago, Texas Child Protective Services (CPS) knew it had a mission to fulfill. Children of color were overrepresented in the child welfare system, and a long process lay ahead for CPS to improve outcomes for youth and families. Early on, CPS realized that the problem of overrepresentation, labeled *disproportionality*, was embedded in child welfare practice, policy, and procedures, and that systems improvements from the beginning to the end of the child welfare process were necessary.

The CPS Leadership Team, in partnership with Casey Family Programs' Texas State Strategy team, developed a vision and values to guide their work throughout the child welfare system. With time, all of the child welfare system would become focused on cultural change by creating regional pilots to test and implement tools, curriculum, and practice models. Staff training, encompassing skills as well as cultural beliefs, became imperative to cultural change. The goal has been to move from regional to statewide implementation of sustainable systems improvements for improving outcomes for youth and families.

By 2006, milestones that four years ago seemed distant dreams are now fulfilled, and the remaining milestones are reachable. A group of incredibly devoted individuals met deadline after deadline, accepted change that sometimes was emotionally and physically difficult to implement, and made adjustments to their pathways, all with the endpoint solid and unchanging: *Children First: Protected and Connected*.

We must have a vision that says everyone is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect, that children should not grow up in foster care, that, as social workers, we can work to change the factors that contribute to poverty and disparate outcomes for African American families and children.

—Joyce James, Assistant Commissioner, CPS, Texas, in her Keynote Address to Black History Month, February 2006

Faith, determination, and perseverance can dislodge the mightiest walls of oppression and bring back humanity to an impoverished society!

—Deborah Green, State Disproportionality Director, CPS, Texas

The Contradictions in Child Welfare

1.1 DISPROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION

Two facts reveal a contradiction at the heart of our child welfare system:

> There is *no* difference between races in the likelihood that a parent will abuse or neglect a child.
>
> There is a great difference between races in the likelihood that a child will be removed from home and placed in foster care.

Thus, the problem is obvious: Families and children of color often enter the child welfare system at a different rate than Caucasians. They also have a different trajectory through the system than Caucasians.

Across the nation, children of color are disproportionately represented in the child welfare system, both in terms of numbers of children coming into the system and the disparity of outcomes for those currently in the system. Texas data show that this disparity in outcomes exists across each stage of service including the phases of investigation, substantiation, removal, placement, and emancipation: African American children in particular stay in foster homes longer, have more placements while in care, receive fewer services while in out-of-home care, have lower high school graduation rates, and leave the system less prepared for adulthood than their Caucasian peers. (See Appendix A.) In terms of personal identity, survival skills, and a host of other factors, race has profound implications for individual success, including how we keep future generations out of the child welfare system.

1.2 SOURCES OF THE PROBLEM

Before we initiate change to address a problem of this magnitude, we must look at the problem's sources so that we can lay the foundation of common understanding. First we ask questions; then we must be willing to look introspectively and do business differently in response to the findings:

> What are the systemic factors in child welfare and other systems that allow the problem to continue to be perpetuated and, most importantly, how can we solve the problem?
>
> What role does institutional racism play in keeping disproportionality in place in child welfare practice?

Recognizing we have years of systematic racism to undo takes wisdom; implementing and making concerted positive steps to amend past practices takes courage.

—Michelle B. Amrine, Tarrant County Disproportionality Advisory Committee Member, Ft. Worth, TX

Disproportionality is not just about the number of minority children in our system being higher than their numbers in the general population—the effects of disproportionality impact connections, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and youth. Disproportionality is about maintaining connections that children and youth need—community connections, cultural connections, and sibling and family connections when possible.

—Jacque Seale, Regional Director, CPS, Austin

…As a leader, a white leader, I have the opportunity AND the responsibility to be a part of the solution as we work to remediate the disproportionality in child welfare that impacts every aspect of our work: the children and families we serve, our community, and our working relationships with each other…I try and work on the problem of disproportionality daily: I talk about race and racism, learn about the scope of the disparity, look at my decision-making, and model addressing the issue directly and constantly.

—Elizabeth Kromrei, Director of Staff Services, CPS, Texas

Disproportionality, the condition of overrepresentation and disparity in the treatment of children of color in the child welfare system, is embedded in the structure of our system, in administrative and legislative policy, in practice, and in individual relationships between workers and their clients. It has its roots in historical conditions, and it arises from factors such as poverty, education levels, income, household composition, and lack of resources. Poverty alone is a strong predictor of whether a child will be removed from the home. More more than 60 percent of 2004 child removals in Texas involved families with annual incomes of $10,000 or less.

But delving further into the roots reveals that individual, cultural, and institutional racism together helped to create the conditions and factors that manifest themselves as disproportionality in the child welfare system.[1]

DEFINITIONS

Individual Racism: The conforming of all individuals to one race's way of life so that the racist behavior can be maintained

Cultural Racism: The imposing of one race's way of life, or culture, on another by way of creating cultural and political institutions that sanction dominance and oppression

Institutional Racism: Race prejudice and power embedded into the culture of an organization (the institution)

All three forms of racism manifest in the child welfare system to create fundamental inequalities embedded in every level of the system. Decisions and biases lead to negative outcomes for individuals of color. Poorer families are often scrutinized more closely because they are assumed to be at higher risk for incidents of abuse and neglect. Value systems frequently are imposed that do not necessarily meet the cultural needs of a family. The system often fails to pay sufficient attention to the importance of extended families and communities in caring for children.

[1] Definitions from Chisom, R. & Washington, M. (1997). *Undoing racism: A philosophy of international social change.* New Orleans, LA: The People's Institute Press.

1.3 THE DATA GUIDE CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE

According to data collected by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) for Fiscal Years 2003 and 2004, African American children are overrepresented in the child welfare system. This principle has guided work within Child Protective Services (CPS) towards the goal of improving outcomes for children who move through all stages of the system:

> African American children are almost twice as likely to be the subject of a child abuse or child neglect report. In 2003, there were 55.6 reports per 1000 African American children, 32.2 per 1000 Anglo children, and 32.1 per 1000 Hispanic children. In 2004, the numbers were 65 reports per 1000 African American children, 35.5 per 1000 Anglo children, and 34.6 per 1000 Hispanic children.
>
> Generally, about 25 percent of these reports are substantiated, but even adjusting for a much larger percentage of reports concerning African American children, there is still a disproportionate representation in the substantiation stage of investigations.
>
> African American children were almost 2.5 times more likely to be removed from home. Statewide, according to a substantiated CPS investigation in 2003 and 2004, about 4.2 per 1000 African American children were removed from their homes, about 1.7 per 1000 Hispanic children were removed, and about 1.6 per 1000 Anglo children were removed.
>
> Further studies have revealed that African American families are less likely to receive in-home family services to help prevent child removal, and, once in the system, African American children spend more time in the system.

I have been a social worker for over 26 years. I can honestly say that each year my passion is fueled by what I witness both inside and outside in regard to the issues facing families of today and our response to those issues. I take responsibility for helping to create the systems we have in place for serving children in the Texas child welfare system. Every day, I realize more and more that the answers to issues confronting families must be addressed by the families themselves in collaboration with child welfare staff and community partners. We cannot continue to work in isolation from those whose lives we impact so profoundly. Families and children should be better off as a result of our interventions in their lives. We should not focus on what is easy but on what is right for families and children.

—Joyce James

1.4 DATA-DRIVEN PLANNING

Texas CPS's work in addressing disproportionality is directly tied to statewide and regional data that track and measure child and family outcomes and the disparities of those outcomes for African American children. Data analysis is vital throughout the planning and implementation phases. Particularly during the early planning stages, data analysis guided CPS and Casey Family Programs to informed identification of problem areas, potential improvements, and changes needed, and a clearer understanding of needed policy changes. Data-driven planning ensures that the actions taken are relevant (both internal to DFPS/CPS and external to the community) and verifies that outcomes are indeed linked to changes in policy or programming.

In my opinion, you cannot separate poverty from institutional racism; they are intertwined.

—Deborah Green

Beyond the Fiscal Year Data Analysis of 2003–2004, other data indicators include:

- Number of intakes assigned for investigation
- Breakdown of the source of referrals (schools, police, doctors, neighbors, etc.)
- Number of children served in family-based safety services
- Findings of allegations in families in completed investigations
- Types of abuse/neglect of alleged victims in completed investigations
- Findings of completed investigations: Reason to Believe (RTB), Moved, UTD (Unable to Determine), Ruled Out
- Location of children in protective custody (e.g.., in foster care more than 2 years, in foster care 2 years or less, in relatives' homes, in adoptive homes, with own family, other)
- Grouping by age (percentage of children under 2 years, 3 to 5 years, 6 to 9 years, 10 to 13 years, and 14 to 17 years)
- Gender (# of girls, # of boys, and percentages)

Further analysis of FY 2004 data using the multivariate regression technique showed that poverty is a strong predictor in whether a child is removed from a home, and it remains a factor in disproportionality because poverty rates are higher among African American families. (See Appendix A.)

1.5 PLANNING: STEPS TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM

CPS and Casey Family Programs addressed several themes early on in their goal of improving outcomes for children and families:

Cultural shift: There must be a fundamental cultural shift in order to work differently that we have in the past. There must be support for an ongoing discussion of race and disproportionality. People at all levels of service must embrace a changed cultural view of race, empowerment, cultural differences, and other issues for children of color. This internal cultural shift must also be focused on ensuring the new culture of fairness across all aspects of DFPS work.

Leadership development: A strong effective leadership component must be set up that is committed to facilitating the cultural change. This will include acquiring leadership skills, supporting staff with cultural change, and taking leadership concepts into the field.

Training programs: Staff is to be trained in new practice techniques as well as in the ideas of cultural change.

Vision and values: A new set of vision and values must be established that integrates all aspects of cultural change.

New practice tools, curriculum, and models: The child rescue–focused system that currently exists must change to a family-centered system of practice.

Systems improvements: We must ensure that changes in policies, practices, programs, and services within and among state-level institutions, communities, and service and resource providers support a sustainable cultural shift.

Practice/Pilot programs: Given the size of the state of Texas and its numerous regions, a phased-in implementation approach will make the work more manageable. Regional pilot programs can be tested and implemented before statewide implementation.

Stakeholder involvement: Constituents including alumni from foster care, youth in care, birth families involved in the CPS system, and kinship caregivers, as well as community members and natural leaders, service and resource providers, and other stakeholders must be included in the process of planning and implementation.

Data-driven practice: This practice ensures that the actions taken are relevant (both internally to DFPS/CPS and externally to the community) and verifies that outcomes are indeed linked to changes in policy or programming. A strong focus on measurable outcomes underscores pilot activities.

My working with disproportionality has enabled me to focus on what has been done, what is being done, and what needs to be done regarding those people who look like me. I am now a part of the solution. This is my resolve.

—Leora Olorunnisomo, Arlington Regional Disproportionality Steering Committee, Dallas, TX

Our Process for Change

2.1 THE HISTORY OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND SYSTEMIC CHANGE: 1996–2004

As early as 1996, the Child Protective Services (CPS) staff in the Beaumont, TX region headed by Joyce James, along with the School of Social Work at Stephen F. Austin University, conducted research to explore factors related to the high proportion of African American children in CPS in this specific region. Later referred to as *disproportionality*, this overrepresentation came to the forefront as an issue to which CPS and community stakeholders would dedicate themselves.

In 1998, CPS began collaborating with regional universities and local community partners in Port Arthur. In 2002, further research was conducted by Lamar University to determine a specific community site where work to address disproportionality would begin, resulting in an ongoing relationship between that university and CPS. In May 2002, under the direction of Joyce James, then Regional Director of TDPRS (Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services), the first community meeting was held in Jefferson County in the Beaumont Region to establish a Project HOPE (Helping Our People Excel) Center, an asset-based program in Port Arthur dedicated to strengthening the community; this became the prototype for the later pilot projects to begin in late 2004.

In 2002, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS), formerly the TDPRS, participated in a required federal Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) that examined various components of the Texas child welfare system. This review identified the need for improvements in the area of formal kinship care programs, specifically those centered around financial assistance, training, and other support for kinship families.

In July 2002, TDFPS and Casey Family Programs created a collaborative called the Texas State Strategy (TSS). Its charter was to address challenges in the areas of kinship care and transition services for youth aging out of the foster care system. A TSS Leadership Team was soon formed, uniting members of both agencies through which a statewide systems improvement strategy would be designed and implemented. This team is co-led by Joyce James, DFPS Assistant Commissioner for CPS, and Carolyne Rodriguez, Director, Texas State Strategy, Casey Family Programs.

In mid-2003, the CPS Leadership Team began addressing systems improvements in various areas of child welfare. As a large management/leadership group, the CPS Leadership Team members include CPS administrative staff at the regional director and program administrator levels, with some additional administra-

Project HOPE

Opening Day Ceremony

First, we must have the courage to go forth and become dominant leaders who are filled with strength, resiliency, and courage.

—Joyce James, in her Keynote Address to Black History Month, February 2006

This is an incredibly committed leadership team with amazing longevity, institutional memory, and a history of practices that provide an amazing legacy for those who follow.

—Carolyne Rodriguez, Senior Director, Texas State Strategy, Casey Family Programs, Austin, during the CPS Leadership Team Meeting, January 2005

While many become overwhelmed and immobilized with institutional and structural inequities in the United States, Joyce James has had the wisdom to effectively tackle them head on. What is needed is courageous, strong, sincere, visionary, and accountable leadership that can bring hope and promise and people together to change our institutional inequities and disproportionality. Joyce, as an accountable leader, has the skills and abilities to bring out the leadership qualities in others to carry on the work. Joyce has done more to tackle disproportionality than anyone else

I have met in my 30 years of undoing racism. She gives me hope to carry on my work.

—Diana Dunn
The People's Institute Leadership Team and Core Trainer, The People's Institute. New Orleans

tive staff in specialized roles, as well as State Office administrators. Casey Family Programs is fortunate to be a part of this leadership team's development work. The team brings constituents such as alumni from foster care, birth parents, and community partners into meetings as well. At this time, the leadership team participated in APHSA[2] leadership training and subsequently realized the need to establish the vision and values that would set a strong commitment for the leadership improvements necessary to make fundamental changes in programs.

By April 2004, the success of Project HOPE led Joyce James and her leaders to begin expanding the concepts of the local program statewide. Using a newly designed Community Engagement Model (see Section 2.5), steps were taken to build on the proven Project HOPE model. In May 2004, the first meeting on disproportionality was held, spearheaded by the TSS team. Meanwhile, leaders were compiling data for a reform recommendation for the governor's office. By June and July 2004, the governor issued an order for CPS improvements that addressed disproportionality.

During this same period, Dr. Herschel Smith, president of the Harris County Leadership Council and pastor, invited CPS District Director Randy Joiner to a Town Hall Meeting to voice community concern over the apparent disconnect between CPS's stated goals and their actions. Beginning with this first meeting, the two sides have understood each other better, worked more closely together, and found common solutions to what earlier seemed insurmountable problems.

2 APHSA (American Public Human Services Association) served to help participants analyze performance and seek to improve upon it, along with making leaders out of everyone through creating a sense of ownership in the individual's work.

Harris County Leadership Council
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September 23, 2004

Mr. Randy Joiner
CPS District Director
2525 Murworth
Mail Code: 362-1
Houston, TX 77054

Sent by fax: (713) 394-4157
and regular mail

Dear Mr. Joiner:

Our African-American families have been torn apart by CPS. Our people will be expressing our grief publicly and collectively and we would like for you to join us.

Speaker of the House Tom Craddick has agreed to join us for a Town Hall Meeting on Thursday, October 14, here in Houston. This event is co-sponsored by Houston Ministers Against Crime and the Harris County Leadership Council.

We would like for you to be a part of the panel that has the ability to make changes and will listen to our African American community that night.

There is no topic of greater interest to black families than our children. Unfortunately, what CPS has dictated as "the best interests of the children" is often "the best interests of CPS." We believe there are solutions and want to voice them from the grassroots level.

