



NICWA
National Indian Child Welfare Association



Western and Pacific Child Welfare Implementation Center
A Service of the Children's Bureau
A Member of the Training and Technical Assistance Network



Alaska Child Welfare Disproportionality Reduction Project Western and Pacific Child Welfare Implementation Center

Background

The Alaska Child Welfare Disproportionality Reduction Project is a four-year interagency collaboration of Alaska Native child welfare programs (led by the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Tribes of Alaska), the Office of Children's Services (OCS), and the Alaska State Court Improvement Project (CIP), with support from the Western and Pacific Implementation Center (WPIC), and Casey Family Programs (CFP). The project is designed to significantly reduce the disproportionate placement of Alaska Native children in foster care through practice and decision-making changes at the front end of the child welfare system. The success of this effort depends on systems change: decreasing disproportionality of Alaska Native children in the Alaska State foster care system by greater use of in-home services; more Native resource families, especially relatives; and more effective coordination with the courts.

Areas of Focus

- Disproportionality of Alaska Native Children***
Alaska Native children are disproportionately represented in the Alaska child welfare system. Disproportionality in this context means that the proportion of Alaska Native children in the child welfare system is higher than their proportion in the general child population in Alaska. In 2009, Alaska Native children made up approximately 25% of the under-age-18 population in the state of Alaska (Dept. of Labor statistics), but they comprised roughly 63% of the children in out-of-home placements within the Alaska Child Welfare system. There are a number of points in the child welfare system where disproportionality may occur. The state of Alaska OCS collects data at each of these points for every child that goes through the system. The data show that a significant portion of the disproportionality of Alaska Native children begins with the initial reports of abuse/neglect, and that it continues to increase slightly at each of the subsequent decision points. The Alaska Child Welfare Disproportionality Project is conducting analyses of these different data elements and trends to help make data-informed decisions about the work of the Alaska Child Welfare Disproportionality Reduction Project.
- Building Tribal Capacity - Need for Expanded Resources***
The Alaska Native Child Welfare Disproportionality Reduction Project is engaged in important systems reform work at the state, regional, and tribal levels to improve the experiences of Alaska Native children in the Alaska state child welfare system. Of the 16 tribal partners participating in the initiative, only five are current grantees of the Rural Social Services (RSS) grant program. This critical program supports tribal capacity development to provide in-home services, thereby decreasing out-of-home placements and disproportionality of Alaska Native children in the Alaska child welfare system. Supportive funding such as the RSS grants is essential to the success of this work. The remaining tribes participating in this initiative are drawing down on already stretched staff time and resources to conduct this work without support from any specifically designated funding source. Expanded RSS funding and increased tribal access to such

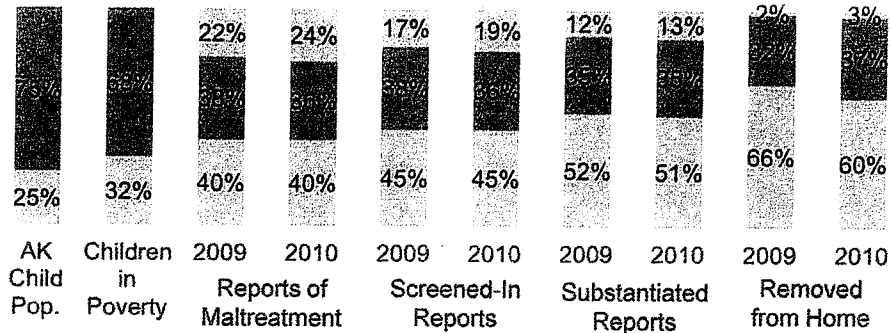
Overview of Disproportionality in Alaska Child Welfare System



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Ratio of Children in the Alaska Child Welfare System by Race/Ethnicity

Alaska Native ■ Non-Native □ Undetermined



Discharge Data for Native & Non-Native Children



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