



# Making a Collective Impact at Ground Level to Combat Disproportionality Based on Race within Child Protective Systems

Team Based Parent Representation as a Tool in the Fight Against Systemic Racism

Samara Vaught, Amanda Rexin, and Kristen Foster

Maricopa County, Arizona

TBPR is a powerful tool to effect necessary change in preserving and strengthening families.

- Where are we?
- How did we get here?
- How can we move forward?





Where are  
we?

Things are looking grim for families in Maricopa County, especially for families of color.

- **For Black families in Phoenix, child welfare investigations are a constant threat**
- **One in three Black children in Maricopa County faced a child welfare investigation over a five-year period. Some families are pushing back.**
- Eli Hager and Agnel Philip/ProPublica; Hannah Rappleye/NBC News Arizona Republic
- Published 10:27 AM MST Dec. 8, 2022 Updated 11:00 AM MST Dec. 8, 2022



In 2015, Nydea Richards decided to move her family to the nation's fastest-growing metropolitan area, in search of lower crime and better weather than in her hometown of Milwaukee. She was pregnant at the time.

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- The hospital screened Nydea for drugs after the birth of her daughter “because she was from out of town.”
  - DCS prohibited her from being alone with her newborn daughter for 5 days while DCS interrogated her about her marital status, whether she received food stamps and how she usually handles stress.
  - Her six other children were inspected and interrogated.
  - DCS then learned there had been a false positive on the drug screen.
  - DCS determined the case was unfounded.
  - No one ever explained or apologized to Nydea.

ProPublica and  
NBC News  
interviewed more  
than 30 Black  
parents across  
the Phoenix  
region who've  
faced a child  
welfare case.

- Almost all described a system so omnipresent among Black families that it has created a kind of communitywide dread: of that next knock on the door, of that next warrantless search of their home.



Sharing that you were investigated by child services remains more stigmatizing in many families than saying you've been stopped by the police.

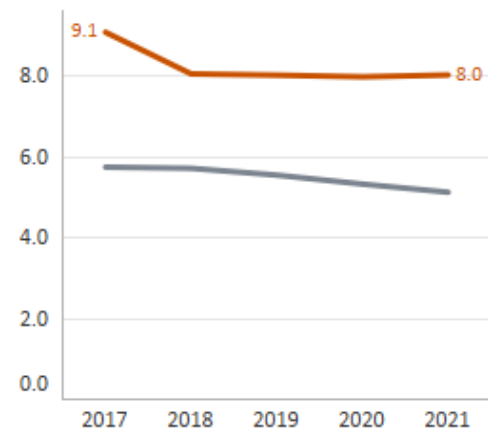
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“It becomes a generational curse.”

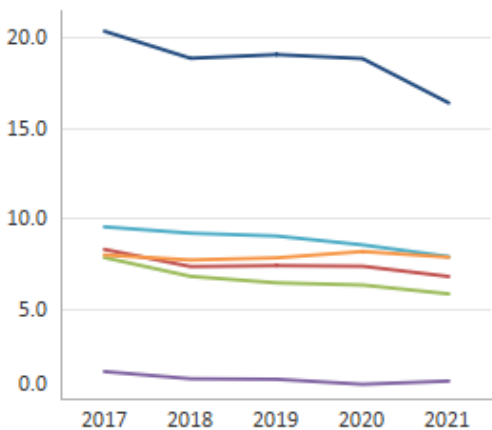
- Tyra Smith



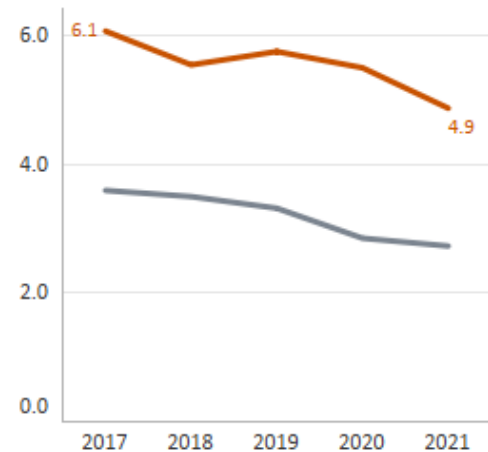
In care rate (report period B; per 1,000)