This meeting will be hosted by Pastor Cleothus Montgomery's church at 7:00 p.m. in Northeast Houston. The address is:

Northside Missionary Baptist Church
6915 Curry Rd
Houston, TX 77093

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. We would be honored by your presence. Please RSVP by October 8, 2004 so we can let our community know of your interest.

Respectfully,

Dr. Herschel Smith
President

I am truly excited about the opportunities that lie ahead for this leadership team as we continue to work toward changing the fundamental ways in which we do our business with children and families, with our youth and alumni, with other agencies and groups who serve these same children and families.

–Joyce James, Opening Remarks, CPS Leadership Team meeting, January 4-5, 2005

Casey Family Programs believes that there are far too many children in the foster care system. As such, we have established as one of our major goals to reduce the foster care population in this country by 50 percent by the year 2020. This goal can only be achieved through cooperation and partnerships with child welfare jurisdictions, policy makers, and community leaders throughout the country. The State of Texas currently has the fourth largest foster care population in the country. Texas has developed a strong partnership with Casey to achieve, not only the goal of reducing the nation's foster care population, but also reducing the rates of disproportionality and outcome disparities for children of color. Our long-term relationship with Texas' Child Protection Services under the leadership of Assistant Commissioner Joyce James is the foundation from which we can begin to see results.

—David Sanders, Ph.D., Executive Vice President, Systems Improvement, Casey Family Programs

Interview with Dr. Herschel Smith, conducted by Carolyne Rodriguez, Director, Texas State Strategy, Casey Family Programs February 1, 2007

I have been involved in this work for a long time and I have personally not understood what workers/caseworkers go through. They haven't had training, this needs to be emphasized more, and they haven't understood what they are responsible for during investigations and other stages of work in CPS. They have been "living it as they go," trying to make the right decisions. Now, being a part of this work (to address disproportionality), I understand better what they need and what their work really is.

There are high turnover rates, and "being on the inside" (now) and seeing the issues, I have a better understanding! Prior to the involvement I now have, people were calling me and I was always taking the role of activist in trying to help them. Now, being "on the other side" has deepened my understanding.

Personally, being on the Houston Disproportionality Advisory Committee and seeing what other agencies do and learning more about policies and procedures, I have learned to see that this (disproportionality) as a systemic problem. It has moved me to "another level" —I do more homework, educate myself, building understanding and deepening my understanding of policies and constraints (of the CPS system.)

The community has to understand the "ins and outs" of this work! They have to understand why workers do what they do. They need to see both sides! It is all about relationships.

"Both sides" need to listen. Formerly, I didn't feel heard; now, they (CPS) are "hearing me out." There is open dialogue!

Casey Family Programs has been the "bridge" to bringing all this "to the table." I appreciate our work together and how Casey is able to bring agencies "to the table."

The Undoing Racism training has helped me so much! I am a better gatekeeper—a gatekeeper that will stand on principles and what I believe in, but I am empowered now; I have tools I didn't have. It has helped me know who I am in this work, and I am now a bridge in the work! I have great opportunities and sharpened approaches and skills. It has helped me to understand to shift my approach—to move from an aggressive to a soft touch approach.

The parents and the young people: they have been the forgotten ones more than anybody. They now (as a result of the work and the training) have confidence and it

has empowered them as well. They are a part of the network. [Regarding Yashica, a birth parent,] I know that people in her neighborhood have real respect for her. Initially they thought she was selling out, but when she did her survey with families and when the article hit the paper [The Houston Chronicle] about her and her family and her involvement in the work, they saw her as empowered; her neighborhood trusted her and the process.

I pray that Casey Family Programs will stay at the table with us. My heart goes out to Joyce for all the work she does and how she does it. I know there will be accountability in this work!

By late 2004, ***Undoing Racism*** training began taking place; during this time, leaders had deliberate conversations about race and racism as a foundation piece for launching disproportionality work in Texas. Leaders realized that the internal culture of CPS must be changed, and their job became one of clarifying expectations for their staff specific to the organization's move to a family-centered practice approach for all stages of CPS service.

In support of successful program change, community support increased; collaboration and better communication (and accountability) were occurring between faith-based organizations, volunteer organizations, and healthcare and other human service systems and organizations. Now, as a statewide initiative, a cross-systems approach is developing to examine policies and procedures and sustainable practice changes focusing on prevention, family support, and services to youth in care. Tools and practice models are being selected and tested in areas of the state with the knowledge gained used to inform broad implementation statewide. Programs such as Project HOPE and the Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) practice model are being employed.

By late 2004, the TSS collaborative selected two Texas CPS regions; Community Advisory Committees were established and planning meetings were held to establish a multiyear plan to address the issue of disproportionality.

When the Texas legislature convened in January 2005, the recommendations that had been outlined by Joyce James and her team six months before were now included in Senate Bill 6. Senate Bill 6 is the major CPS reform bill with multiple mandates for systems improvement in Texas.

In May 2005, CPS launched a broad-based initiative to address disproportionality. Under this initiative, CPS would hire a disproportionality state director and

The Disproportionality Initiative and the Texas State Strategy in 2004 marked the beginning of both a formal statewide strategy and a personal re-awakening for me. Part of that process involved answering a question: Why are some racial/ethnic groups disproportionately represented in the CPS system? Having spent my adult life attempting to solve social problems through research, this question fit me like a glove. Another part involved a re-kindling of my sense of fair play and justice through attending

Undoing Racism training. Not since my youth (in the 1960s, of all things) had I experienced a shared passion for changing a state of affairs that was simply wrong. Throughout this process, these twin motives have made this work a joy.

–Donald J. Baumann, Jr., Ph.D., CAPTA Evaluation Team Lead

This journey with Casey around undoing racism and leadership development has been a difficult and challenging one for me, but not one I would trade. It has actually been more than a journey—more like a passage for me to a better place both as a person and as a leader.

—Linda Wright, Regional Director, CPS, Arlington, TX

specialists, conduct cultural competency training, modify CPS policy as appropriate, and begin to increase prevention activities in areas with high minority populations.

The CPS Leadership Team moved forward after their training to establish their vision and values and to expand their collaborative work with Casey Family Programs. The next sections focus on the Leadership Teams and their accomplishments, with an emphasis on leadership development and systems improvement both internally and externally throughout the child welfare system, with an additional goal of providing inspiration to those leaders who follow.

2.2 TEXAS STATE STRATEGY COLLABORATION:

Leadership Development and Systems Improvement

CPS must be committed to working differently with families to change outcomes and help families be more successful. We have built this relationship with Casey on a shared vision and commitment to examine and address disproportionality, racism, and cultural insensitivity in Texas' Child Welfare System.

—Joyce James

The leadership team collaboration between Texas CPS and Casey Family Programs, named the Texas State Strategy (TSS), was created to serve an overall purpose of systems improvement. Directed by Casey Family Program's Carolyne Rodriguez, its charter began with addressing challenges in the areas of kinship care and foster care transition services across the state of Texas. The expected scope of this strategy is that any recommendation proposed will ultimately have sustainable, statewide impact resulting in 1) improved outcomes for individual youth and families, and 2) a shift in a state child welfare practice, policy, and procedures.

The assembling of the TSS Leadership Team has provided the structure for overseeing the work efforts, determining specific desired outcomes, creating an operational work plan, and monitoring implementation of state strategy activities. The goal is systems improvement that will change broad policies, address structural needs, and initiate and support change within and among state-level institutions, communities, and those who provide services and other supports.

At the inception of the TSS Leadership Team, the context for establishing the state strategy included the following commitments:

- Identification of promising practice models to be piloted statewide
- Strong desire for systems changes to improve practice models available to child welfare staff so that work satisfaction would be enhanced
- Commitment to improved outcomes for youth and families such as sustained kinship care placements, reduced returns to the child welfare system by youth formerly in care, and successful transitions from foster care for young adults

- Support for child welfare leadership in their interest to join with Casey Family Programs in addressing systems change operationally: ultimately to improve performance contracting standards, to achieve uniformity of assessment tools and measures across the residential provider community, and to set common data elements upon which to measure success

The TSS Leadership Team understood that the only way to achieve a level and quality of service that met kinship and transition needs in Texas was to draw upon the expertise of public and private agency staff, alumni from foster care, kinship caregivers, community members, foster parents, and others who understand the current needs and whose services lead to better outcomes. With that in mind, the team formed two subcommittees with broad connections to Texas communities.

The Kinship Care subcommittee's mission and goals included evaluating practice programs nationwide and considering them for implementation, and considering the nonnegotiables for families, for DFPS, and for Casey Family Programs in accepting any model. The Transition subcommittee's mission and goals included commitment to better outcomes for youth, the building of new collaborative relationships, the adoption of new tools, and the accountability of stakeholders.

Later in the process, the Texas State Strategy generated a set of hopes and expectations:

- To work collaboratively with the child welfare system to ensure that systems improvement can be sustained over time in the areas of permanency and transition
- To ensure CPS success in the areas of their accountabilities, i.e., CFSR and legislative mandates
- To ultimately ensure, for the beneficiaries of CPS work (children, youth and families), improved service delivery, client-centered planning processes, and improved outcomes once youth and families leave the CPS system
- To ensure that staff in CPS have best and promising practices in support of their work with children, youth, and families, across all stages of service
- To expand the capacity of consumers (alumni from foster care) across the state to increase their voice with policymakers and other stakeholders in their home communities and at the state level
- To ensure that systems improvements are scalable statewide, replicable by other child welfare jurisdictions, and sustainable by being embedded in CPS policy/practice guidelines, staff training, and QA processes for ongoing monitoring purposes

We believe that Texas' DFPS is providing unprecedented leadership as it attempts to improve the well-being outcomes of all children who are currently in their child welfare system, as well as those children at risk of coming into the system. Not unlike 46x other child welfare jurisdictions in this country, children of color are disproportionately represented in the Texas child welfare system and have poorer outcomes when compared to Caucasian children. Under the leadership of Assistant Commissioner Joyce James, with the great support from Commissioner Cockerell, Texas is taking on the tremendous challenge of trying to reduce disproportionate representation and outcome disparities for children of color within their system. Casey Family Programs is proud to be a partner in this movement.

—Ralph Bayard, Ed.D.,
Senior Director,
Casey Family Programs

Each day we get to make ourselves anew, we get to remake our commitments to our children.

—Dr. Gloria Burgess, Senior Director of Learning, Casey Family Programs, Seattle. Notes from UR Workshop, March 28–29, 2005

Leaders must fly the plane, maintain access to hope, pay attention, and continue to learn.

—Gloria Burgess, January 4–5, 2005

And finally, a set of practice improvement goals were outlined:

- Increased placement of children with their kin, focused on desired improvement outcomes of achieving earlier permanency for children with their families
- Reduced number of youth entering out-of-home care (formal foster care)
- Reduced recidivism specific to children re-entering formal foster care
- The need to more actively involve the family in case planning and decision making
- Reconnections for children with birth family throughout all stages of service within the child protective services process

By 2004, the teams' focus now included disproportionality work, recognized as a central theme to all issues. This inclusion had in it the following: ensuring that all data would be tracked and analyzed by race and ethnicity and that the voice of community partners and constituents would guide and validate the work. Work being done in the Kinship Care and Transition subcommittees of the TSS was supporting a range of CPS initiatives. Pilot programs were being designed to operationalize initiatives in various program areas of CPS.

2.3 OPERATIONALIZING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT

Under the banners of Leadership Development and Systems Improvement came a host of improvement concepts that the CPS Leadership Team embraced. These included establishing a set of vision and values, applying practice tools and models that would operationalize systems improvement work, acquiring new leadership skills, applying these concepts to procure cultural change, and offering training such as APHSA (American Public Human Services Association) Leadership training and the People's Institute's ***Undoing Racism*** training, in which participants are given the tools to examine and address systemic practices through the lens of institutional anti-racism.

Casey Family Program's Organizational Learning Alliance (OLA), headed by Gloria Burgess, became the supporting structure for the leadership development efforts. Gloria facilitated, as an integrated part of the TSS work, the work of the CPS Leadership Team, helping these agency leaders to integrate values of anti-racism into their disproportionality work. By internalizing the values taught in ***Undoing Racism*** training, staff can begin to think about how their practices and day-to-day decisions affect children of color in care as well as their families.

Casey Family Programs Organizational Learning Alliance (OLA) Collaborative Leadership Program

In its work with Texas State Strategy, the Organizational Learning Alliance's focus is capacity building, or leadership development. The leadership development model aims to develop strong staff at all levels, from first line to executives and at the individual and collective levels. Competencies that OLA develops include:

Being outcomes-driven. The ability to identify and pursue objectives that support organizational goals and produce good outcomes that reflect appropriate planning and follow-through.

Business acumen. The ability to effectively and efficiently acquire and steward diverse resources.

Diversity and anti-racism. The ability to identify institutional systems and practices that result in disproportionate outcomes, and to create and implement strategies to change them.

Leading change. The ability to develop and implement a vision, engage others in the vision, and balance change and continuity in the pursuit of goals.

Leading people. The ability to engage others in addressing opportunities and challenges, and in designing and implementing strategies that maximize employee potential.

A well-trained workforce, a well-articulated practice framework, and strong public support are widely recognized elements of a strong child welfare system. Once in place, these achievements are rarely if ever sustained without consistent, focused leadership. We at Casey Family Programs are pleased to see this strong leadership in Texas Child Protective Services. We look forward to working in partnership with their leadership team as they continue to improve services to the children and families of Texas.

—Benjamin de Haan, Managing Director, State Strategy, Casey Family Programs

Part of leadership development is learning to lead from a position of values and character, and committing to shaping the future through actions in the present. "When we get clear about who we are, and who and what we value, we can stand up and use our voice to agitate and make a difference no matter what," says Gloria.

The foundation of strong leadership is grounded in values that are essential for ensuring a solid legacy. This values-based leadership is what CPS committed to and what OLA uses in its leadership support. Encouraging leaders to realize they are creating an intentional legacy, Gloria states:

> When you live with intention and act on what matters to you, that decision shapes every other choice you make. It propels you forward with purpose, drive, and unstoppable momentum.

The values underlying leadership activity then guide leaders towards humane practices and policies in their behavior with staff, youth, families, and others.

Becoming a Leader

Warren Bennis, one of the preeminent scholars on Leadership Studies, has influenced the work within Casey's OLA group. The results of this are evident in the successes of Texas CPS.

To become a leader requires:

Establishing a compelling vision by first defining what you believe is possible and then managing your dream.
Through her leadership, Joyce James has been clear, consistent, and persistent in her vision and in holding her leadership team accountable for making the vision actionable.

Communicating the vision and inspiring others to follow it.
Joyce anchors accountability by asking her team what they think, which connects them to the vision on their terms.

Being original. Learning from others but not being made by others. Reinventing and recreating ourselves.
Joyce and her team have moved beyond the status quo to reshape their work and have reshaped themselves in the process.

Believing in the best for ourselves and others and exerting passion for the promises of life.
Texas CPS leaders have learned that being a Passionate Champion means your passion drives the work. (See Section 2.4.) The passion exhibited by these leaders is what we might call "so-that" passion: leading so that youth and families might be safe and secure, and have a better life.

Seeing success in small, everyday increments and joys.
Texas CPS team members count and celebrate the small, day-to-day movements toward the goal: a conversation between coworkers, a phone call from a birth parent, an encounter with a youth that's remarkably different because of a new perspective on historical trauma and the effects of racism.

Using the context of your life rather than surrendering to it.
Some of the CPS Regional Directors have shifted their leadership methods as a result of their own transformational experiences in the Undoing Racism workshops.

As 21st-century leaders, we are called to be stewards, inventors, and architects of the future. It takes courage and commitment to live with intention, to take a stand for what matters.

—Gloria Burgess, "Legacy Living: The Power of Intention," March 2005.

