



Permanency Enhancement Project

Southern Region

Fiscal Year July 2013-June 2014

End of Year Report

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Permanency Enhancement Project Fiscal Year July 2013-June 2014 How Are We Doing in Southern Region?

Introduction

This report is a follow-up Report #6 submitted by the Center for Adoption Studies at Illinois State University and continues the exploration of trends permanency, placement, and disparity trends across the Southern Region.

As with previous editions, this report is guided by a number of underlying principles and service assumptions that guide the work of key stakeholders involved in the process of decreasing disparities and disproportionality in child welfare.

Item 1: Underlying Service Principles and Assumptions

Underlying Service Principles and Assumptions

1. Children generally fare best with their families and suffer when they are removed from familial care, even when this removal is necessary for their safety.
2. When children cannot remain in their families they should be returned to their stronger, safer and more stable families as soon as possible.
3. Racial disproportionality and disparity exist in our child welfare system.
4. Disparate treatment of African American families disadvantages African American children, youth and families.
5. Research on disproportionality and disparity reveals that the over-representation of African American children and youth is present at several measurement points, but is most clearly present at the first point (accepted reports) and the last point (remaining in care).
6. Addressing disproportionality and disparity requires a broad-based community effort – the public child welfare institution cannot (and should not) tackle these issues alone.

In engaging in ongoing service assessment, the varied regions of DCFS-IL are actively attempting to address disproportionality and disparity across all levels of service. The work of this report and similar ones (past and present) will further elucidate systemic

trends so that service may be improved to help ALL families and children in a given region.

Overview of Southern Region

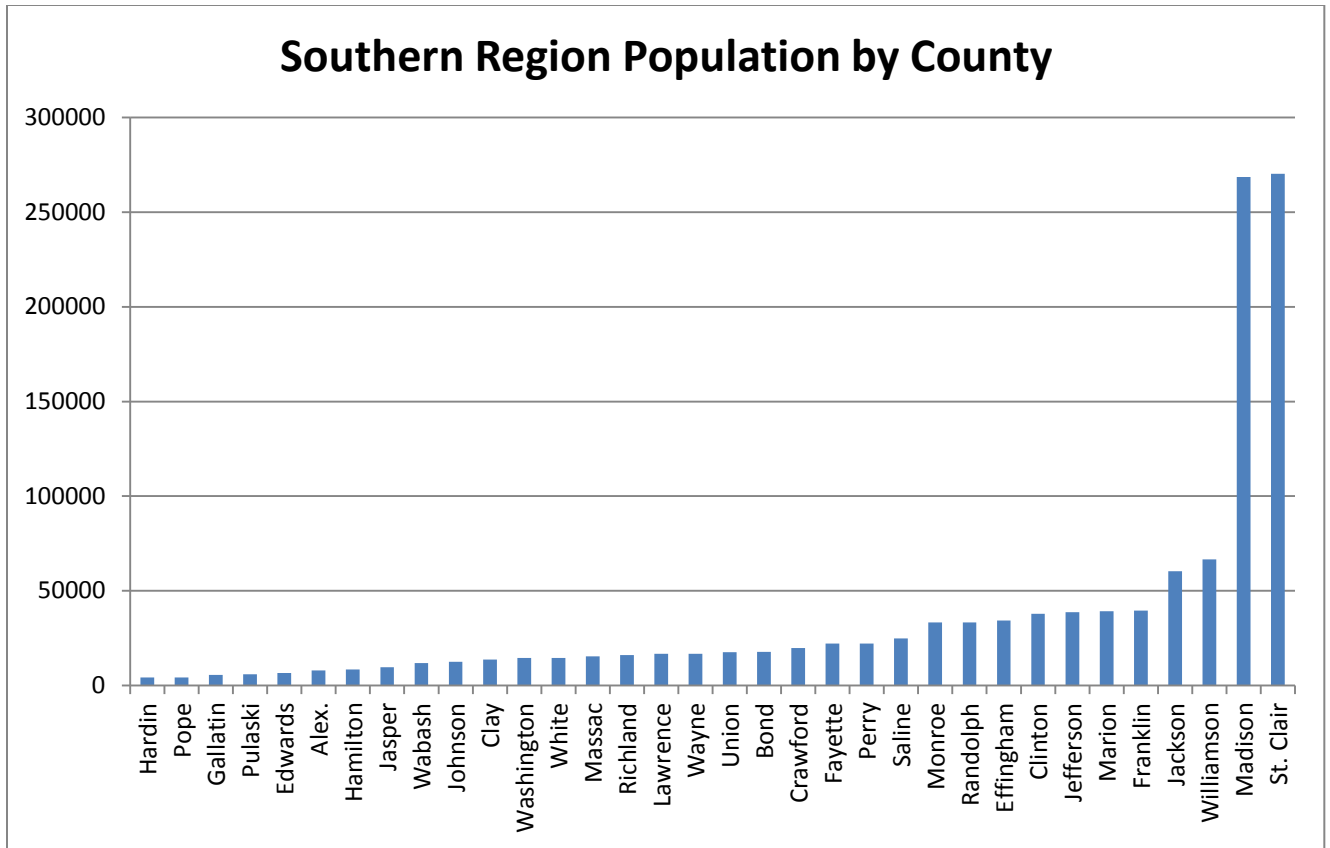
This report specifically looks at service trends and patterns in The Southern region of DCFS. This region comprises over a third of the state of Illinois. The Southern region includes the following action teams (counties):