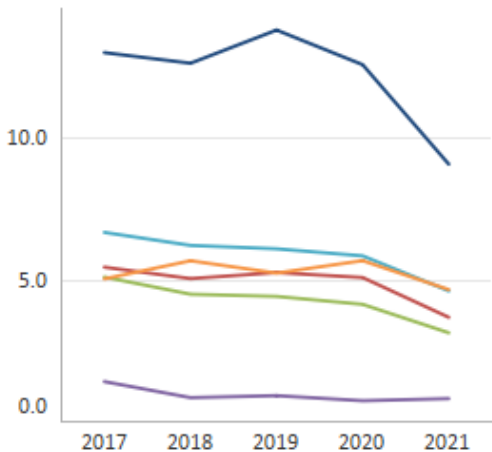
by race/ethnicity



Entry rate (report period AB; per 1,000)



by race/ethnicity



## Arizona

13,500 kids in care

(flat over past few years)



- \$90 million on group homes
- \$99 million on foster care
- \$278 million on adoptions

Once DCS is involved, the emphasis is on child safety and possibly child removal rather than addressing problems at their root, as reflected in the agency's funding structure.

- \$15 million on prevention efforts
- \$29 million on in-home services for families themselves



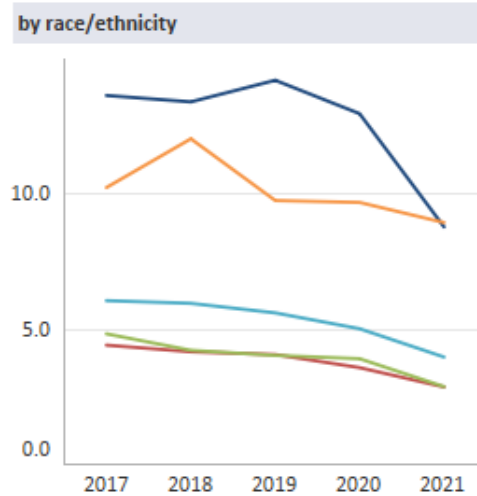
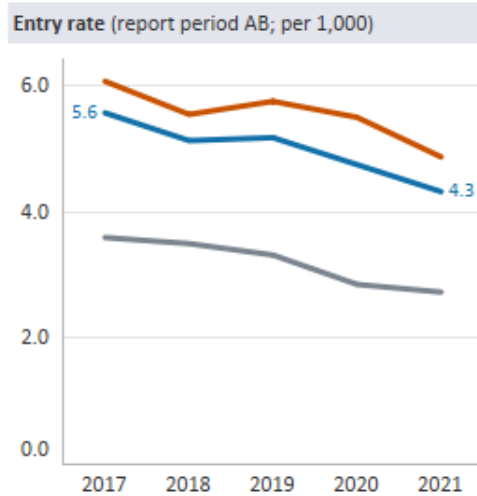
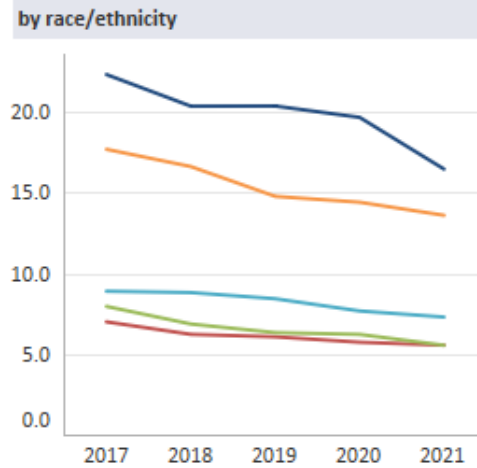
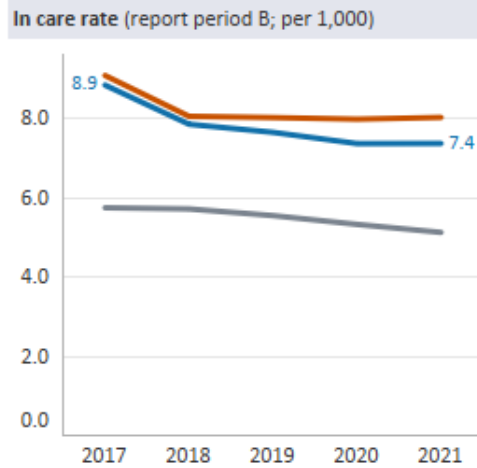
“It’s Arizona. It’s  
an attitude that  
we were never  
supposed to be  
here.” – Dana  
Burns