2.4 VISION AND VALUES

In summer 2003, regional and district directors, along with Casey Family Programs, worked together to compose a vision and values that would pull everyone together statewide in a common understanding. The vision, first expressed as *Children First: Safe and Secure,* and the values of respect, inclusiveness, integrity, compassion, and commitment, were embraced by the team and formerly shared with all CPS staff.

Writing and then articulating the vision and values statewide was like a life raft for getting through some tough times. The vision directed us; it was truly uplifting.

—Colleen McCall, Director of Field, Texas CPS

In 2005, the CPS Leadership Team expanded the vision and values in their specificity. The team is now charged with operationalizing the vision of *Children First: Protected and Connected* and applying these five core values:

Respect for culture
Inclusiveness of families, youth, and community
Integrity in decision making
Compassion for all
Commitment to reducing disproportionality

The work involving understanding and positively affecting disproportionality is really, really hard. In order for any such efforts to be effective, long-term and comprehensive involvement is necessary. Casey Family Programs has demonstrated a willingness to both join and support this important work.

—Michael Lindsey, Arlington Regional Disproportionality Steering Committee Member, Dallas, TX

The application of the vision and values is reflected in management approaches and in leadership of social work practice. The vision and core values are a touchstone for:

- Staff and leaders when working to ensure they are being true to effective family-centered practice.
- Family members and professionals when there is any doubt that an approach is in the family's best interest.
- Leaders, to ground what they are expecting to see from staff in their interactions with youth, families, and communities in all aspects of their work.
- All concerned, to align practice to the vision and values, and to ensure that cultural competence informs the work at every stage.

Another concept relating to values is that of the *Passionate Champion*, a person with a deep and abiding passion for the work and for what is right for families, children, and communities. This passion leads the work in all aspects. A leader is a champion for addressing disproportionality when he or she leads from a strengths-based passion for what families need. At the core of the work is the true desire to excel shown in the passion for hope in communities, for the hopes and dreams of young people, and for opportunities and access for everyone. One of the processes used in the Leadership Development work led by Gloria Burgess

We must begin with the fundamental belief that the community has all it needs to address its problems. Let the community take the lead. Let the community answer its questions. The networks within the community will lead to community success.

—Deborah Green

Nothing About Us Without Us!! My role is as an advocate. We have to be committed to this work. The time is now—we have the right to have a voice.

—Nishikie Ambush-Gladney, Alumna of Foster Care, Houston, TX

How do we change our practices? How do we make the system better for families and children who are disproportionally represented? How do we make the system better for all?

—Joyce James, discussing why the pilot programs were initiated

of Casey Family Programs' Organizational Learning Alliance has been to have leaders declare their passion—what truly drives their work and their investment in their work in CPS. This is a part of getting in touch with what *fuels* their commitment to stay with this challenging and difficult work.

2.5 PILOT PROGRAMS AND PRACTICE MODELS

CPS and Casey Family Programs strongly advocate for the inclusion of external stakeholders as a part of ensuring the integrity of the work and its relevance to service providers and community partners, as well as those receiving services. This essential involvement is grounded in the belief and value that communities and families must inform what can best meet the needs that link to causes and solutions with maximum impact on disproportionality. There are essentially four components defining a community engagement model, as outlined in the July 1, 2006 Disproportionality Remediation Plan submitted to the Texas legislature by the Health and Human Service Commission (HHSC). This model is being expanded and refined from the original work started in the Beaumont Region, where Project HOPE was developed. It involves a framework using a facilitative leadership process through which community advisory committees are convened and their work facilitated with the express purpose of addressing disproportionality. The components include:

Community Awareness and Engagement—Making the problem and issues visible, sharing the data, telling the story with the media and with constituents, enrolling community leaders, building local allies.

Community Leadership—Expanding the leadership beyond organizations/institutions to the level where it belongs, that is, at the community level. Participation in *Undoing Racism* training (see Section 2.6) is available at this stage to reinforce the committee members as agents of social change.

Community Organization—Going to the community and being guided by it to learn what its strengths are, and hearing from residents and bringing them to the table as key informants to address their issues.

Community Accountability—Working to desired outcomes and measurable results to achieve the ultimate goal of sustainability, and ensuring that communities are the owners of the solutions.

The establishing of community pilot programs is allowing CPS to move leadership concepts into concepts-in-action. The principles of leadership development and systems improvement underscore all of this work.

The highly populated Houston and Arlington regions were selected as initial pilot sites for addressing disproportionality because of their large concentrations of children of color served by CPS. Selection was also guided by their being less likely than other regional areas to undergo organizational structural changes at the time of implementation of strategies to address disproportionality**.** The pilot sites work to ensure that service access is improved for families either through one-stop resource centers or through a network of services across agency systems. The work is focused on increased collaboration among local and state agencies, and proactive efforts to address issues contributing to disparities in the system. The scope is such that improvements are applicable and relevant statewide. The desired outcome, again, is to implement statewide strategies to reduce the disproportionate representation of children of color in the foster care system.

Each of the two regions formed a Regional Advisory Committee on disproportionality with the commitment to:

- Include broad representation from various segments of the designated community areas, incorporate stakeholders and organizations
- Contain an operational charter to provide an ongoing source for guiding the disproportionality planning and implementation work
- Provide recommendations for change and inform policy makers and CPS management at the regional and state levels
- Attend anti-racism training
- Improve communication with staff and their constituents
- Participate in statewide efforts to increase external communication about efforts to recognize and address disproportionality
- Monitor implementation strategies
- Examine and analyze data and ensure that it drives the work

Note: The Arlington Region chose a structure that has one Steering Committee with regional representation from three local area Advisory Committees in three different counties of the region (Dallas, Denton, and Tarrant).

A third regional pilot in Austin is replicating the facilitative leadership approach implemented in the Houston and Arlington Regions. The initial planning meeting led by CPS and Casey Family Programs staff, including some community partners and constituents, was held in May 2006, followed by regional ***Undoing Racism*** training sessions in June and September 2006. Advisory Committee meetings, beginning in October 2006, are now regularly underway.

My goal is to build sustainability into the community so the process continues once CPS and Casey Family Programs are gone.

–Deborah Green

As a community organizer, I work within a community of poor people with few resources… Many times it's our own people who make it harder and create a barrier within the community, making it harder for those to move forward. Going through the [Undoing Racism] training, I am able to explain how continued negativity is creating more harm than good. If we share resources and experiences with our young people, we can begin to remove the barrier within our own neighborhoods.

—Tisha Armstead, Community Organizer, Project HOPE, Port Arthur, TX

Port Arthur's Project HOPE Center, a one-stop service center for helping families avoid entering the child welfare system, provides a central place for work efforts addressing disproportionality. It operates as a 501(c)3 organization with a governing board and a paid community organizer, as stated earlier, and is a practice model identified for expansion to address disproportionality work throughout Texas.

Undoing Racism training was important to me and my role in CPS in that it allowed me the opportunity to remove blinders and to actually provide a name to the barriers that we sometimes place in the pathways of children, families, and even CPS staff. For me personally, this training gave me the opportunity to bring all that I am to the table. As an African American professional in this arena, I owe it to the families and children that we serve to do my part in this process to be an advocate for recognition and change.

—Tondalier Owens, Program Director, CPS, Austin Region, Bastrop, TX

Practice Curriculum, Tools, and Models: Operationally, systems improvement work involves (among its various strategies) the piloting of several practice curricula, tools, and models. At the forefront is Family Group Decision Making/Family Group Conferencing (FGDM/FGC), a practice model that focuses on family-centered case planning, grounded in family strengths; it supports birth families in developing plans to ensure the safety and protection of their children. Relatives are frequently selected for the child's placement, including in some cases adoption as the permanency plan. This model is being implemented across the state's CPS system, with Casey Family Programs providing technical assistance, logistics support, evaluation support, and staff training to assist CPS throughout its implementation. The focus is on achieving desired measures and outcomes in the areas of practice improvement, policy change, and compliance with federal (CFSR) goals and indicators. Evaluation results of FGDM are indicating improvements in systems outcomes including accelerated placements of children with kin and reduced stays in foster care.

Breakthrough Series Collaborative: CPS also participated in the Casey Family Programs/Annie E. Casey Foundation-sponsored Disproportionality Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC). Nationally selected teams participating in this BSC tested multiple ideas, strategies, and tools on a very small scale, addressing the disproportionate representation of youth of color in the child welfare system. The Houston pilot site, a five-zip code area in the Sunnyside community, participated in the BSC, enabling this site to successfully test various disproportionality-specific practice improvements. The BSC work ran from 2005 through September 2006. BSC goals are as follow:

We have a responsibility to educate ourselves about human inequality and to work to break down barriers that deny access to certain groups.

—Joyce James in her Keynote Address to Black History Month, February 2006

- Work in a structured measurable way.
- Start small-scale tests of change to see if they may work on a larger scale.
- Apply change efforts to target areas of disproportionality, e.g., stages of service: reporting, removals, etc.
- Demonstrate teams' change efforts to promote shared learning.
- The BSC senior leader team along with core team members attend learning sessions through which shared learning also occurs.

2.6 CULTURAL COMPETENCY TRAINING

The values-based approach to leadership is strengthened by the dual application of anti-racist practices and principles. These include leadership behaviors such as courageous conversations, thoughtful analysis of decision making, family-centered practice, community-led strategies to address disproportionality, and intentional risk-taking to combat racism when it is discovered in systemic practices and policies.

To be anti-racist is to act individually or collectively to eliminate decisions and bias that lead to negative outcomes for individuals of color. It also means creating healthy institutions where all individuals have equal access to needed services and to opportunities for maximizing their physical, psychological, social, economic, and spiritual well-being. Leading up to this cultural change at CPS was work done with Dr. Carol Spigner, who provided a contextual history of disproportionality in child welfare. She elevated historical themes for Texas CPS that emphasized the need for awareness of two dynamics:

- A multicultural dynamic: cultural competency
- The oppressive nature of some child welfare policies and practices that disadvantage certain groups (poor, minority, women)

Dr. Spigner emphasized the need to be willing to explore institutional racism and be willing to help people work and understand different groups.[3]

To help CPS become an anti-racist institution, CPS and Casey Family Programs brought the ***Undoing Racism*** workshop to CPS staff and leaders, its community partners, and its constituents. The workshop is offered by the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, a national anti-racist collective of veteran community organizers and educators dedicated to building an effective movement for social change. (See Appendices C and D.)

The theory of change underscoring the ***Undoing Racism*** training is that, if the following anti-racist principles become internalized by individuals and subsequently by organizations, the ability of child welfare agencies to address disproportionality in a sustainable way is advanced:

- Learn from history
- Share and respect each other's cultures
- Understand how racism manifests itself in individuals, institutions, culture, and language and in our relationship with our environment

Honestly, I was skeptical about the Undoing Racism training. I figured I'm a young black male. What could they possibly teach me that I haven't experienced first hand. But…I was thoroughly enlightened. The historical information that was shared was truly eye-opening. The training prepares one to be able to address the root cause of the issue, not just the symptoms. It will inspire you to believe that if you mix the information and the insight you learn from the training with some practical application, over time, you can actually turn the ship called institutional racism around!

—SaulPaul, Alumnus of Foster Care, Executive Director, ReRoute Productions, Austin, TX

I find that Undoing Racism has provided me with a new lens for the world…with this new lens I can envision a CPS system that feels different to our families and children.

—Colleen McCall, May 2006

[3] Dr. Spigner serves as the Kenneth L. M. Pray Distinguished Professor at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work. A former Associate Commissioner of the Children's Bureau under President Clinton, she has a history of research and involvement with child welfare.

- Effectively network in an effort to develop a broad-based movement for social change
- Understand the impact of internalized racial oppression and its manifestations (e.g., internalized racial inferiority and internalized racial superiority)
- Engage in leadership development
- Be accountable to those being served
- Be gatekeepers who value systems improvement over systems perpetuation

A second training program developed by Casey Family Programs is titled ***Knowing Who You Are (KWYA)***. Created with the direct collaboration of alumni of foster care, youth still in care, birth parents, resource families, and social work staff, the curriculum helps child welfare professionals explore their own race and ethnic identity, preparing them to support the healthy development of their constituents' racial and ethnic identities.

2.7 DELIVERABLES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

A compilation of deliverables addressing disproportionality was based on recommendations and mandates from the Texas Legislature:

- Action plans developed and driven by specific data confirming the disproportionality that exists and designed to result in policy and practice changes that can promote parity in outcomes for African American children
- Increased targeted recruitment efforts for foster and adoptive parents who can meet the needs of children and youth who are waiting for permanent homes, including an expansion of the DFPS faith-based effort and One Church, One Child programs
- Prioritized prevention and early intervention funding for communities with high rates of minority children in foster care
- A plan outlining content, design, and delivery of cultural competency training to all service delivery staff that go beyond the cultural awareness level, have a performance measure component, and are relevant to all stages of CPS service
- Strengthened kinship care programs and services with the desired outcome of expanded opportunities for African American children to be successfully placed with family members, building on promising practice models already in place and the early results of Family Group Decision Making implementation
- Collaborative partnerships for co-housing with other agencies to develop one-stop service centers, to include education programs such as GED classes, job skills training, and grants for higher education

New interest and receptivity to support change has emerged, both within the community and within the administrative and political leadership in Texas. The following are expected outcomes for change:

- Reduction of the number of African American youth entering the foster care system by ensuring that 1) youth do not enter the child welfare system, and 2) they are placed with relatives or are returned to their parents successfully with necessary supports to ensure success
- Decreased moves in out-of-home placement
- Decreased amount of time in foster care placement
- Increased number of African American youth placed with kin
- Increased number of African American foster and adoptive homes
- Increased new resources at the community level, including supports from community-based organizations, foundations, and other prospective community partners, as community buy-in occurs
- Increased community-based services in targeted areas, services that divert families from the child welfare system
- Increased youth and family engagement to identify and communicate what they need that can lead to successful outcomes
- Community involvement that will result in increased buy-in and support to elevate disproportionality as a critical issue as well as ways to reduce it through effective community-based strategies
- More effective outcomes seen by providers when services are delivered if families and youth help by communicating what they need for success
- Enhanced best practice models and approaches for provider programs, making them more relevant for families and youth, so that they will more fully utilize these services

Our Accomplishments

3.1 SUCCESSES, RESULTS, AND NEXT STEPS

Each Texas CPS region is progressing differently in the process of change, but each has positioned itself for success over the last four years. Expected outcomes involve expected improvements in practice models and tools, community involvement and commitment, and reduced numbers in all stages of service in the child welfare system. As a work in progress, these expected outcomes are closer to achievement due to a strong leadership force and a knowledgeable and committed staff. With these expected successes comes the responsibility to carry the work to a different scale, that is, to pass success on to others.

The following categories of successes and results show the strengths of each systemic change that both the TSS Leadership Team and the CPS Leadership Team are realizing. At the end of many of the categories are suggested Next Steps.

Data-driven strategies: From the start, it was clear that the data must drive the solutions. All CPS data are pulled by race and ethnicity and are regularly analyzed to monitor progress, recognize trends, and make practice improvements. Disproportionality data are being used to guide community strategies for systems improvement. In addition to results based on data, there are many less tangible improvement results that the leaders are confident will show in the data over time.

Leadership development: Leadership development has led to the following improvements: Leadership mentoring. Hiring diverse managers. Leadership meetings focused on values-based leadership development. Changing culture at the supervisor level.

> ***Discussion:*** The goal of leadership development is to support and develop leadership that actively and affirmatively ensures that policies, practices, programs, and services are supportive of children and families through agency vision, funding allocations, case staffing, and supervision.
>
> For this to happen, however, leaders must gain new leadership skills to lead cultural change. Leading through vision and values is the focus of work facilitated by Casey's Organizational Learning Alliance (OLA), led by Gloria Burgess.
>
> The hiring of a State Disproportionality Director, Deborah Green, in August 2005 meant a true commitment to the work. The director, along with Carolyne Rodriguez, Casey Family Programs' Texas State Strategy Senior Director, is instrumental in advancing pilot programs for change through a facilitative leadership process.

