
National CASA Evidence Bank Resource Guide


CULTURAL AWARENESS AND BIAS: REDUCING
DISPROPORTIONALITY AND DISPARITY



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Research has long shown the overrepresentation of certain racial and ethnic populations—particularly African Americans and Native Americans—in the child welfare system when compared with their representation in the general population. Not only are there more children and youth of color in foster care, but they are more likely to remain in care for longer periods of time, re-enter care and age out of care without permanency.



The personal biases of professionals and others involved with a case or family may knowingly or unknowingly affect professionals' decision making. In the context of the advocate role, cultural competence is the ability to work effectively with people from a variety of backgrounds. This entails being aware and respectful of different cultural norms, values, traditions and parenting styles.

CASA/GAL program staff and volunteers can address the issues of disproportionality by:

- Participating in training and education to learn more about how cultural bias influences important decisions for children and families of color.
- Exploring your own culture as well as identifying similarities and differences between groups who are different from your own and trying to understand families through a cultural sensitivity lens.
- Getting a clear picture of disproportionality in your local community by collecting data on the race and ethnicity of the children who are child welfare-involved and compare it to the overall child population.
- Instilling or reinforcing policies in your program that support equity for all children and families.
- Identifying programs in your community that provide culturally competent services.
- Partnering with child welfare providers and court representatives to identify and address the root causes of disproportionality in your community.

NATIONAL PUBLICATIONS AND ONLINE RESOURCES

The resources below are offered to help your CASA/GAL program understand and address the ways that issues of disproportionality affect the children and families we serve. These materials can be customized and used to create in-service trainings for staff and volunteers.

[The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare \(CEBC\): Reducing Racial Disparity and Disproportionality in Child Welfare](#) CEBC has reviewed a number of strategies aimed at reducing racial disproportionality and disparity. It also has assigned these strategies scientific ratings based on the research evidence supporting them.

[Disproportionality Rates for Children of Color in Foster Care Technical Assistance Bulletin](#) This Fiscal Year 2015 disproportionality technical assistance bulletin includes new graphs that portray differences in placement and outcomes for children of color in foster care. In addition to in-care disproportionality rates, this 2015 data also includes (by race/ethnicity): median number of placements, current placement type and time to permanency.

[National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators, Disproportionality Diagnostic Tool](#) The

Disproportionality Diagnostic Tool allows users to identify gaps, areas for improvement and agency strengths that can support equitable representation.

[Racial Disproportionality and Disparity in Child Welfare](#) From The Child Welfare Information Gateway, this issue brief is designed to help administrators, program managers and policy makers explore solutions to racial disproportionality in their own child welfare systems. Specific examples of state and local projects that address disproportionality are highlighted.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

An inclusive CASA/GAL network helps us better understand and promote the well-being of the children and families we serve. National CASA is committed to promoting cultural competence among staff and volunteers, reducing disproportionality and ensuring equitable outcomes for all children regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation and zip code.

General Resources

[Center for the Healing of Racism](#) The center believes that the human race is essentially one and that racism is a learned behavior that can be unlearned. Its belief is that by working together, we can heal racism as well as bring positivity and empowerment to everyone.

[The Diversity Training Group](#) This is a private consulting firm that provides printed training materials for improving workplace diversity and cultural sensitivity.

[Institutional Bias Checklist for Volunteers](#) This checklist from National CASA is for volunteers and is based on the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, “Courts Catalyzing Change Preliminary Protective Hearing Benchcard.”

[International Multicultural Institute](#) This site provides web-based trainings, publications, coaching and mentoring as well as a yearly conference. It was developed to provide information to staff and volunteers looking to deepen their understanding of racism and its ongoing impact on American society.

[National Coalition Building Institute \(NCBI\)](#) NCBI provides training, workshops, certifications and organizational assessments to improve cultural competence and collaboration among diverse groups.

[The People's Institute](#) This organization provides training workshops that include dialogue, presentations and role-playing. It also provides web-based lectures and runs conferences that include training and workshops yearly. The institute’s “Undoing Racism” training provides tools to confront societal and institutional racism.

[Prism International](#) This organization offers consulting, web-based and in-person training on cross-cultural communication, harassment prevention as well as diversity and inclusion.

[Rural Strengths and Challenges](#) Rural communities face a number of challenges, such as poverty, substance abuse, unemployment and lack of education. These challenges are of particular concern because they are linked to child maltreatment and often are of greater concern for children of color.

[Texas Center for Elimination of Disproportionality and Disparities](#) This resource is housed on the Texas Health and Human Services website. It includes information on a number of topics that are specific to Texas, but can be adapted for other locations.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH OF COLOR

[The Asian Americans Advancing Justice](#) This group builds power through collective advocacy and organizing to achieve racial equity.