# Maricopa

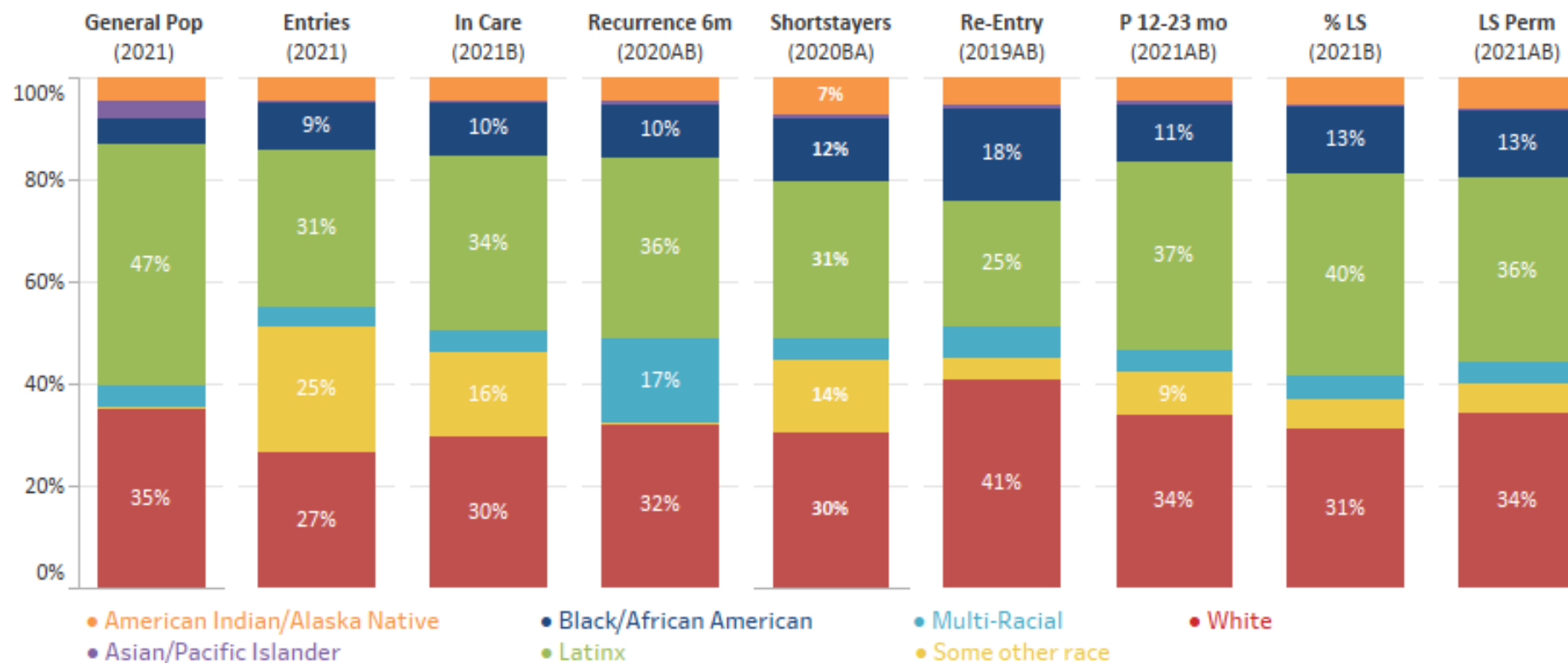
7,900 kids  
in care

(flat over  
past couple  
years)