The road to success is paved beyond rhetoric to actualization.

—Deborah Green, March 2006

I have come to believe that doing anti-racist work is the core from which all of our other work will emerge…Internalizing and institutionalizing anti-racist principles is the key to transforming every aspect of our system from how we hire and develop staff to how we work with children and families, external partners, and each other. Leadership development and anti-racist work are intrinsically linked, and we must actively implement both for true systems change.

—Linda Wright, Regional Director, CPS, Arlington, TX

Next Steps: Disproportionality will continue to have dedicated CPS staff including a director and specialists; the work will continue to spread throughout the state using the community engagement strategies to advance the work; and Casey will continue to support leadership development efforts as a key component in implementation efforts in Texas.

Development of Culturally Competent Work Force: Developing cultural competence has led to the following improvements: Training for CPS workforce. Hiring disproportionality specialists in some regions. Hiring youth specialists in every region. Changing the organizational culture of CPS.

Discussion: The ***Knowing Who You Are (KWYA)*** curriculum, developed by Casey Family Programs in partnership with numerous stakeholders and constituents, is being implemented in Basic Skills Development (BSD) training for new CPS staff. KWYA training is designed to address cultural competency system improvements for CPS staff by providing CPS direct delivery staff with the knowledge, skills, tools, and resources that will support the engagement of youth in their racial and ethnic identity formation in day-to-day social work practice and case management. This includes instilling pride in their racial and ethnic heritage, multicultural competence, and preparation for racism and discrimination.

Next Steps: This curriculum will continue to be implemented for all new CPS direct delivery staff through BSD; CPS has adopted and will continue implementation through its own trained/certified KWYA facilitators; and KWYA concepts and components will be infused in ongoing staff development for all CPS staff.

Exemplary Programs for Addressing Disproportionality: Project HOPE. Houston, Arlington, and Austin region pilots.

Discussion: Project HOPE, a one-stop family resource/family service center for strengthening the community, was the community-based model identified for statewide replication in addressing disproportionality. It became the prototype for the later pilot programs, emerging as the Community Engagement model implemented in the Houston and Arlington Regions. Thirty services are provided through the center, and a host of outcomes are listed as goals of achievement.

The pilot sites in the Houston and Arlington regions are having many successes in implementing community strategies. In their 2005 Accomplishments report, both regions noted, "It has been the year of readying for critical, essential work to address disproportionality and disparate outcomes of African American youth in the child welfare system. This has been a year of positioning, enrolling, engaging, educating, learning, questioning and planning, and establishing a foundation for addressing disproportionality. Each committee has reached many significant milestones in the 2005 planning year…" Some of the major milestones are as follows:

- Committee assembled
- Vision statement, assumptions, and benefits of work defined
- Approach and criteria for community site selection defined and then sites selected
- Data reviewed and discussed to support strategic and operational plans
- ***Undoing Racism*** trainings provided; operational charter developed and approved
- Principles to guide disproportionality work established
- Commitment to strong, diverse representation on the Advisory or Steering committee successful
- Focus groups, town hall meetings/community forums completed and others underway and presentations delivered to community officials.

The Austin Region initiated the same process undertaken by Houston and Arlington. Advisory Committee work is underway to form the operational structure, select a site for the work, etc. Arlington and Houston work for 2006–2007 has moved into implementation, and the two regions are seeing programmatic accomplishments such as increased use of kinship care and expanded utilization of FGDM.

Next Steps: The plan is to continue to spread the work to address disproportionality across the state, using the strategies described.

When will we hear from the community—you must get understanding from the community!

—Yashica Evans,
Birth Parent, Houston, TX

Treat families like one of the group. I have seen us go from being deficit-based to strengths-based. This engages and retains parents.

—Valerie Garza,
Birth Parent, Austin, TX

Community/Stakeholder Involvement: Town hall meeting. Working closely with community partners. Partnering with Casey Family Programs.

Discussion: Texas State Strategy efforts are grounded in the principles of valu-

Attending *Undoing Racism* training was a life-changing experience. Until this training, I did not fully understand the role of institutional racism and gatekeeping. I had known of all the separate pieces that make up racism, but the training made it all fit together into one, big, ugly picture!

—Daphne Casses, Special Project Coordinator, CPS, Project HOPE, Port Arthur, TX

ing an inclusive approach that ensures constituent voices and respecting the contributions that constituents make by ensuring that they are fully prepared to maximize their participation. This includes monetary, educational, and resource support.

Through community advocacy, the state of Texas has been legislatively mandated to address disproportionality.

The power of the community is where we begin to promote parity and improved outcomes for children and families. To effect social change will require a multifaceted approach: social, economic, educational, political. The community must be the driving force behind any sustainable change. Everyone needs to be at the table: constituency involvement, community leadership involvement. There must be community accountability. These are the themes that run through all Texas disproportionality work.

Going through Undoing Racism training—how uncomfortable are we willing to be?

–Shonda Thompson, Birth Parent, Austin, TX

Training Programs: ***Undoing Racism*** training; ***Knowing Who You Are*** (racial and ethnic identity formation) training embedded in BSD. The CPS Parent Collaboration Group (PCG) video used in training. Mandatory cultural diversity training for staff.

Discussion: Leading the way in training success is ***Undoing Racism*** training. By June 2006, this training had been provided to all regional and state office managers and directors, and to pilot site staff (through supervisory and staff specialist levels) and collaborators.

Next Steps: Undoing Racism**:** All CPS managers/directors in all CPS regions and the State Office are now trained. Various community partners and constituents are also trained in each of the 11 CPS regions. CPS trainers received the ***Undoing Racism*** training. Staff and other community partners in pilot sites are being trained. Additional ***Undoing Racism*** training will be extended to more CPS staff at all levels in the months ahead.

Vision and Values: Incorporating vision and values in all regional work. Mission and values regional meeting. Families and youth involved in vision and values rollout. Acknowledging our values by telling stories in the context of our values.

Discussion: Underlying all cultural change are CPS and Casey Family Programs' vision and values. For leadership work to move forward, workers and constituents at all levels continue to model their actions on these values.

Next Steps: The vision and values were reworked in spring 2006 to better fit the latest work and goals of CPS. The changes are reflected in this report.

Statewide Accomplishments: $125,000 Amon G. Carter Foundation grant in Region 3. CWLA (Child Welfare League of America) and Campaign for Human Development grant received by HOPE. CAPTA federal grant funds committed for ***Undoing Racism*** training, for use for stipends to community residents and for consultation, and for use to fund disproportionality specialized positions.

Discussion: The consensus among the CPS Leadership Team is that success must be acknowledged and celebrated. This includes team and individual achievements. Making visible the milestones achieved shows staff and others of the successes and benefits of programs, it creates motivation, and it highlights successful endings to let us move forward.

Additionally, results in the form of data collected and milestones met show the great strides the regions have made in meeting the needs of children and families.

- Fiscal 2005: Operation PUSH resulted in 3,173 finalized adoptions, an increase of 661 adoptions from the previous year.
- Fiscal 2005: 3 additional pilots created; 900 new CPS workers hired and trained.
- April 2005: 1300 Adoptions Program reached 1284 adoptions.
- Spring 2006: All regional leaders trained in Undoing Racism.
- July 2006: 3,625 FGDM conferences conducted in 57 counties.
- Fiscal 2006: Texas receives the largest adoption incentive award of any state/jurisdiction in 2006.
- Hired state disproportionality director and disproportionality specialists.
- San Antonio and 28 surrounding counties selected as first region to outsource case management and substitute care services.
- Austin region added as a pilot site for DFPS to address disproportionality.
- Family Group Decision Making staff are partnering with disproportionality staff to better understand the cultural needs of families served.

If you are white and not doing something about a solution—not doing anti-racist work—you are part of the problem. This is challenging work, difficult work, and we're just beginning!

–Randy Joiner, Regional Director, CPS, Houston, TX

- Disproportionality staff and new FGDM coordinators are being trained to conduct FDGM conferences.
- All youth in foster care over the age of 16 are being offered Circles of Support.
- Education Portfolios distributed for all school-aged children in care.
- Over $1,000,000 allocated to assist caregivers in providing for the essential needs of children in kinship care.

Intangible Successes: There are many additional successes of system change that cannot be seen in the data as of yet.

- Cultural competency principles infused into hiring process
- Satisfaction of families and staff collaborative
- Increased media and constituency awareness of disproportionality
- Community wanting to take the lead
- Regional sites asking to be involved in disproportionality work
- Undoing Racism training more successful because of attendees' increased awareness and readines

Where Texas has come and where it continues to go, specifically with the next Austin pilot site, can be understood in the words of Jacque Seale, Regional Director, CPS, Austin:

My vision is that we look not just at numbers, but also at the effects of disproportionality at every decision point in our system and that we put practices in place to ensure we address this issue. My vision is that our staff will be culturally competent, and we will be able to recognize our own bias in working with families, that services will be equally available to all families and children. My vision includes working with communities to develop resources to support families and kinship placements, to recruit for foster and adoptive homes in communities where our children are from. We need to utilize Family Group Conferences and Circles of Support to identify family and kinship support for families and placement options for children that are safe and that help maintain connections.

This is not just a CPS issue—this is a community issue, and when the whole community is willing to invest as the spokesperson, look at the problem, and advocate to improve the circumstances for children and youth—we can create improvement

for all children, youth, and families. Together we can find new and innovative ways of engaging families. We can all recognize that families and children have a role in our work and can be a filter for our practice—help ground us in reality out of their own experience with the system. Austin is rich with organizations and people who are champions for children—what fertile ground for this work!

The scariest thing you can have is a person without hope. As long as you have a committed adult in your life, the more likely you will be successful.

—Nishikie Ambush-Gladney, Alumna from Foster Care, Houston, TX

3.2 MANDATED DISPROPORTIONALITY ACTIVITIES O

As a result of the passing of the 79th Texas Legislature's Senate Bill 6 (see Section 2.1), two reports on disproportionality were prepared. The first, submitted to the Texas Legislature on January 2, 2006, found that "disproportionality did exist in the Texas child welfare system, even when taking into account other nationally recognized relevant factors such as age and sex of the victim, family income, allegation type, and marital status"[4]:

- In Texas, even when other factors are taken into account, African American children spend significantly more time in foster care or other substitute care, are less likely to be reunified with their families, and wait longer for adoption than Caucasian or Hispanic children.
- Among families investigated for child maltreatment, poverty is a strong predictor of whether a child is removed from the home. More than 60 percent of child removals in Texas involve families with annual incomes of about $10,000 or less. This is a factor in disproportionality because poverty rates are higher among African American families.
- African American families are less likely than Anglo families to receive in-home family services to help prevent child removal in three areas of the state, while Hispanic families are less likely than Anglo families to receive such services in four areas.
- Other factors, such as poverty, family structure, age of the alleged victim, type of alleged abuse, and the source of report play a significant role in the final decision of child maltreatment cases investigated by CPS.

The second report, submitted on July 1, 2006, evaluated "the policies and procedures CPS uses in enforcement actions and describes remediation plans to address disparities found in the system."[5] Because of the amendment of section 264.2041 to Senate Bill 6, DFPS responded to four areas of activities:

This work I feel will awaken hundreds of social service practitioners to understand the effects of racism and power structures within the communities in which they serve and hopefully will give them the effective tools to work for positive social change that reduces the disparities between ethnicities. And that new-found awareness and determination from just one person attending the Undoing Racism workshop can, I believe, ripple across this county, state and world. I know it changed my life.

—Carolyn Mohair, Denton ISD, Denton Disproportionality Advisory Committee, Denton, TX

[4] Disproportionality in Child Protective Services: Statewide reform effort begins with examination of the problem. HHSC and DFPS, January 2, 2006.

[5] Disproportionality in Child Protective Services: Policy evaluation and remediation plan. HHSC and DFPS, July 1, 2006.

- ***Cultural Competency Training: Undoing Racism*** training to increase sensitivity to the issues that play a role in disproportionality. To date, training has been provided to middle- and upper-management staff at the state and regional level, supervisory staff in two pilot sites, service delivery staff in one pilot site in Houston, and all training academy managers.

  A second training program, developed by Casey Family Programs, ***Knowing Who You Are***, has a goal of fostering the development of healthy race and ethnic identities in children served by CPS by enhancing staff's understanding of their own race and ethnic identity.

- ***Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Families:*** CPS is changing policy to broaden recruitment efforts of African American, Hispanic, and other families. Targeted recruitment includes a contract with One Church, One Child of North Central Texas in conjunction with Congregations Helping In Love and Dedication (CHILD). CPS implemented a public awareness plan to increase visibility with media and entered into relationships with African American adoption agencies across the United States. CPS participates with Texas Heart Gallery projects to promote adoption by linking professional photographers and children in conservatorship.

- ***Implementation of Undoing Racism Trainings:*** Providing *Undoing Racism* training to management communicates the importance of a diverse workforce in improving outcomes. At the end of fiscal year 2006, CPS staff had increased from 5,796 in fiscal year 2005 to 6,935. This represents an overall 20% increase in staff. From 2005 to 2006, African American staff increased 25%, Hispanic staff by 21%, and Caucasian staff by 13%. As the data indicate, the proportion of African American and Hispanic staff increased relative to Caucasian staff (25% and 21%, respectively, compared to 13%). CPS will continue to ensure diversity by providing staff with cultural competency training and training leadership on the importance of diversity.

- ***Development of Collaborative Partnerships:*** CPS seeks input from external stakeholders to ensure the integrity and relevance of the agency's work with service providers, community partners, and clients. Outcomes include the Community Engagement Model (see Section 2.5 and Appendix H); a statewide workgroup of DFPS staff and external stakeholders to address disproportionate representation and disparate outcomes in CPS; specialized staff for additional outreach to include working with other agencies on cross-system issues and facilitating community group sessions and community organization; the pilot programs' Community Advisory Committee in Houston and the Regional Steering Committee and Advisory Committees in Arlington/Dallas/Fort Worth area, an important and ongoing resource for reducing disproportionality and implementing remediation plans.

Lessons Learned

4.1 STAFF FEEDBACK

During regular CPS Leadership Team meetings, attendees are asked to list lessons learned for future pilot projects and programs as well as to provide information to the broader child welfare field. Many comments center around what worked, while others focus on what should have happened to make the system improvements happen more quickly or easily. What comes out in all the work, however, is the leaders' desire for change, resulting in a system that works for all children and their families.

If we once again look at the underlying themes noted in Section 3.1 and that run throughout the Texas CPS reform work, the following Lessons Learned chart captures these themes as well:

- Leadership issues
- Staff issues
- ***Undoing Racism*** training
- Constituency telations
- Disproportionality

Three categories (Data-driven results, Realize the challenges, and Celebrate successes) are listed for themes covered in team meetings.

Leasons Learned Chart

LEADERSHIP ISSUES

It is essential to grow leaders

Manage for outcomes that best serve families and children

Leadership moves issues forward; step up to issues

Recognize Joyce's love of the work and moving vision and values forward

Passion for the work is the fuel, the sustaining piece

Show the importance of checking in to move vision and values forward

Make public what it takes to do the job

Recognize the joint work of Casey and CPS, the enthusiasm, and the successes

Acknowledge that this leadership team is the best leadership team

Child Welfare leaders cannot be the only voice, but must be the voice that compels new leaders to lead the work

STAFF ISSUES

Recognize the need for a diverse workforce that reflects the people we serve

A diverse workforce strengthens the work

Many hands make for lighter work

We must include and value others' opinions in a real way

Passion for the work is the fuel, the sustaining piece

We must train existing staff as well as new staff

We want things to be better for workers

We need better tools

UNDOING RACISM TRAINING

Everyone must embrace the training and its principles

Recognize and accept the need for a cultural shift

Debrief after training

Confront institutional racism

Share and respect each other's culture

Recognize systemic racism so we can undo it

Act out against racism

Learn from history

Know that this work requires a personal and professional self-examination

It is not about remaining comfortable!