- Cairo Action Team (Alexander & Pulaski)
- Carbondale Action Team (Franklin, Jackson, Perry, & Williamson)
- Carlyle/Sparta Action Team (Bond, Clinton, Monroe, Randolph, Washington)
- Effingham Action Team (Effingham, Fayette, & Jasper)
- Madison Action Team (Madison)
- Metropolis Action Team (Hardin, Johnson, Massac, & Pope)
- Mt. Vernon Action Team (Marion & Jefferson)
- Olney Action Team (Crawford, Edward, Lawrence, Richmond, & Wabash)
- St. Clair Action Team (St. Clair)

County Demographics

These counties are largely rural, or a combination of rural and small to mid-size metropolitan areas, ranging in population from under 10,000 to over 250,000. The two counties with the largest populations (Madison and St. Clair Counties) are near the metropolitan St. Louis area and are more urban in character. Based on 2011 Census estimates, the total population of Southern region is about 1.23 million.

Chart 1: Southern Region Population, by County



Child Population

By far the largest racial/ethnic group in child population in Southern region is white/non-Hispanic. The child population for each of the counties with active action teams follows.

Table 1: Child Population, by County

County	White, Non-Hispanic	African American	Hispanic	Other
Jasper	96.7	>1	1.5	1.5%
White	96.2	>1	1.9	1.6
Hamilton	96.0	>1	1.7	2.0
Clay	95.9	>1	1.8	2.0
Fayette	95.8	>1	1.3	2.4
Wayne	95.6	>1	1.9	1.9
Lawrence	95.1	>1	3.6	.6
Monroe	95.2	>1	2.2	2.2
Franklin	95.0	>1	2.0	2.0
Edwards	94.9	1.2	2.0	1.9
Effingham	94.9	>1	2.8	2.0
Richland	94.0	>1	2.6	2.5

Crawford	93.8	1.3	1.9	3.0
Wabash	93.8	1.1	2.5	2.6
Washington	93.7	1.6	2.3	2.4
Bond	91.8	2.8	2.6	2.8
Clinton	91.7	>1	1.8	6.2
Perry	90.0	3.0	2.0	5.0
Randolph	89.7	5.3	2.5	2.4
Marion	87.2	5.7	>1	3.9
Williamson	87.0	5.0	3.0	5.0
Jefferson	82.3	10	>1	3.9
Madison	80.0	11.0	5.0	4.0
Jackson	66.0	19.0	7.0	8.0
Pulaski	55.0	37.0	3.0	5.0
St. Clair	52.0	37.0	5.0	6.0
Alexander	48.1	45.0	1.0	6.0

The largest *numbers* of African American children are in the two largest counties (Madison and St. Clair), but these counties differ dramatically in the percent of their populations that is African American. Over 1/3 of the child population of St. Clair County is African American, compared to 11% of Madison.

The Hispanic child population continues to be a small percent of overall population, and in just one county (Jackson) does it exceed 5% of the total. Of note, the Hispanic population exceeds the African American population in almost 2/3 of the counties in Southern region with action teams.

Challenges to Family Well-being

Southern region has been particularly hard hit by the economic downturn beginning in 2007. Population growth has been small – less than 2% since 2006 – and many counties have lost population. Further, Southern region families show risk on several indicators of child and family well-being, indicators that are factors predicting child welfare involvement. These indicators include: Child Poverty, Unemployment and Underemployment, and Single Parenthood.