# Arizona

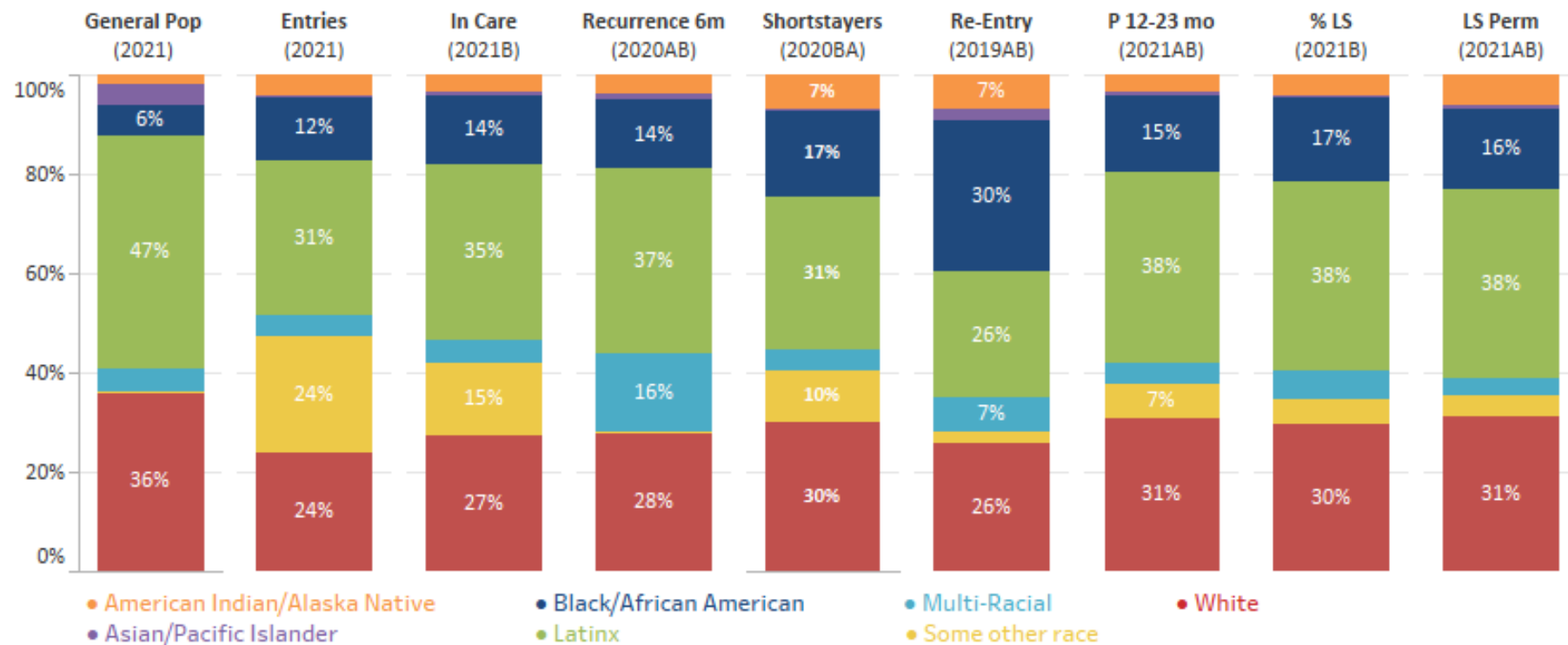
by racial/ethnic group





# Maricopa

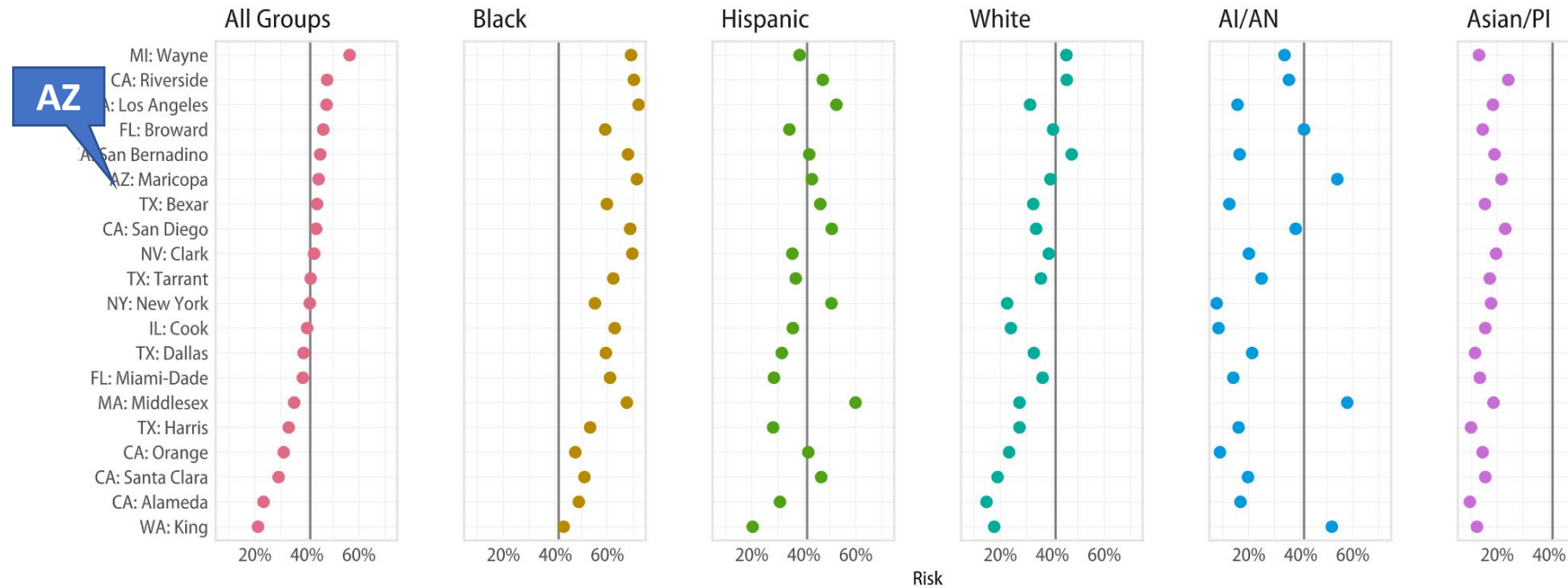
by racial/ethnic group





# 20 Largest Counties – Risk of Investigation

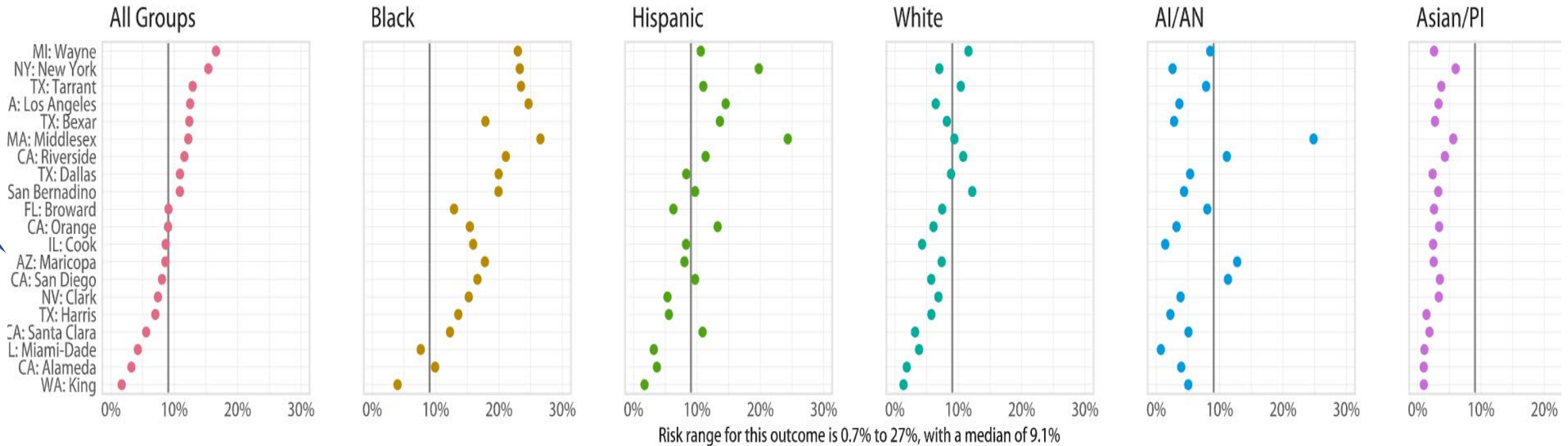