DISPROPORTIONALITY

Disproportionality work must be grounded in agency vision and values

This work is led by the community

Work with a variety of community partners focusing on CPS practice improvements to improve outcomes for African American children

Increase targeted recruitment efforts for foster and adoptive parents who can meet the needs for children and youth waiting for permanent homes

Allocate designated resources, both staff and dollars, for this work

Acknowledge that this work is viewed as the bridge to improving relations with community: parents were once recipients now are participants

CONSTITUENCY RELATIONS

Families are the greatest resources

Families know what they need

Show the importance of alumni and family voices

Invite the community—even "undesirable" stakeholders; they can be your best advocates/allies in this work

Champions are a must

Community leadership of disproportionality work = Sustainability

"Nothing About Us Without Us" alumni voice

A caring adult is essential for young people in care

Parents must be involved in all aspects of this work: Parent Collaborative Group/Community Residents

Acknowledge successes with other agencies

Know families and children can change; give them hope

Community and CPS can work together

Include families in decisions

Community engagement = focus groups = first step!!

Disproportionality is not solely a CPS problem. It requires community-based investment and solutions.

Leasons Learned Chart [continued]

DATA-DRIVEN RESULTS

Measure the data/share the data with community partners

Good data is critical to good outcomes

Hear from the youth in care and alumni we have served

Acknowledge the positive press

Anticipate tangible results

Results of Family Group Conferences (FGDM model): now in hours not weeks

Satisfaction of families and staff collaborative

Staff co-location improves communication and camaraderie

Constituents now aware of the data; work towards data

Continue to evaluate the work and its progress

Measure our work, track the milestones, and stay focused on desired outcomes

REALIZE THE CHALLENGES

Acknowledge the problems

Realize it doesn't happen overnight

See and act on the urgency to engage other systems

One size *does not* fit all

Know that we have a lot more work to do

Know that learning is ongoing

Recognize and celebrate differences

Acknowledge that we proved the critics and media wrong in the hardest year (2004)

Accept the sense of urgency about the mission

Turn crisis into opportunity

Recognize we can always do things better

No job is more important than this!

This is the work. If things improve for African American children, they improve for all children

CELEBRATE THE SUCCESS

Celebrate success

Tell the good stories

Celebrate milestones along the way

Include short- and long-term outcomes to track Progress, celebrating success throughout the process

Acknowledge partners' contributions

Document contributions—e.g., birth parent resident survey

Celebrate awards given for progress in the work

Pursue opportunities to publish/ document the work

Celebrate opportunities to share the Texas experience with other states/ jurisdictions

5.1 FINAL COMMENTS AND TIMELINE

Although our work is ongoing, we have been fortunate to have opportunities for learning exchanges with other jurisdictions, such as the states of Michigan, Kentucky, and Washington (King County), and with colleagues in New Mexico. We invite other communities to contact us with their questions and comments. One of our hopes has been to be a model program. We feel there is a lot to learn from our successes and our challenges, and we hope others will use much of this material to help them succeed in this very important goal of systems improvement: reducing disproportionality and improving child welfare practice, policy, and procedures, all with the ultimate goal of *Children First: Protected and Connected*.

Five Years of Successes:

Leadership Development and Systems Improvement With Casey Family Programs and Texas Child Protective Services

2007

Casey Family Programs/Texas CPS Chronicle Released

2006

Undoing Racism Training for All Field Managers and State Office
Kinship Rollout January and July
Disproportionality Reports Released
Regional Structure Complete

2005

Undoing Racism Training Begins
Launch of Regional Pilots (Houston and Arlington)
Additional Community Programs: Project HOPE
Breakthrough Series Collaborative Small-scale Pilot Testing
Basic Skills Development Staff Training

2004

State Office Disproportionality Planning Meeting Established
Regional Disproportionality Planning Meetings Established
Community Programs (Rapid Response)
Planning for *Undoing Racism* Training

2003

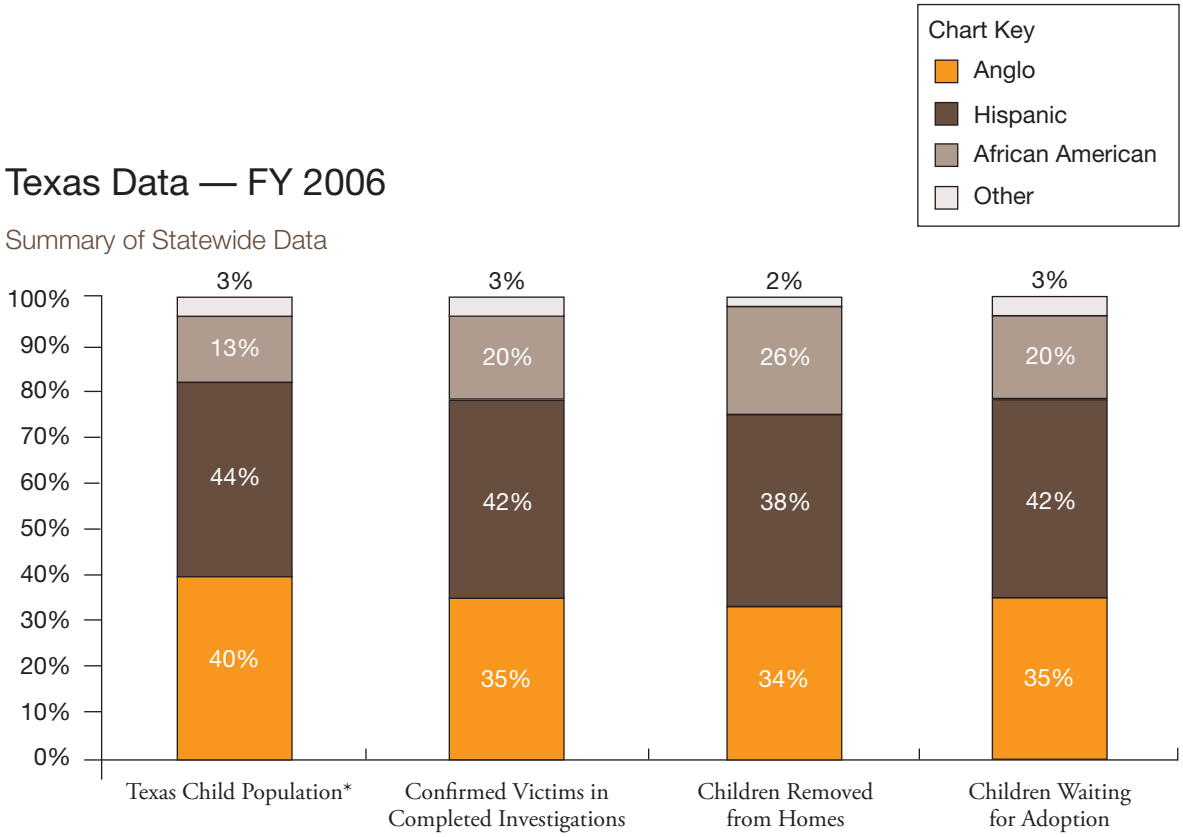
APHSA Training
Vision and Values Established
FGDM Specialist Hired and First Practice Model Conference Held
Community Pilot Programs Begin: Circle of Support; Project SERAPE

2002

State Strategy Leadership Development Team Established

Supplemental Materials

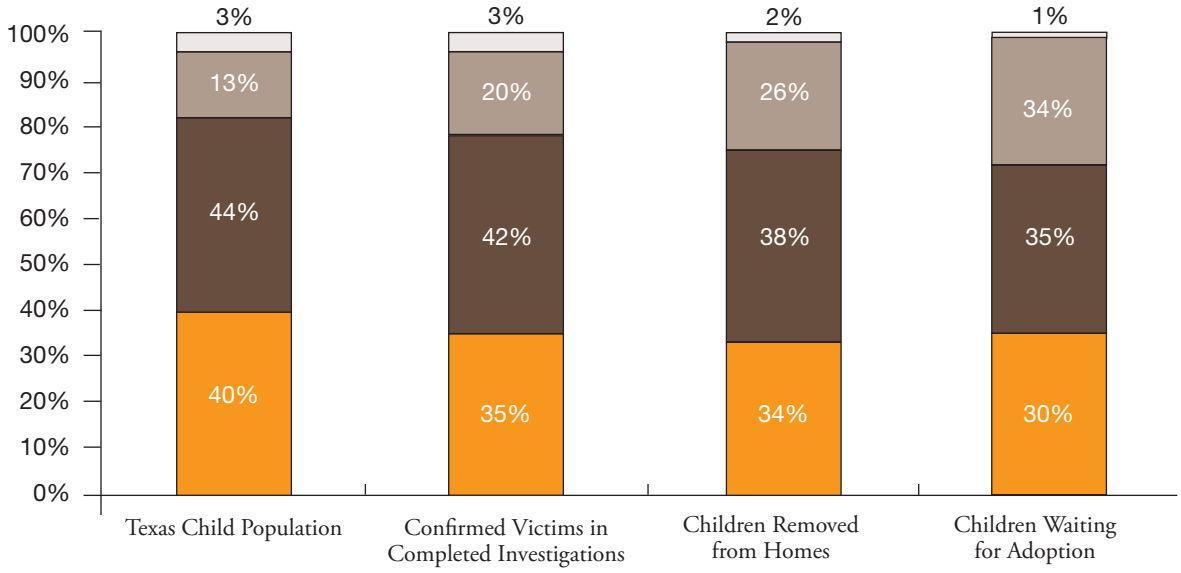
Appendix A: Fiscal Years 2006, 2005, and 2004 Data



Texas Data — FY 2006

Summary of Statewide Data

*Based on 2000 Census



Texas Data — FY 2005

Summary of Statewide Data

The following three charts are taken from the report"Disproportionality in Child Protective Services: Statewide Reform Effort Begins with Examination of the Problem." HHSC and DFPS, January 2, 2006.

Table 1: CPS Actions per 1,000 Children

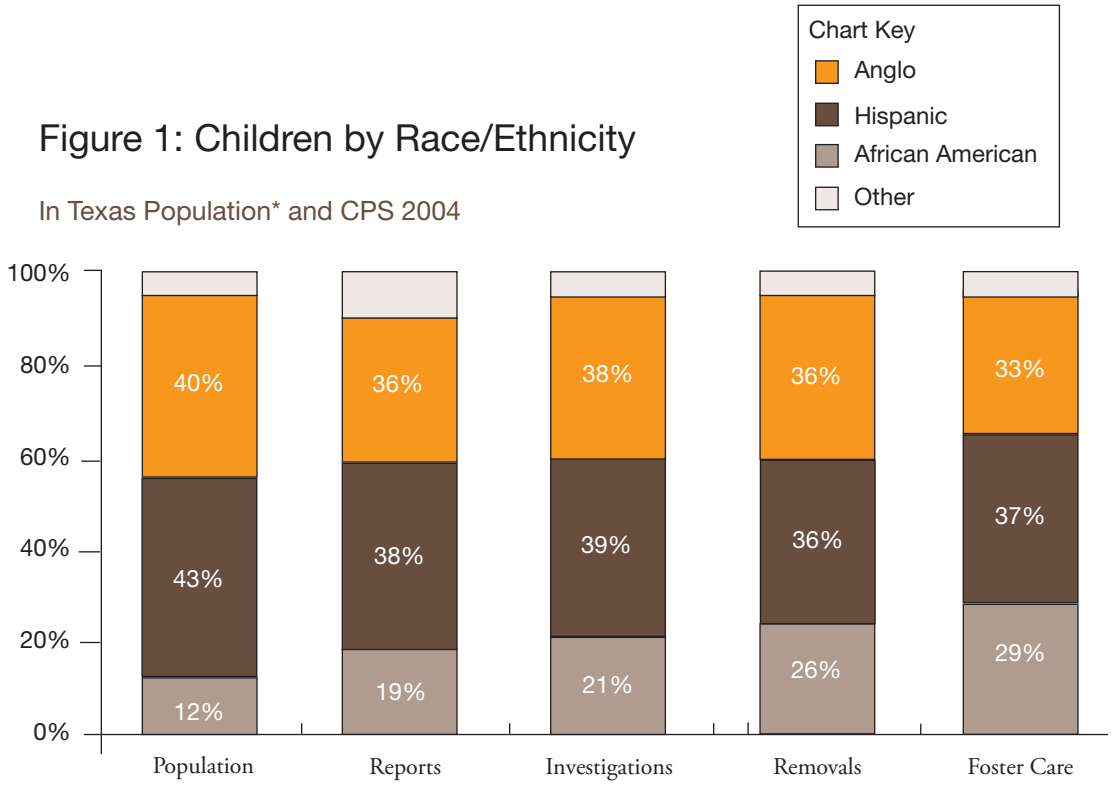
Texas Population 2004*

	Reports	Investigations	Removals	Foster Care
African-American	65.0	52.9	4.2	6.6
Hispanic	64.6	27.2	1.6	2.3
Anglo	35.5	28.7	1.7	2.2
All Children	39.6	30.3	1.9	2.7

*Based on U.S. Census Bureau 2004 American Community Survey for Texas

Figure 1: Children by Race/Ethnicity

In Texas Population* and CPS 2004



*Based on U.S. Census Bureau 2004 American Community Survey for Texas

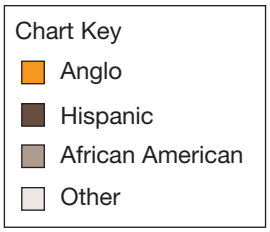
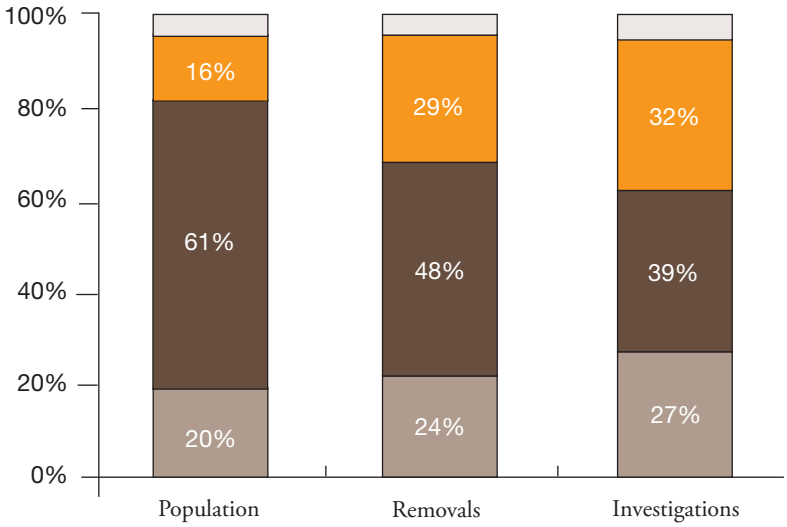


Figure 2: Children with Family Income < $10,000 by Race/Ethnicity

In Texas Population* and CPS 2004



*Based on U.S. Census Bureau 2004 American Community Survey for Texas

Appendix B: Texas State Strategy Leadership Team

Carolyne Rodriguez, Senior Director, Texas State Strategy, Casey Family Programs
Joyce James, Assistant Commissioner, CPS, Texas
Elizabeth Kromrei, Director of Staff Services, CPS
Debra Emerson, Director of Policy and Program, CPS
Colleen McCall, Director of Field, CPS
Deborah Green, State Disproportionality Director, CPS
Angie Cross, Consultant, Alumna of Foster Care
Ida Hawkins, Director, Communications, Casey Family Programs
Henry Johns, Systems Improvement Specialist, Texas State Strategy, Casey Family Programs
Deborah K. Green, Division Administrator - Disproportionality

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Dan Capouch
Division Administrator — Accountability

Henry Darrington
Division Administrator — Federal and State Support

Randy Shell
Division Administrator — Placement

Sally Melant
Division Administrator— Permanency

Annette Emery
Division Administrator — Outsourcing

Vicky Coffee-Fletcher
Division Administrator — Family Focus

Marsha Stone
Division Administrator — Investigations Policy

REGIONAL DIRECTORS

Camille Gilliam — Region 1

Bit Whitaker — Regions 2/9

Linda Wright — Region 3

Susan Ferrari — Deputy Regional Director Region 3

Judy Bowman — Regions 4/5

Randy Joiner — Region 6

James Castille — Deputy Regional Director Region 6

Jacque Seale — Region 7

Sherry Gomez — Region 8

Diana Barajas — Region 10

Scott Dixon — Region 11

REGIONAL PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS

Bella Alex — Region 6

Lisa Black — Region 3

Kristene Blackstone — Region 7

Shelia Brown — Region 7

Robbie Callis — Region 8

Bernadette Cascio — Region 4/5

Frank Chinh — Region 6

Linda Eichberger — Region 11

Penelope Ferguson — Region 1

Anna Flores — Region 3

Hilda Flores-Rendon — Region 8

Jacquline Freeman — Region 3

Sandra Haire — Region 6

Elaine Leonard — Region 2/9

Sherrel Mathews — Region 2/9

Denise McDonald — Region 4/5

Georgina Morales — Region 11

Rebecca Pereda — Region 3

Sylvia Pitcher — Region 10

Debra Pohlman — Region 3

Mary Riojas — Region 8

Sandra Russell — Region 6

Sheryl Russell — Region 1

Veronica Woods — Region 11

Marina Yzaguirre — Region 11

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

All CPS clients

- Birth families
- Youth in care
- Alumni of foster care
- Kinship families
- Foster families
- Adoptive families

Governor's Office

Legislators

DFPS leadership

All CPS leaders and staff

Broker Services

- Emergency Shelters
- Child Placing Agencies
- Residential Treatment Centers

Faith-based Communities

Health and Human Services Commission

Child Welfare Boards

Casey Family Programs Texas State Strategy Team

Ralph Bayard, Ed.D., representing Casey Family Programs Office of Diversity

Gloria Burgess, Ph.D., representing Casey Family Programs Organizational Learning Alliance

Court system (judges, attorneys, CASAs, etc.)