A more detailed overview of these indicators can be found in the FY12-13 report completed by The Center for Adoption Studies at Illinois State University. The boxes below provide some of the facts that demonstrate how these indicators challenge family well-being.

Child Poverty

- 7 out of 9 Illinois counties with the highest child poverty rates are located in the Southern Region
- 21.9% of children in Illinois are experiencing poverty. (2007 Report Illinois Poverty)
 - Of these - 38.4 % of these children are African American (compared to 22% of Hispanic, 8.2% of White, 6.8% of Asian children)

Unemployment & Under-Employment

- Since economic recession, unemployment has doubled in Southern Region
- Southern Illinois lags behind the nation in recovering from the recession
- Median Income for families with children in Franklin and Jackson Counties (Southern Region) has dropped by 21.8% and 26.4% respectively in 2011 (Illinois Kids Count, 2013 Report)

Single Parenthood

- Single parent household are at a greater risk than dual parent households for poverty, low wage, and familial stress.
- In Southern Region, the single parent household rate in St. Clair, Clinton, Effingham, Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Madison, Marion, Randolph, and Williamson all exceed 25%.



Section II

About the Data

Background on Data

The data in this packet are supplied to guide discussion as groups implement action plans for their communities. They are only a small part of “how we are doing” in Southern region. This section provides some overview statistics on trends and patterns for the region as a whole. Special sections specific to each Action Team can be found in the Appendices.

Data Sources and Limitations

The primary source for data for this packet is the Quality Assurance Reports of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, hereunto referred to DCFS. Quality Assurance data provided to the Action Teams are reported out quarterly (July, October, January, March) and were analyzed by the Permanency Enhancement Project Team at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (hereunto referred to as SIUE). This team includes Dr. Jayme Swanke [jswanke@siue.edu], Dr. Kimberly Carter [kcart@siue.edu], and Dr. Venessa Brown [vbrown@siue.edu].

Data Decisions

There are many factors related to children’s safety, well-being and permanence that tell us “how we are doing” in Southern region. When the first “Southern Summit” was held the areas targeted permanency and racial disproportionality and disparity. Permanency rate was an issue raised in the federal reviews of our public child welfare system. Disproportionality and disparity have long been a concern of many of those who led this work. In particular, the African American Advisory Council of DCFS raised this important concern over a number of years. As community groups continue their efforts, other types of data may be sought to guide the work of local communities.

Interpreting the Data

What is presented here are data – facts and figures. We at SIUE cannot put the data into context or help illuminate the meaning of data at the community level. Each individual Action Team knows the unique workings of their teams and particular composition of their communities. Action Teams should use their respective facts and figures to put the data into context to reflect the ‘true meaning’ of the experience. Thus, the meaning of the data may vary greatly from one Action Team to another. It is the experience and expertise of community members that can best determine what the data *mean*.



Section III

Children in Care Data

HOW ARE WE DOING IN SOUTHERN REGION?

Who are the Children in Care in Southern Region?

Overview

Numbers of Children in Out of Home Care

In Southern region, as of March 2014¹, 2,079 children were in out of home care.

Region	Numbers in Care 2006	Numbers in Care 2010	Numbers in Care 2014	Change
Southern	1,790	2,268	2,267 ^{2,3}	- 1

Age of Children in Out of Home Care

Children in Care by Age in Southern Region [as of March 2014]

	Number	Percent
Under 3	452	19.8%
3-5	452	19.5%
6-9	462	20.4%
10-13	351	15.5%
14-17	373	16.5%
18 older	188	8.3%

Over 40% of children in care are 5 or under. A little less than 25% are at the older end of the age spectrum – 14 or older. Having a significant number of children in this age group is a particular concern because of the risk of these children aging out of care without permanency.

Racial Ethnic Background of Children in Out of Home Care

Children in Care by Race/Ethnicity 2014

	Number	Percent
African American	664	27.9%
Hispanic	31	1.4%
Other ⁴	59	2.5%
Caucasian	1551	68.2%
Total	2275	

¹ NOTE: Data used for this overview section come from FY 2013-2014 Quality Assurance reports from the Department of Children and Family Services.