[Denver Indian Family Resource Center \(DIFRC\)](#) This center has served American Indian children and families in the Denver area who are involved, or at risk of becoming involved, with the child welfare system.

[Indian Country Child Trauma Center](#) This organization was established to develop trauma-related treatment protocols, outreach materials and service-delivery guidelines specific to American Indian and Alaska Native children and their families.

[National Association of the Deaf \(NAD\)](#) The mission of NAD is to promote, protect and preserve the rights and quality of life of deaf and hearing-impaired individuals in the United States.

[National Association of Puerto Rican Hispanic Social Workers \(NAPRHSW\)](#) The mission of NAPRHSW is to organize social workers and other human service professionals to strengthen, develop and improve the resources and services that meet the needs of Puerto Rican and Hispanic families.

[National Black Child Development Institute \(NBCDI\)](#) The NBCDI is devoted to improving the lives of Black children and families through advocacy and education.

[Native America Calling: The National Electronic Talking Circle](#) This live call-in program links public radio stations, the internet and listeners together in a thought-provoking national conversation about issues specific to Native communities.

[Native Web.](#) This site contains over 3,000 links to various aspects of Native American culture and history.

[OCA – Asian/Pacific American Advocates](#) OCA is a national organization dedicated to advancing the social, political and economic well-being of Asian Pacific Americans in the United States.

[Teach Mideast](#) This site is a resource for increasing understanding of the Arab world.

[Tribal Court Clearinghouse](#) This resource is for American Indian and Alaska Native nations, American Indians and Alaska Native people, tribal justice systems, victim services providers, tribal service providers and others involved in the improvement of justice in Indian country.

[WWW Virtual Library-American Indians](#) This resource is a library of the American Indian culture with an index of resources on the web, including culture, history, language, health and art.

[White Antiracist.org](#) This site provides a definition of a white antiracist as well as biographies and profiles of antiracist individuals and organizations. It also provides information on the history of race in the United States and links to antiracist resources.

[UnidosUS](#) The largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States, this organization works to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans.

[National Indian Child Welfare Act](#) The Indian Child Welfare Act was enacted in 1978 in response to a crisis affecting American Indian and Alaska Native children, families and tribes. Studies revealed that large numbers of Native children were being separated from their parents, extended families and communities by state child welfare and private adoption agencies. In fact, research found that 25–35 percent of all Native children were being removed; of these, 85 percent were placed outside their families and communities—even when fit and willing relatives were available. For more information, visit <https://www.bia.gov/bia/ois/dhs/icwa>

CHILDREN AND YOUTH WHO ARE LGBT

[All Children – All Families \(ACAF\)](#) This website has resources that can help CASA/GAL programs learn how to support LGBT youth and work toward better outcomes for this population. The ACAF initiative enhances LGBT cultural competence among child welfare and child service professionals. It also educates LGBT people about opportunities to become foster or adoptive parents for waiting children.

[Children of Lesbian and Gays Everywhere \(COLAGE\)](#) The COLAGE organization offers peer support, newsletters, conferences and literature for children with gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender parents.

[Coalition for Positive Sexuality](#) This site offers information about sexuality for teens who are gay, straight or bisexual.

[Family Acceptance Project](#). The Family Acceptance Project is the only community research, intervention, education and policy initiative that works to decrease major health and related risks for LGBT youth—such as suicide, substance abuse, HIV and homelessness—in the context of their families.

[Foster Care's Invisible Youth Video](#) This video offers compelling firsthand accounts of the foster care experiences of seven LGBTQ youth. Their struggles range from a lack of acceptance and peer approval to a sense of being lost in a series of unstable and unsupportive placements.

[Getting Down to Basics: Tools to Support LGBTQ Youth in Care](#) Developed in partnership by the Child Welfare League of America and Lambda Legal, this toolkit provides guidance on an array of issues affecting LGBTQ youth as well as the adults and organizations who provide them with out-of-home care.

[Human Rights Campaign \(HRC\)](#) The largest national lesbian and gay political organization, the HRC envisions an America where lesbian and gay people are assured of their basic equal rights.

[LGBTQ Youth in Foster Care](#) The Child Welfare League of America released a special issue of its *Child Welfare Journal* (August 2018) that is focused on young people in foster care who are LGBTQ.

[National Youth Advocacy Coalition \(NYAC\)](#) The NYAC advocates for and with young people who are LGBTQ in an effort to end discrimination and to ensure the well-being of these youth.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

[The ARC: For people with developmental and intellectual disabilities](#) This organization is devoted to advocacy for all people with disabilities.

[Deaf Linx](#) This site provides an extensive list of links to sites about deaf culture, deaf history, deaf businesses and other general resources to those with hearing loss or those who would like to learn about deaf culture.

SPECIAL IMMIGRANT JUVENILE STATUS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

[Special Immigrant Juvenile Status](#) This homeland security site provides information on this topic.