Juvenile Justice System

Law Enforcement

City, County, and State resources

Foundations and Funders (Local, State, and National), State, Federal, and CPS policies

Educational System (Primary, secondary, and Postsecondary)

Medical (Physical, mental, and substance abuse-related)

Work Force System

Housing System

Private Industry

United Way

Community Advocates and Child Advocacy Centers

Advisory Council on Minority Adoptions

Contractors and other Service Providers

Media representatives

Community organizers

Natural community leaders

Appendix C: Undoing Racism Fact Sheet

THE PEOPLE'S INSTITUTE FOR SURVIVAL AND BEYOND

The ***Undoing Racism*** Workshop is an intensive two-day workshop designed to educate, challenge, and empower people to "undo" the racist structures that hinder effective social change. The training is based on the premise that racism has been systematically erected and that it can be "undone" if people understand where it comes from, how it functions, and why it is perpetuated.

This workshop is offered by the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, a national multiracial, antiracist collective of veteran organizers and educators dedicated to building an effective movement for social change. The People's Institute was founded in 1980, has trained thousands of people in hundreds of communities throughout the United States, and is recognized nationally for the quality of its training.

The workshop addresses the following areas:

- **Analyzing Power**—Effective organizing requires accurate analysis. Analysis includes the systems that keep racism in place. The training examines why people are poor, how institutions and organizations perpetuate the imbalance of power, and who is responsible for maintaining the status quo.
- **Defining Racism—**In order to undo racism, it must be understood. Organizers and educators who intend to build effective coalitions need to be very clear about what racism is and what it is not in order to avoid serious strategic and tactical errors.
- **Understanding the Manifestations of Racism—**Racism operates in more than just individual and institutional settings. The dynamics of cultural racism, linguistic racism, and militarism as applied racism are examined.
- **Learning from History—**Racism has distorted, suppressed, and denied the histories of people of color and white people as well. A correct knowledge of history is a necessary organizing tool as well as a source of personal and collective empowerment.
- **Sharing Culture—**One of the most effective methods of oppression is to deny a people its history and culture. The training process strongly emphasizes "cultural sharing" as a critical organizing tool.
- **Organizing to Undo Racism—**How can communities achieve concrete results in dismantling the structures of racism? The principles of effective organizing, the process of community empowerment, the techniques of effective strategizing, and the internal dynamics of leadership development are explored.

The ***Undoing Racism*** workshop is generally two-and-a-half days in duration and is typically geared to 30–40 participants. For further information about the workshop and the People's Institute, contact:

The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond
P.O. Box 770175
New Orleans, LA 70177
Phone 504.296.2579 | Fax 504.241.7412 | www.pisab.org/temp/2006/05/24/our-new-home/cck/

Appendix D: The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond

ANTI-RACISM PRINCIPLES

Undo Racism

Racism is the single most critical barrier to building effective coalitions for social change. Racism has been consciously and systematically erected, and it can be undone only if people understand what it is, where it comes from, how it functions, and why it is perpetuated.

Learn from History

History is our guide to the future and a tool for effective organizing. If we fail to learn from history, we are condemned to repeat it.

Share Culture

Culture is the life support system of a community. If a community's culture is respected and nurtured, the community's power will grow.

Analyze Manifestations of Racism

Racism manifests in *individuals, institutions, culture,* and *language* and in our relationship to our environment. These forms of racism are interrelated. For example, individual racism is nurtured by the dominant culture and backed up by institutions.

Militarism is applied racism. It is the force that maintains the current imbalance of power. Racism manifested as *militarism* is enforced by police at home and armies abroad. To dismantle racism, we must analyze the power of its interlocking applications.

Network

The growth of an effective broad-based movement for social change requires networking or "building a net that works." As the movement develops a strong net, people are less likely to fall through.

Undo Internalized Racial Oppression

Internalized Racial Oppression occurs as both ***Internalized Racial Inferiority*** and ***Internalized Racial Superiority.*** It leads individuals, institutions, and whole systems to accept and act out definitions of individuals and groups that are rooted in a racial construct that designates one or more races as inferior and others as superior. Naming and analyzing *Internalized Racial Oppression* is the first step in overcoming its debilitating effects.

Internalized Racial Inferiority

Internalized racial inferiority is a multi-generational disempowerment process. Over generations, it is internalized and often expressed in self-defeating behaviors such as self-blame, rage, colorism, ethnocentrism, denial, etc. *Internalized racial inferiority* is accepting and acting out the definition of self, given to you by your oppressor, which is rooted in a race construct that designates your race as the inferior race, or one of many inferior races.

Internalized Racial Superiority

Internalized racial superiority is a multi-generational empowerment process. Over generations, it is internalized and gives those designated as a "superior race" unearned privileges and unacknowledged power that often makes their racial advantages invisible to them. *Internalized racial superiority* is accepting and acting out the definition of self, given to you by your self, which is rooted in a race construct that designates your race as the superior race.

Develop Leadership
Grassroots leadership needs to be developed intentionally and systematically within local communities.

Maintain Accountability
Accountability to the community is the key to organizing effectively and with integrity.

Reshape Gatekeeping
Most of us who are organizers have come from the efforts that promoted the "down with the system" theory. Now many of us are the system. The position we hold is that of "gatekeeper" within institutions. The very nature of an institution is to have the position of gatekeeper to ensure that the institution perpetuates itself. When we understand our position as a gatekeeper from an anti-racist, anti-oppressive perspective and are in an accountable relationship with the community, this position can serve as an important springboard from which institutional transformation can be generated.

Appendix E: Casey Family Programs Mission, Goals, Values, and the 2020 Vision

MISSION

To provide and improve—and ultimately to prevent the need for—foster care.

Established by United Parcel Service founder Jim Casey, we are a Seattle-based national operating foundation that has served children, youth, and families in the child welfare system since 1966.

We operate in two ways. We provide direct services, and we promote advances in child-welfare practice and policy.

We collaborate with foster, kinship, and adoptive parents to provide safe, loving homes for youth in our direct care. We also collaborate with counties, states, and American Indian and Alaska Native tribes to improve services and outcomes for the more than 500,000 young people in out-of-home care across the U.S.

Drawing on four decades of front-line work with families and alumni of foster care, we develop tools, practices, and policies to nurture all youth in care and to help parents strengthen families at risk of needing foster care.

GOALS

Permanence: We create security for children and youth by finding them safe, loving homes and by encouraging lasting connections to their family, friends, and community.

Transition: We prepare youth to successfully make the transition from foster care to independent living.

Prevention: We work with parents to strengthen families and prevent the need for foster care.

Disproportionality: We promote parity in opportunities and outcomes for children of color, who enter the child welfare system in disproportionately high numbers, receive fewer services, and leave less prepared for adulthood.

Indian child welfare: We support American Indian and Alaska Native tribes working to develop and improve their own sustainable child-welfare systems.

VALUES

Diversity and anti-racism: We honor differences and courageously confront racism and discrimination.

Innovation: We value agility and embrace thoughtful change. We continuously learn from experience, each other, and the community.

Relationships: We strive to be good partners to develop, support, and preserve permanent family and community relationships for children and youth.

Stewardship: We create an environment of trust and accountability. We make strategic and fiscally responsible decisions for sustainable and lasting contributions.

CASEY FAMILY PROGRAMS' 2020 VISION

Every year, through no fault of their own, over 800,000 children experience the foster care system. On any given day, about 500,000 children are in foster care, with about half of these youth staying in care a year or even longer. Over 20,000 youth emancipate from care each year, often without permanent connections to family or community.

If nothing changes by the year 2020:

- 22,500 more children will die from child abuse or neglect, most before their fourth birthday
- 10.5 million more children will experience the foster care system
- 300,000 more youth will age out of the system, most without the support they need to be successfully self-sufficient
- 3% of the youth leaving foster care will graduate from college
- One in five youth leaving foster care will experience homelessness

Casey's 2020 Strategy will involve a substantial investment to improve outcomes for children in foster care. By the year 2020, we will work in partnership with states and jurisdictions and with families, youth and communities to:

- Safely reduce the number of children in foster care nationally by 50% (from approximately 500,000 to 250,000)
- Increase the safety and improve the transition to self-sufficiency for children and youth who enter the foster care system
    - Improve educational outcomes by increasing the high school graduation rates for youth in care and increasing the number of youth who earn two- or four-year vocational or college degrees

- Provide employment opportunities for youth in care equal to that of the general population
- Improve the overall health and mental health of children in care and extend health care coverage and mental health care coverage to age 25 (or age 21 at a minimum), ensuring that children with mental health disorders receive the treatment and care they need.

Through collaborative approaches at the local, state, and national levels, we can improve the health of our children, provide needed school success and employment supports, and work with families to ensure the safety and stability for children in their own homes and communities.

For more information, visit www.casey.org

Appendix F: CPS Vision and Values

MISSION

The mission of Child Protective Services is to protect children and to act in the children's best interest. To seek active involvement of the children's parents and other family members to solve problems that lead to abuse and neglect.

VISION

Children First: Protected and Connected

VALUES

Respect for culture

Inclusiveness of families, youth, and community

Integrity in decision making

Compassion for all

Commitment to reducing disproportionality

Appendix G: About Project HOPE

PORT ARTHUR HOPE (HELPING OUR PEOPLE EXCEL)

Planning Document, Spring 2004

Port Arthur HOPE began under the direction of Joyce James, Regional Director with Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, in May 2002, as a community forum to focus on the overrepresentation of African American children in foster care and juvenile probation within Jefferson County, Texas. The core group of individuals involved were in established local churches, non-profits, and county, state, and federal agencies dedicated to the health, welfare, and protection of children. Using research provided by the Schools of Social Work at Stephen F. Austin State University and Lamar University as well as the experiences of the group, data were collected. The statistical findings showed that in Jefferson County, 77 percent of children in foster care, 68 percent of children referred to Juvenile Probation, and 86 percent of children identified as at-risk by Communities in Schools are African American. The poverty rate and unemployment rate were also found to be high among this population.

Based upon these statistics and community forums, the obstacles to a healthy and safe community identified for this targeted population included high unemployment, a reliance on public assistance, high rate or incidence of poverty, low educational performance of children, limited education and training of adults, drug abuse, high crime rate, lack of transportation, and limited accessibility to public and commercial services. Port Arthur HOPE members set their mission to identify and remove the obstacles that prevent families and citizens from reaching their individual potential and working to improve outcomes for children. It is believed that the circumstances of the family must change in order to help the children. Port Arthur HOPE members met monthly and engaged citizens from the targeted area to become members and to participate in the steering committee.

Port Arthur HOPE engaged in several activities including parenting classes at the three Federal Subsidized Housing Complexes in the targeted geographical area. Outreach activities were held at the complexes as well. The purpose was to build rapport, gain support, and get the residents involved in the project. The events held offered educational opportunities, family activities, games, and refreshments. Follow-up meetings were held with the residents of the housing complexes. Input was given by the residents, as to what their needs were, and they were given opportunities to serve on the Board of Port Arthur HOPE in order to have a voice and to ensure that the services provided were appropriate.

With the support of the targeted recipients, on July 10, 2003, Port Arthur HOPE formed as a board and on July 28, 2003, it was granted incorporation from the State of Texas. The board has moved forward with plans to connect the target population with the needed educational, vocational, and substance abuse intervention services. Based upon the input of the targeted citizens, a plan was developed to provide community support to fight crime, develop vocational or employment opportunities, and strengthen family units.

Initial Membership of Port Arthur HOPE Included:

Residents and staff from each of the housing complexes

Apartment and Public Housing Resident Boards

Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services

Texas Department of Human Services

Texas Workforce Commission

Jefferson County Juvenile Probation Services

Jefferson County Community Supervision and Corrections Department

Southeast Texas Regional Planning Commission

Region V Educational Service Center

Port Arthur Chamber of Commerce

Port Arthur Independent School District – Booker T. Washington Elementary

279th and 317th District Courts

CASA of Southeast Texas

Communities in Schools of Southeast Texas

Lamar University

Port Arthur Housing Authority

Josh Allen Property Management

Mt. Sinai Missionary Baptist Church

Jefferson County Health and Welfare Services

Port Arthur Police Department

City of Port Arthur

It is planned that Port Arthur HOPE will hire an Executive Director/Community Builder to manage the day-to-day functions and coordination of services. Funding opportunities are being explored.

Note: Port Arthur HOPE hired a Community Organizer in 2005 to manage the day-to-day functions and coordination of services and the one-stop family service center, which opened in April 2005. This service center was established—with commitments from non-profit organizations and governmental agencies—to provide in-kind community services for Port Arthur residents residing in federally subsidized housing or involved with the Juvenile Justice or Child Protection systems. The location of the service center is within the geographical area and within walking distance of the targeted population.

Many local nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and support services are committed to participating in the one stop family service center to meet the needs of the adults, children, and families they serve.

The planning and development of HOPE continued under the leadership of Joyce James until April 2004, when she was named as the DFPS Assistant Commissioner for Child Protective Services in Austin. Although Ms. James moved from the Port Arthur area, she encouraged her colleagues to continue the work they had begun just two short years before.

"It is with extreme sadness and great anticipation that I tell you I have accepted another position within Child Protective Services. I am sad to be leaving my family, friends, and comrades but am anticipating this new position with all its possibilities and challenges.

I have accepted the position of Assistant Commissioner for Child Protective Services in Austin, effective April 1, 2004. I will be responsible for providing leadership and direction for the Child Protective Services Program for the State of Texas. In this position, I hope to make an even greater impact on reducing the number of African American children within the foster care system and will continue to work toward improving the outcomes for children and their families throughout Texas. Although I will not be living in the Port Arthur area, I will continue to work with Port Arthur HOPE by proposing changes at the state level that support our vision and mission.