² Due to variations and non-uniformity in measurement and data recording methods, a number of discrepancies surfaced across TOTAL category numbers when the following categories (age, race, and gender) were summed. These errors could be due to inaccuracies in capturing data, differences in how data is reported, variations across teams in how data is recorded, and/or other errors associating with assessment design and delivery.

³ NOTE: Reference previous footnote. Using the category 'Wards, Age by race' the total sums to 2267; Using the category 'Wards, Race by Placement type' the total sums to 2262; Using the category 'Wards by gender' the total sums to 2267.

⁴Includes Asian Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Native American, Other, & Unknown

Out of Home Care Placements

FY2013-14

Living Type	All Children	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Foster/Relative Care	1785	78.9%
Residential	167	7.4%
Other Institutions	70	3.1%
Independent	79	3.5%
Other Care	161	5.1%
TOTAL	2,262	

Overall, most children (78.9%) are in traditional foster care or kin (relative) care.

The issue of disproportionality and disparities in care is most often referenced in regards to services to White and non-White children. Given, this the analysis looked at service trends comparatively. Across all counties the number of Asian Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Native American and Other race children was extremely small. As a result most comparative tables show statistics for African American and White children.⁵

Living Type	All Children	African American Children		White Children	
		<i>N</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent</i>
	<u>Total N</u>				
Foster/Relative Care	1785	486	27.2%	1231	67.0%
Residential	167	42	25.1%	120	72.0%
Other Institutions	70	31	44.3%	39	55.7%
Independent	79	31	39.2%	45	57.0%
Other Care	161	37	23.0%	116	72.0%
TOTAL	2,262	627	27.7%	1551	68.6%

⁵ Given the very small numbers of Hispanic children and those of other ethnicities/races, most tables will show statistics only for African Americans and Caucasians. This issue is complicated by the fact that the Department of Children and Family Services continues to work out how to best define and capture the numbers of children who are Hispanic. Evidence suggests such children are often coded as "White."



Section IV

Permanency Data

Across the region, most children served in the region achieved permanency through adoption.

Permanency Achievement by Type

Whole Region [Southern]	Total Permanencies	Type 1: Reunification	Type 2: Adoption	Type 3: Sub-Guardianship
All 9 Action Teams	131	47 (35.9%)	75 (57.3%)	9 (6.8%)

Permanency Achievement by Type & Race

Whole Region [Southern]	Total Permanencies	Type 1: Reunification	Type 2: Adoption	Type 3: Sub-Guardianship
All 9 Action Teams	428	247 (57.7%)	165 (38.6%)	16 (3.7%)
White	296 (69.1%)	171	112	13
African American	104 (24.3%)	53	49	2
Other ⁶	28 (6.5%)	23	4	1

Reunification

The data indicate that all racial groups achieved permanency through Reunification (Permanency Type 1) more often. The data suggests that 57.8%, 51%, and 82.1% of White, African, and Other race children, respectively achieved permanency through reunification.

Adoption

In regards to Permanency Type 2, Adoption, 47.1% of African American children who achieved permanency achieved it vis-à-vis adoption. Compared to the other race groups [14.3% and 4.1% of Other and White children, respectively] African American children had the highest numbers of permanencies as a result of adoption.

⁶ Includes Asian Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Native American, Other, & Unknown

Sub-Guardianship

In regards to Permanency Type 3, Sub-Guardianship, out of all the White children who achieved permanency (N=296), 4.4% (N=13) of them achieved it through this method. White children had the highest rate of permanency in Sub-Guardianship compared to other race groups. Out of all African American children that achieved permanency (N=104), 1.9% of them achieved it through Sub-Guardianship. Out of all the other race children that achieved permanency (N=28), 3.5 % of them achieved it through Sub-Guardianship.



Section V

Disproportionality & Disparity Data

Disproportionality and Disparity in Southern Region

More detailed analysis provided by The Center for Adoption Studies at Illinois State University has found that African American children are at much higher likelihood to be in care than their percentages in the population would predict. And while there existed variation by county, generally African American children were less likely to leave care in a timely fashion than White children who entered care. As indicated in their previous report presented to DCFS in FY2012-13, over-representation exists at several decision-making points in the care continuum [i.e. from the point of care acceptance to care exit]⁷.

In order to best interpret the data findings in this section it is important that readers understand key terms – disproportionality and disparity. The following definitions have been put forth by The Center for Adoption Studies at Illinois State University.