Again, I will miss each of you. I only ask that you keep our dream alive and see Port Arthur HOPE to its fruition."

–Joyce James' Farewell to Port Arthur HOPE partners, 2004

Appendix H: Community Engagement Model

Excerpt from "Disproportionality in Child Protective Services—Policy Evaluation and Remediation Plan," HHSC and DFPS, July 1, 2006

Child Protective Services (CPS), in collaboration with Casey Family Programs, is implementing a multistage, community engagement model that began with the original work in the CPS Beaumont Region. The work that led to the development of HOPE marks the beginning of this work in Texas. Its purpose is to address the problem of disproportionality and disparate outcomes for children of color in the child welfare system. The model takes a multifaceted approach, looking at social, economic, educational, and political factors that impact disproportionality.

Community Awareness and Engagement: The cornerstone of the community change model is the formation of community partnerships to improve outcomes for children of color. The first step in forming community partnerships is to create community awareness. Each targeted area has formed an Advisory or Steering Committee comprised of local community leaders and CPS staff. The initial focus is to raise the issue of disproportionality and share related data to encourage discussions as to the role of local community services in creating parity. These efforts are reinforced by "telling the story" through the voices of former CPS clients, birth parents, kin caregivers, and foster parents. Committee members are asked to identify specific change strategies to enlist the larger community in addressing disproportionality. Encouraged to see themselves as informed advocates, they begin the process of identifying community strengths to address local needs.

Community Leadership: The next stage in the development of these committees is a focus on community leadership. Community investment and ownership in system improvements to address disproportionality are directly linked to community strengths, constituent voices, and the needs identified by community members and leaders. Participation in *Undoing Racism* training is made available at this stage to reinforce the role of committee members as agents of social change.

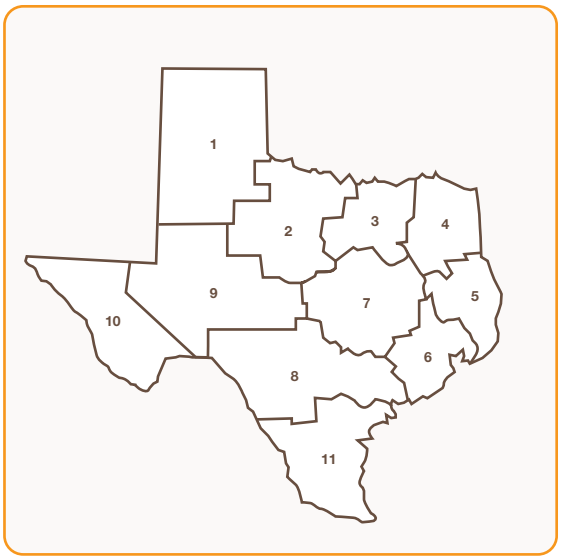
Community Organization: The third stage of this community change model emphasizes community organization. Community organization begins with direct contact with the community to hear from residents about their issues and the strengths of the community. Relationships with residents are cultivated to support them as key resources. CPS Disproportionality Specialists play an active role in helping to begin this exchange of information and in conveying the belief that the community knows best what it needs and how to accomplish its goals.

Community Accountability: The final focus of this community change model is community accountability for desired outcomes and measurable results. As owners of the solutions to sustained community change, committee members are empowered to take responsibility for changes that transcend the work of CPS. The resulting community partnerships lead to measurable change at the local level.

This four-stage community change model has been utilized in the CPS disproportionality pilot sites and will also be the framework for working with the state-level taskforce being formed in fiscal year 2007. The role of the taskforce will be to lead the state-level efforts specific to disproportionality, such as serving as a voice for change, providing leadership for development of public policy, and identifying opportunities for coordinated efforts that sustain change and replicate successful practice models in other areas of Texas.

Appendix I: Our Stories: The Vision and Values in Action

Each region of Texas has multiple success stories. What follows are a few of these stories behind the efforts of addressing disproportionality in the child welfare system. Some are about caseworkers who have shown their commitment; others exemplify how the process works, including using specific services or programs, as well as acting on new policy and procedure. All are a tribute to the successes that CPS Leadership Development work has accomplished in recent years.



MAINTAINING FAMILY CONNECTIONS: REGION 6

Two children came into DFPS conservatorship after their mother was deemed unfit for care, and later her parental rights were terminated. An aunt was notified but was unable to take the children for financial reasons. After the children had been in several foster care placements, their mother died. The biological family arranged a visit to notify the children in person of their mother's passing.

During this reuniting with their biological families and over subsequent visits, it was determined that the family's commitment was positive. The aunt proved she was committed to providing a home for her nephew and niece. (She was able to access housing to better accommodate the children and the agency's assistance.) Additional furniture was located for the family to better accommodate the children's needs.

With the help of the foster parents, the children were transitioned into adoptive placement after eight years of being in the foster care system. The CPS caseworker provided the support the family needed to maintain permanency by consistently assuring that services were in place and ongoing to assist the relative parent with the children's needs. The agency is continuing to extend support to the family in an effort to allow the children to maintain their biological connection and cultural heritage.

MORE FAMILY CONNECTIONS: REGION 6

John is a 14-year-old African American male who originally came into DFPS conservatorship as an infant in 1991 due to abandonment. After adoption, he was returned to DFPS due to physical abuse from his adoptive mother.

The caseworker did some research on the case and found that John's birth mother had eight children. The oldest was a brother in the U.S. Navy in San Diego who was married and had four children.

The caseworker contacted him and found he was very interested in having a relationship with John and possibly having him placed with his family if things went well. When the caseworker shared this news with John, he was overwhelmed with emotion.

John and his foster mother contacted the older brother and pictures were exchanged. The phone calls have gone well and the older brother is now pursuing an adoptive placement. John is scheduled to spend Spring Break in San Diego with his newly discovered family.

GOING THE EXTRA MILE: REGION 5

On the Wednesday before Christmas, a caseworker visited a family of very limited means and asked the kids what they wanted for Christmas. One of the little girls said, "Hair bows." The caseworker was expecting a request like a CD player, DVDs, or a game system, so when she asked her again what she would really like, the little girl answered, "Well, some paper for school," and then went on to list some other school supplies and a backpack. Then she added that she would rather her brother get the backpack. When the caseworker left, she contacted family, friends, etc., and managed to put together a real Christmas for this family complete with Christmas tree. She also purchased clothing and shoes for the family with her own money and really went the "extra mile" for these children. She managed all of this in 1 1/2 days.

RECONNECTING: REGION 1

This Circle of Support story involves two cousins successfully raised together for many years as siblings in foster care. When a family reunion came up, it was decided that the two children should meet their biological families. The caseworker made the travel arrangements and, during the reunion of more than 300 relatives, the children went "from table to table, joining card and domino games… like little sponges soaking up as much family as they could." A Circle of Support conference was held during this time period, and later an aunt offered her home to one of the children as he attended college in the area.

At the time these children had been removed from their home many years earlier, there was no Family Group Conferencing available; but through this Circle of Support, the children were able to connect with what now has become a very supportive network of relatives.

KIND WORDS FOR KIND ACTS: REGION 7

A parent whose child was in CPS care and who has since returned home offers this praise:

I would like to thank your agency for all the help that my daughter received. Thank you for helping place her in a treatment center where she received help [to get] through her emotional issues. She is now back at home and doing great. It's like having a different person in my house—she has changed and grown so much.

ABOVE AND BEYOND: REGION 2

A Family-Based Safety Services (FBSS) caseworker had a case of a 19-year-old pregnant woman with a drug problem and a 2-year-old child. The caseworker found on the Internet a drug treatment program that would take the mother and child. She arranged for her transfer, found clothing and supplies at the Rainbow House, and waited at the bus station with her until departure. The mother wanted to place the unborn child for adoption and arrangements were made through Inheritance Adoptions. This caseworker went above and beyond to help this young mother to become more stable, to get off drugs, and to be able to learn to better parent her young child.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND GOALS, YOUTH STORY: REGION 6

I will turn 17 on March 6, 2006—one month after the birth of my child. Adoption is my plan for this child's future. These are the goals I have set for my future. I do feel that these pressures of life would not be so heavy on me if I had a functional family and were still living at home. I'm asking for help to accomplish these goals.

Independent living

- After the birth and placement of my child, I wish to rent a room from Harkins House for $200 a month. I will be volunteering at the maternity home and helping other pregnan girls adjust to living in a group home environment.
- I can live at this location for 2 years to finish my basics in college.
- I will be providing my own food and necessities.
- I wish to stay in a family environment before moving to a university.
- I need to acquire health insurance 6 weeks after the birth.

Education

- I graduated from Humble ISD on January 1, 2006 with a 4.0 grade average.
- I'm planning to take my SAT test on January 28 if it is not postponed.
- I would like to attend Kingwood College for 2 years to get my basics. My plan will be to start in the summer of 2006.

- After Kingwood College: Transfer to a university to continue my education (living on campus) at University of Texas or University of Houston Clear Lake.

Transportation

- I have successfully passed my written and driving test and received my driving permit from Sears Driving School. I will receive my license in July 2006. If necessary, I can pursue getting my hardship license.
- I plan to buy a used vehicle this summer for transportation to work and school
- I need to acquire insurance to cover the liability of my vehicle.

Work

- I will be working at the Harkins Hutch part-time after the birth.
- When I have transportation, I will be working with a temp agency to have experience in a variety of fields.
- I am pursuing a career in the counseling field.

YOUTH SPEAK OUT: REGION 6

My name is Steve and I am 18 years old. I am so happy to see all of you here tonight for the Heart Gallery opening. It shows me that you really care about children and want to make a difference.

I want to share a little bit about myself with you. I was a foster child for 6 years before I was adopted and had a forever family. I had been in many, many foster homes and was looked at by several families interested in adopting me, but it felt like an eternity before I *finally* had a place to call HOME.

Many children will behave the way I did *(not so long ago).* I was a handful. I would push my new parents away when I found myself loving them because I didn't want to get hurt again. I would say inappropriate things and act uncontrollably.

I was so afraid to love them and then have them kick me out so I decided to kick myself out before they could hurt my feelings. I really gave them a run for their money. There are days I just shake my head and can't believe I acted that way, but they understood how my heart was broken and needed time to heal.

It was New Year's Eve 1997 when my parents took me to Niagara Falls to see the ball drop. It was their second wedding anniversary, and they wanted to celebrate their marriage and ME as their SON! Finally I felt like a REAL kid and finally I had a forever family.

They stuck through everything with me and have helped me be the person I am today and will continue to help me be the adult I want to become. My parents also sought out help and advice from adoption professionals to help our family grow stronger and overcome the rough times.

Please DO NOT believe a child when they say they don't want to be adopted. They really DO! They are just afraid to be disappointed so they would rather not take the risk of getting their feelings hurt so they decide to ACT TOUGH instead. EVERY kid wants to have a place to call HOME! And every kid wants somebody to come home to!

Please do not look at the age of a child as a reason to NOT adopt them! Older children and teenagers need a forever family and want to be loved too! I should know! I am 18 and could not imagine what my future would be if I could not come home from college for Thanksgiving or be a married adult and not have a family to visit for Christmas with the kids.

We are not just children until the age of 18 or 21. We will be your kid for the rest of our lives. I want to be 30 and calling my dad to talk about sports and how he lost our Super Bowl bet!

I want to be 40 and tell my mom that my teenager is driving me nuts…and then ask her, "How did you ever do it, Mom?— Thank you for sticking by my side!"

There are so many children waiting for a forever family and many of them are older—who will love you the rest of your life if you would just give them a chance.

There are also many siblings waiting to be adopted, who need and should stay together. I know first hand what it is like to not live with my younger brother. My heart aches for him every day and I dream of what it would have been like to grow up in the same home with him and do things together. YES, that also means fighting with each other too.

Please don't say no to a child because they come with a brother or sister or two. Sure, many of you will say "Wow, that's an instant family, but you know what…it's also an instant *wonderful family* for the kids too!

So I ask you to...look around…Open your hearts…and give one child, or two or three or more a chance. You can be the hero in their life, and they will be the hero in yours.

So please, won't you consider being a HERO?!

WORKING TOGETHER TOWARD ONE GOAL: REGION 8

CPS and FJC: What Does It Mean?

Submitted by Richard Brooks, Bexar County Family Justice Center, 2006

Child Protective Services eagerly accepted the invitation to partner in the Family Justice Center (FJC). As an on-site partner, CPS has been able to establish the first investigation unit in Bexar County specializing in domestic violence cases.

The CPS Domestic Violence Unit is unique due to a specialization that focuses on the crossover between domestic violence and child abuse. The initial criteria for cases to be assigned to the unit include the following: cases where the primary allegation involves domestic violence (such as a child injured during a violent event, police responding to a domestic disturbance, etc.); a principal in the case has or is pursuing a protective order; a principal in the case has a criminal history that includes Assault Bodily Injury-Family; and other cases as determined to be appropriate including cases referred by FJC partners.

The primary focus of CPS is to ensure child safety with a focus on family preservation. In domestic violence cases, one strategy for helping children be safe is to help the adult victim also be safe. This is often possible through resources available through partner agencies at the FJC. Collaboration is key when working together, and to that end, CPS began in February 2006 to schedule weekly staffings for cases involving domestic violence. The case collaboration staffings have been initiated at the CPS headquarters to allow other investigation units and ongoing units to collaborate and seek recommendations on appropriate services and community referrals for victims of family violence.

The question posed in the title of this article (CPS and FJC: What Does It Mean?) can be illustrated by the latest success story. On February 9, 2006, a caseworker was assigned a Priority 1 case involving a mother, currently 8 months pregnant with possible complications with her pregnancy, and two younger children. At the time the investigation was initiated, the mother was a patient at a local hospital. It was reported that the mother was the victim of a domestic violence relationship and was fearful of returning home. One of the main concerns was that the mother reported having been a victim of domestic violence for more than five years and that her two children were currently in the custody of the alleged perpetrator. The caseworker consulted with a CPS Hospital Liaison regarding the mother and her circumstances, who then consulted with the unit supervisor. From there, additional collaborations with FJC partners were facilitated with the Department of Defense, the Battered Women's Shelter, the caseworker, and law enforcement. Arrangements were made for the mother following discharge from the hospital to be transported to the FJC to complete an intake and start services. Through coordination with law enforcement, the mother was successful in securing her children and having the family transported to the Battered Women's Shelter where they remain safe. The mother has initiated a protective order against her paramour and has contacted her family for additional assistance. This family is a perfect example of the success of the FJC program: all of the parts of the FJC working together to obtain one goal.

SUPPORTING FOR SUCCESS: REGION 11

I am new to Family and Protective Services, but I have already seen the strong efforts that the workers and supervisors do to ensure the well being not only of the children we help protect but the family as a whole. It is our goal to provide services to our clients that will enable them to learn new and effective ways of parenting.

My success story is about a young mother who was reported to our department for alleged physical abuse of her 7-year-old daughter. It was my very first case, so I did not know what to expect, but I knew I would receive a lot of help from my co-workers and supervisor on how to provide effective service to this family.

On my initial assessment with the family, my client was defensive and stood her ground about not needing any help from our department. However, she, but agreed to participate in services that we had jointly come up with. My client and supervisor and I agreed that she would benefit from individual counseling to address her issues with anger management. Another service that we offered her family was individual counseling for her daughter to address the issues of the abuse. Along with the counseling, my client and I agreed that she would also benefit from parenting classes so that she could learn different techniques of discipline that did not involve physical punishment. I communicated to my client that I was there to help her and be supportive of her family.

When it came time to conduct my monthly visit, I asked my client what she had been discussing in her parenting sessions and if she was using any of the techniques that she had learned. She was excited to inform me that she was learning how to praise and reward her children for good behavior and was taking away privileges for inappropriate behavior. My client was learning how to promote good behavior and learning how to deal appropriately with behavior that was not suitable in her home. My client also shared that she felt her daughter was getting a lot from the counseling she was receiving because it allowed her to talk to someone else besides her. She discovered that it was easier for her to open up to someone that she did not know. My client noticed that her daughter's behavior had improved. My client added that she was enjoying the services and that she was aware of the changes she needed to make to ensure that her children would not be at risk for future abuse.