Disproportionality –

Occurs when the percentage of a group of children in a population is different from the percentage of the same group in the child welfare system.

For example, if 25% of the children in a county were African American, then 25% of those in foster care should be African American, all things being equal. That would be proportional. If these percentages differ there is disproportionality.

Disparity –

Unequal treatment or outcomes when comparing children of color to non-minority children.

For example, if 30% of Hispanic children who are indicated are then placed into care, but only 15% of White children who are indicated are then placed into care, there is a disparity in the risk of entering placement, with Hispanic children at twice the risk to be placed outside their homes after indications.

In this section we examine disparity at 3 critical points⁸:

- Indicated Cases
- Entries into Care
- Permanencies

These points are examined over the course of a given year – e.g. *during* a given year how many children had reports indicated or entered care.

The data presented on the following pages represent the extent of disparity in two ways: through bar graphs and through a single number representing the degree of disparity.

⁷ As indicated in their original report, “most of the counties in the Southern region are rural and their populations are overwhelmingly non-Hispanic and White” thus for this portion of the analysis The Center for Adoption Studies at Illinois State University only analyzed the counties with the highest populations, Jackson [Carbondale Action Team], Williamson [Carbondale Action Team], Madison [Madison Action Team], and St. Clair [St. Clair Action Team].

⁸ This report does not present findings for a key Care Point (Accepted into Care) because the data was not available in the DCFS Quality Assurance quarterly data reports.

- The graphs provide a visual representation of disparity, something action teams have reported to be helpful in reviewing the data;
- The second way of examining disparity is through the **disparity ratio**⁹, for our purposes we categorize disparity as follows:

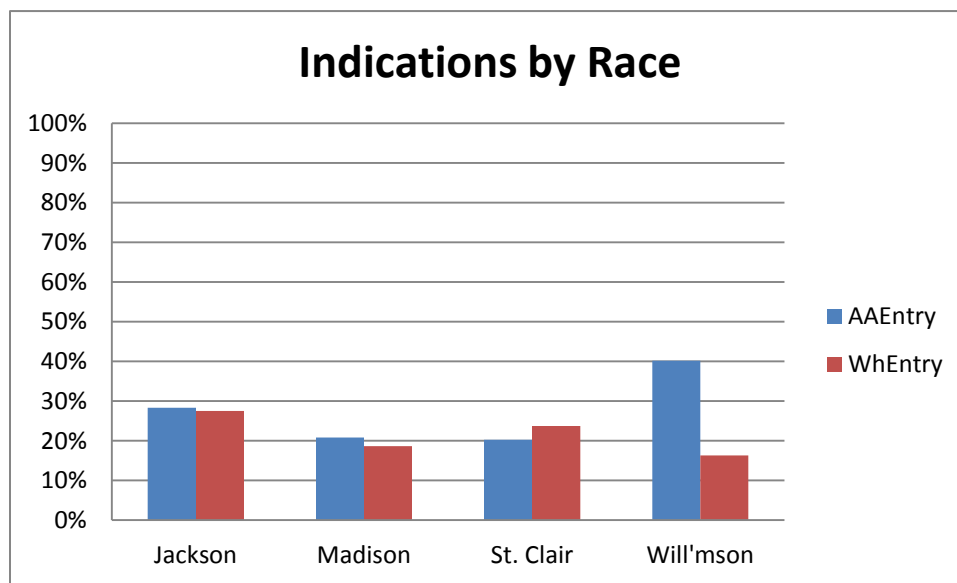
1.5 to 2.49 is moderate disparity

2.5 to 3.49 is significant disparity

3.5 and above is extreme disparity

Decision Point One: Indicated Reports

Once a report is accepted it is then investigated. Those reports where investigation yields sufficient evidence that the report is credible are *indicated*. These reports typically move forward in the system – they are opened, assigned to a caseworker and services begin.



As this graph illustrates, African American children are slightly more likely to have reports indicated than are White children. There is significant disparity, according to the disparity index in Williamson County during the FY13-14 year. This is a change substantial incremental change from the FY12-13 year. All other large counties either maintained the same index ratio or went down slightly.

⁹. In the child welfare literature there are several ways to reflect differences through ratios (e.g. racial disproportionality ratios, risk ratios, weighted risk ratios). The measure selected compares African American children – the largest minority group in the child welfare system - to White children - the majority group. If the resulting number is 1 or close to 1 there is no disparity. A number larger than 1 reflects disparity and the larger the number the greater the disparity. It is important to note, there is no uniform standard as to what constitutes the degree of disparity using this ratio.

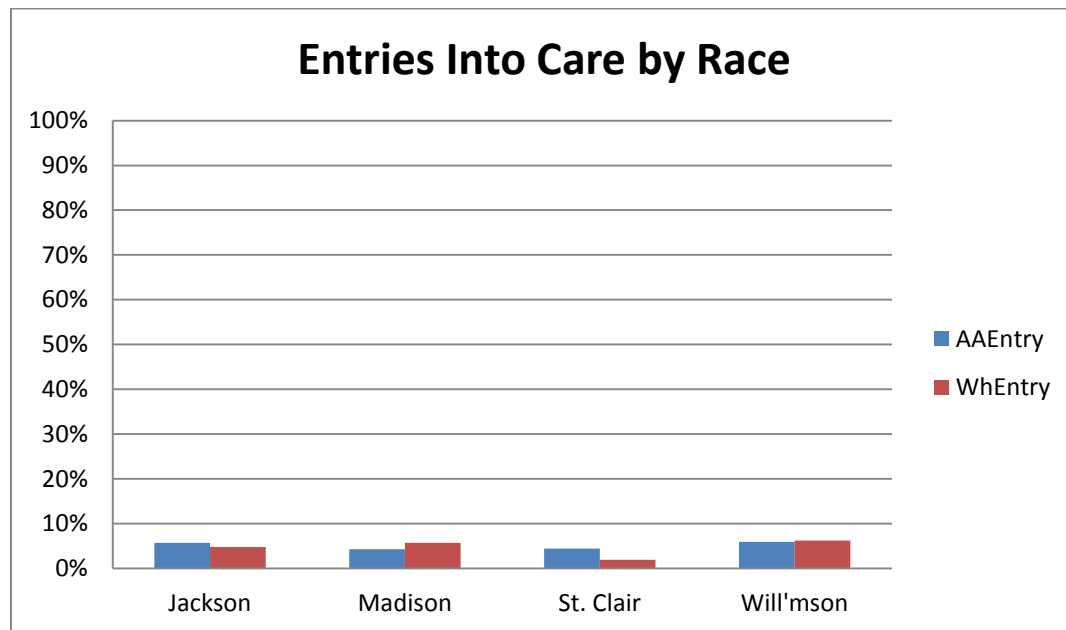
Disparity Ratio* for Indications [Yearly Comparison]

	FY 12-13	FY 13-14
Jackson	1.2	1.0
Madison	1.1	1.1
St. Clair	1.0	0.9
Williamson	1.5	2.5

*Disparity ratio on this variable = (number of African American children indicated divided by number of African American children with accepted reports) over (number of White children indicated divided by number of White children with accepted reports).

Decision Point Two: Entry into Care

Indication does not necessarily mean children are removed from the care of their families – in fact most children who have indicated reports of maltreatment are not removed from their homes. For those children who are removed, this decision point assesses whether African American children are at greater risk for entry into care than White children.



The disparity ratio for entries into care shows a different pattern. For Jackson and Madison counties, the ratio went down. Though, African American children are slightly more likely to enter care than White children, there is a downward trend. In St. Clair county African American children are at more risk, but again the trend across the 2 year time span shows yet another decrease. In Williamson County, however, African American children are significantly *less* likely to enter care than are White children in FY12, but in FY13 the likelihood that these children will enter care increases slightly.