My client successfully completed all ten of the required sessions and her therapist felt that she was no longer a threat to the well-being of her children. My client has expressed her appreciation for the help that we offered her family.

Appendix J: Undoing Racism: A Personal Perspective

Submitted by Chris Van Deusen, Public Information Officer, Region 7, as shared at a 2006 Disproportionality workshop.

WHAT IT'S NOT

Before we go any further, I think it's important to know what *Undoing Racism* is not. It's not a cultural sensitivity class. It's not a course on discrimination. It's not a feel-good, be colorblind, sing "Kumbaya" workshop. ***Undoing Racism*** is an eye-opening experience that can change the way we see our relationship with the people we're supposed to be working for.

It begins with an historical context for racism in America, moves through defining and recognizing racism, looks at how institutional racism acts as an oppressive force, and addresses developing, organizing, and empowering community constituents.

I had the opportunity to attend one of the two-and-a-half day trainings in June, the first one in Austin for Region 7 staff. Before it started, the rumors were flying like tumbleweed in a windstorm: you'll love it, you'll hate it, you'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll never see yourself or anybody else the same again. With all of that, I didn't know what to expect. At the same time, I was curious, skeptical, defensive, and energized. Looking back, I can't say it was an absolutely transfigurative experience; it didn't radically change what I do every day. But it was certainly valuable and enlightening. I learned a lot, even about myself, and it changed the way I look at the world around me, as well as how I think about my agency and other large institutions that interact with it.

RACE MATTERS

For me, the light bulb came on when we were sharing, as individuals, what we like about being white …or black …or brown. There was a lot of talk about culture and tradition, which prompted me to think about how I identify myself. There are lots of ways: by my job, my religion, my avocation as a singer, my being an American or a Texan. But "as a white guy" was not anywhere near the top of my list.

Then I listened to my colleagues, and that's when it struck me. I have the luxury of not defining myself by my race, but people who aren't white can't do that. Their skin color or ethnicity colors how they see the world, and how the world sees them. Like it or not, everything around us says that's one of the most important things about them. How well educated they are, what job they hold, or the ideas they have often take a back seat. It may be a shallow, obvious revelation, but it's one that will stick with me.

DIVINING A DEFINITION

I couldn't possibly summarize the entire session here and won't try to, but I thought it might be useful to let you in on some of the highlights. One of the most important concepts to understanding racism is defining it. Our working definition was that "race prejudice plus power equals racism." Racism is not the same as prejudice or bigotry. As the People's Institute trainers define those terms, not everyone who is racist is a bigot, and there are certainly bigots who can't possibly be racist. No matter whether you decide that you are a racist, we can't afford simply to wallow in being ashamed of racism. It is a fact of life, and recognizing that it's built into the system lets us begin to work at undoing it.

CULTIVATING GRASSROOTS

Another thing that came up repeatedly over the course of the training is the concept of developing a constituency, people to whom CPS is accountable and who will go to bat for the agency. Real people, the people we help, have to take a stake in the system and become leaders willing speak up about it. Organizing grassroots support and cultivating leaders will be crucial to transforming CPS into an anti-racist institution.

The agency has started that process by beginning to organize community groups that will work to undo disproportionality. However, we can't stop there. The most important part of developing support and keeping the anti-racist ball rolling is accountability. We must, as an agency, be responsive to the community in order to organize people effectively and create grassroots leadership.

There is, of course, much more to the training: understanding history, recognizing different kinds of racism, evaluating where CPS stands on a racism continuum. I hope you'll have a chance to participate at some point. All I ask is that you enter with a mind open and willing to think and learn and stay with it even after the ***Undoing Racism*** session is over. Don't let the end of the training be the end of your efforts to undo racism. Keep talking to people inside and outside the agency; start organizing and networking as we try to turn the page and transform CPS and DFPS into an anti-racist institution.

Appendix K: Undoing Racism: New CPS Training Program Attacks Roots of Disproportionality

Submitted Randall Anthony, Information Specialist, 2006

Here's a news flash: racism is a tough issue. Certainly, that sounds like the understatement of the century, but it behooves us once in a while to confront it. Racism is a thoroughly complex monster, a veritable hydra of public and private problems, and understanding it—let alone undoing it—will require a thorough knowledge of class, economics, religion, ethnicity, nationality, education, and gender issues, not to mention a thorough appreciation of history.

Take film director Spike Lee, for example. His movies, like *Do The Right Thing* and *Jungle Fever,* have explored issues of race and racism in America with passion and subtlety, painting pictures with inflammatory broad strokes and textured nuance—and everything in between. Lee has argued in the press that African Americans *cannot* be racist, couching his argument in his assertion that racism is defined by power, and if you don't have any, you can't be racist.

And yet, one of Lee's own films, *School Daze*, revolves around black-on-black discrimination, and negative Jewish stereotypes are a common occurrence in his movies. Which is just one way of asserting—contrary to Lee—that racism is everywhere and affects most everyone. So solving the problem will not be a matter of public policy but, rather, personal change.

Sweeping generalities? Perhaps. But one of the defining moments in this writer's life was the rude realization that the racism that surrounded him during his Southern, conservative, lily-white upbringing had absolutely, positively infected him—and all the well-intentioned liberality in the world could not expunge the stain. So, if anyone claims they don't have a racist bone in their body, I recommend getting an x-ray.

Into this cultural minefield wades CPS. A new training program, ***Undoing Racism,*** is the most ambitious tool yet in attacking disproportionality in Texas' child welfare system. Briefly stated, disproportionality is the overrepresentation of a particular race or cultural group in a particular program or system. Specifically, the CPS initiative (as defined by Senate Bill 6) seeks to redress the disproportionate numbers of African American children in the system and, most importantly, improve the outcomes for those children. While the causes of disproportionality extend throughout society, some of the responsibility lies within the child welfare system and in CPS. This is where the ***Undoing Racism*** training comes into play.

Undoing Racism deals with more fundamental issues than social work and public policy. Conducted by the New Orleans-based People's Institute, the training maintains that racism has been systematically erected, and it can only be "undone" if people understand where it comes from, how it func-

tions, and why it is perpetuated. Thus, ***Undoing Racism*** seeks to attack the *illness* of racism, thereby alleviating the *symptom* of disproportionality.

In fact, the roots of CPS' ***Undoing Racism*** program go back to 2004. Newly-appointed CPS Assistant Commissioner Joyce James attended an ***Undoing Racism*** workshop at the invitation of Casey Family Programs, a DFPS partner in the disproportionality initiative. Ms. James says, "This workshop was the most powerful discussion I had ever had on the impact of institutionalized racism and the specific impact it has on the poor. It changed my focus on how we should deliver services to families involved with CPS."

Under James' leadership, the program took wing, and ***Undoing Racism*** workshops began in February 2005, mainly in Regions 3 and 6 where disproportionality was most prevalent. These "pilot" programs were actually quite extensive, reaching all the way down through management to the caseworker level in some areas. Now, the training program is ramping up and will reach the entire state by the end of the year.

Like many CPS leaders, Deborah Green, (PS State Disproportionality Director, has already attended the ***Undoing Racism*** training. To her, the most compelling aspect of the workshop was the analysis of power—how it creates racism and how it can eliminate it. "Systems were not originally set up with poor people of color in mind," Green asserted, "and in many cases the systems do more to maintain the status quo rather than change it for the better." ***Undoing Racism*** participants, she explains, develop recognition of the power that already exists in even the poorest community—power to undo racism. Green concluded, "My hope is that CPS staff will come away from the workshop with the understanding that everyone's voice is required to effectively address disproportionality."

Green and James, actually, have each attended the ***Undoing Racism*** workshop numerous times. Other CPS leaders, including Regional Directors Linda Wright (Region 3) and Randy Joiner (Region 6), have also attended multiple sessions, and they speak of their experiences with enthusiasm. Wright has attended four ***Undoing Racism*** trainings—in part because of her commitment to her staff and in part because she believes strongly in the principles espoused by the workshop. "I believe that we cannot separate our disproportionality work from the work around undoing racism," Wright stressed. "Racism is that big—something that will always get in the way of effective services unless we learn and agree about what it is, where it came from, and how it impacts all of us and the services we provide to children and families."

Wright continued, "The ***Undoing Racism*** workshop is not cultural diversity training. Rather, it talks openly about the issue of racism—which most of us find very difficult—and I think it is a conversation that is long overdue." Racism, she discovered, doesn't discriminate. "One of the most important things that I have learned during the workshop is that racism has damaged us all—people of color *and* white people. Racism is a barrier to effective relationships and, thus, a barrier to CPS providing services to children and families."

Randy Joiner has attended five workshops. "***Undoing Racism*** and the disproportionality initiative reminds me of the reason that I became a social worker," he enthused. "The State of Texas has taken the lead, showing our true desire to help families and children. Our work in this arena provides me with a great sense of pride."

Speaking with these CPS leaders, one gets the impression of not just understanding, but belief—even a sort of evangelism. In a sense, they have seen the light—a ray of hope that perhaps, finally, we can genuinely, personally, honestly address racism in our own backyard. Joiner believes that solving the problems addressed by the ***Undoing Racism*** workshop can solve a variety of social ills, including those addressed by the CPS disproportionality initiative. "Fix this," he said, "and the numbers will fix themselves."

Appendix L: Letter to Commissioner Carey Cockerell from Dr. Ralph Bayard, Senior Director, Office of Diversity, Casey Family Programs

February 9, 2007

Mr. Carey Cockerell, Commissioner
Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
701 W. 51st Street
Austin, TX

Dear Commissioner Cockerell:

On behalf of Casey Family Programs, I would like to acknowledge the tremendous demonstration of leadership at all levels within Texas' DFPS. Under the very capable leadership of Assistant Commissioner Joyce James the state of Texas is fast becoming recognized as the "go to" state when other jurisdictions we work with want to know and learn more about what Texas is doing to try and improve its system of care for vulnerable children.

As you know, children of color, particularly African American children, are disproportionately represented in Texas' child welfare system and have poorer well-being outcomes. Texas is one of forty-five other jurisdictions in this country where this is an issue. However, unlike most of those forty-five other jurisdictions, Texas is trying to do something about it. We believe that strong leadership within DFPS along with tremendous support from the highest levels of state government, and the intentional engagement of constituents are the key elements to any attempts to address this very daunting issue. We also believe that Texas is one of the few jurisdictions in this country that currently has all of those elements in place.

I mention the daunting nature of this issue. As you know, talking about race and systemic bias is not an easy conversation to have. However, we believe that conversation is fundamental to get to the underlying causes of disproportionality and outcome disparities, and more importantly to the sustainable solutions that will help to reduce both. Addressing the issues of race is really where the State of Texas has demonstrated unprecedented leadership. And it is because of this kind of leadership that Texas' work is being viewed by other states and jurisdictions as a model approach to addressing the issue. As a result, Casey Family Programs is extremely proud to be partnering with Texas in achieving its goals around this issue.

Sincerely,
Dr. Ralph Bayard, Ed.D.
Senior Director, Casey Family Programs

Anti-racism: To act individually or collectively to eliminate decisions and bias that lead to negative outcomes for individuals of color

APHSA: American Public Human Services Association leadership training

Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC): Nationally selected teams test multiple ideas, strategies, and tools on a very small scale, addressing the disproportionate representation of youth of color in the child welfare system

BSD: CPS Basic Skills Development for new staff

CAPTA: Child Abuse Prevention Treatment Act

Casey Family Programs: A mission to provide and improve, and ultimately to prevent the need for, foster care. A Seattle-based national operating foundation that has served children, youth, and families in the child welfare system since 1966.

CFSR: Federal Child and Family Services Review of state child welfare programs in the context of specific outcomes in the areas of safety, permanency, and child well-being.

Circle of Support (COS): A case planning process, modified from the FGDM practice model, through which young people approaching their transition from the foster care system are at the center of their future planning. Typically, the young person identifies participants for the COS meeting who can be a sustained support system for him or her as he or she exits the system.

Community Change Model: CPS, in collaboration with Casey Family Programs, is implementing a multifaceted approach to addressing disproportionality by looking at the impact of social, economic, educational, and political factors. Community leadership and partnership are the fundamental aspects of this model.

CPS: Child Protective Services. Charged with ensuring that children and youth who are at risk of abuse and neglect live in safe, nurturing, permanent homes

CPS Leadership Team: A large management/leadership group, including State Office and regional managers, that leads systems improvements in all areas of child welfare

Cultural racism: The imposing of one race's way of life, or culture, on another by way of creating cultural and political institutions that sanction dominance and oppression

Disproportionality: The overrepresentation of a particular race or cultural group in a particular program or system

FGDM: Family Group Decision Making. A family-centered approach to working with families for case planning and decision making regarding children served by the child welfare system

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Glossary

Gatekeeper: Anyone in an institutional/organizational role or position who can grant or deny access to institutional resources or equity. Gatekeepers are, by structural design, accountable to the institutions they work for, and not the people they serve. They function as buffers between their institutions and the community.

HHSC: Health and Human Services Commission

Individual racism: The conforming of all individuals to one race's way of life so that the racist behavior can be maintained

Institutional racism: Race prejudice and power embedded into the culture of an organization (the institution)

Kinship care: The placement of a child in the home of a relative or family friend. This placement occurs when parents are unable to provide for the child's safety.

KWYA: Knowing Who You Are. A 3-part curriculum for social workers and other adults and professionals in the child welfare system. Created with the direct collaboration of alumni of foster care, youth still in care, birth parents, and resource families, the curriculum helps child welfare professionals explore race and ethnicity, preparing them to support the healthy development of their constituents' racial and ethnic identity.

OLA: Organizational Learning Alliance, within Casey Family Programs. Focuses on capacity building, which includes professional development for direct service staff and leadership development for all staff and our external collaborators. The leadership development model is to develop strong staff at all levels, from first line to executives and at the individual and collective levels.

One Church, One Child program: A special adoption recruitment program designed to reach out to the minority community. Working primarily through the minority churches, it identifies adoptive families and single parents for children in need of permanent homes. One Church, One Child was begun in 1980 in Chicago by Father George Clements, former pastor of Holy Angels Catholic Church. The basic principle of One Church, One Child is to recruit at least one minority family or single parent per church to adopt at least one child. One Church, One Child representatives are among the stakeholders involved in Disproportionality Advisory Committees in Texas.

Operation PUSH: Placing Us in Safe Homes. Established in 2005, ensures that tasks are completed to move children to adoption finalization. Provides for state office oversight and monitoring.

The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond: A national, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, anti-racist collective of veteran organizers and educators, the office for which is headquartered in New Orleans. Dedicated to building an effective movement for social change

Pilot programs: Pilot sites that work to ensure that service access is improved for families either through one-stop resource centers or through a network of services across agency systems

Project HOPE Center: Helping Our People Excel. A one-stop family resource/family service center in Port Arthur, TX, operating an asset-based program for strengthening the community. HOPE is the community-based model identified for statewide replication in addressing disproportionality.

Stages of service: In the CPS system, includes reports, substantiations, investigations, removals, and placements.

TDFPS: Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (formerly TDPRS, Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services)

TSS: Texas State Strategy. A child welfare systems improvement collaboration co-led by Casey Family Programs and CPS. TSS work is focused on sustainable child welfare policy and practice changes and improvements. Work is accomplished through various work efforts and methodologies directed toward specific areas for change. The work is done in partnership with key agency representatives, constituency group members, and multiple stakeholders participating in planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Undoing Racism. Training offered by The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond designed to educate, challenge, and empower people to "undo" the racist structures that hinder effective social change.

Youth Specialists: Staff positions in each of the 11 CPS regions, all of which are filled by alumni of foster care