Disparity Ratio* for Entry into Care

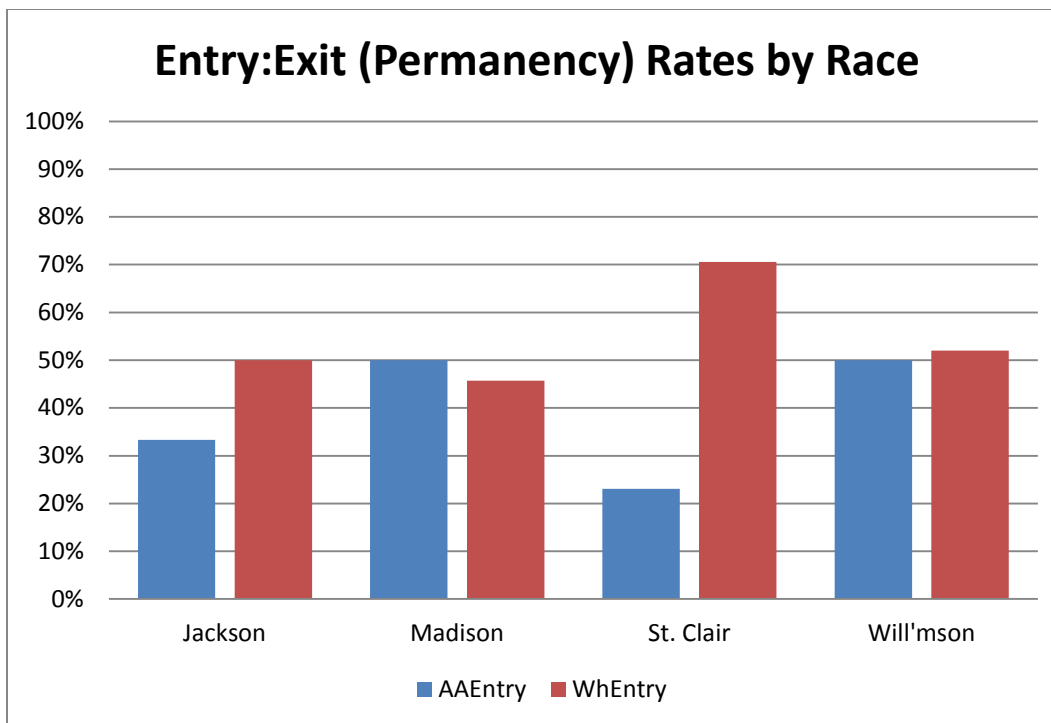
	<i>FY 12-13</i>	<i>FY 13-14</i>
Jackson	1.3	1.2
Madison	1.4	.75
St. Clair	2.8	2.3
Williamson	.30	.95

*Disparity ratio on this variable = (number of African American children entering care divided by number of African American children indicated) over (number of White children entering care divided by number of White children indicated).

Decision Point Three: Permanencies

Here we examine the differential percent of achieved permanencies as a proxy for understanding care exit patterns among African American and White Children in the four largest counties. In achieving permanencies children are being adopted, reunified with their families, or placed in substitute guardianship.

This way of looking at the data allows one to see the extent to which African American children exit care at differential rates than White Children. Previous reports suggest that in the 4 larger population counties under review, all have considerable disproportionality – i.e. there were more African American children in care than we would expect from their percentage in the population. (The Center for Adoption Studies, FY 12 Report). As suggested in the previous report, though African American children seem to carry the legacy of overrepresentation in the care system, further explorations of disparities must assess the extent to which differences exist in how children exit care.



This graph indicates that the percent of White children who exit care after entering care is higher in Williamson, St. Clair, and Jackson Counties. Conversely in Madison County, the percent of African American children who exit care is much higher than the percent of White Children.

An assessment of the disparity ratios suggest the same pattern that after entering care African American children in Madison County are less likely than White Children to exit care to any of the permanency types noted (i.e. adoption, reunification, or sub-guardianship).

Disparity Ratio* Percent in Population vs. Percent in Care

Jackson	.67
Madison	1.09
St. Clair	.33
Williamson	.96

*Disparity ratio on this variable = (number of African American children achieving permanency divided by number of African American children who enter care) over (number of White children achieving permanency divided by number of White children in the who enter care).

At least for Madison County, this data upholds that of previous reports that suggest that the difference by race for children *in* care can be a function of children leaving care at different rates. In Southern region African American children have historically left care at slower rates than White children. This gap continues to narrow, as is demonstrated by the patterns of Williamson, St. Clair and Jackson.

Conclusion

Similar to past reports, these numbers provide an informed approximation of the problem of racial disparity in Southern region. But, as stated in the introduction it is up to the individual action teams to apply their unique stories to the numbers. While the rates of disproportionality and disparity may be due to one cause in one action team, another action team may suggest that the differences are due to varied experiences.

As suggested by The Center for Adoption Studies (2012) in their FY12 report, “despite these limitations, disparity ratios provide insight into problem points for disproportionality and disparity” (pg. 21). Action teams and policy makers should explore the numbers in depth and seek ways to understand the unique nuisances of their decision making points so that they can address the issues of child maltreatment in such a way that equity frames service delivery.