Vertical lines in each panel show the median All Groups risk of 41.3%



Next four slides from: *Contact with Child Protective Services is pervasive but unequally distributed by race and ethnicity in large US counties*, Frank Edwards, Sara Wakefield, Kieran Healy, and Christopher Wildeman, PNAS2021 Vol. 118 No. 30

# 20 Largest Counties – Risk of Confirmed Victim

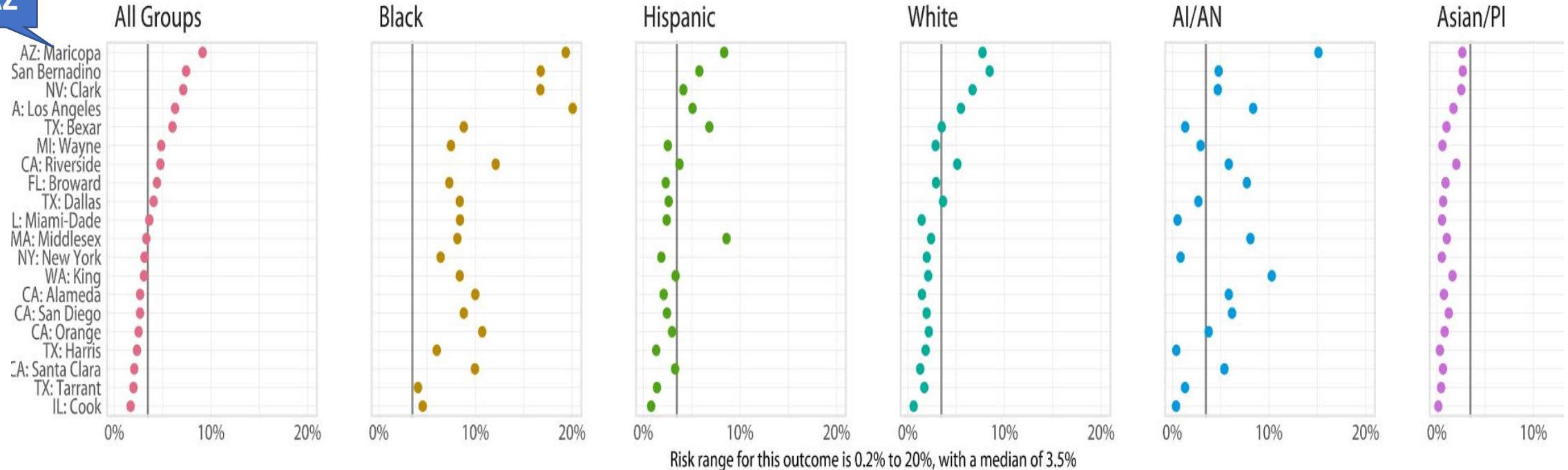
## Confirmed Victim



# 20 Largest Counties – Risk of Placement in Foster Care

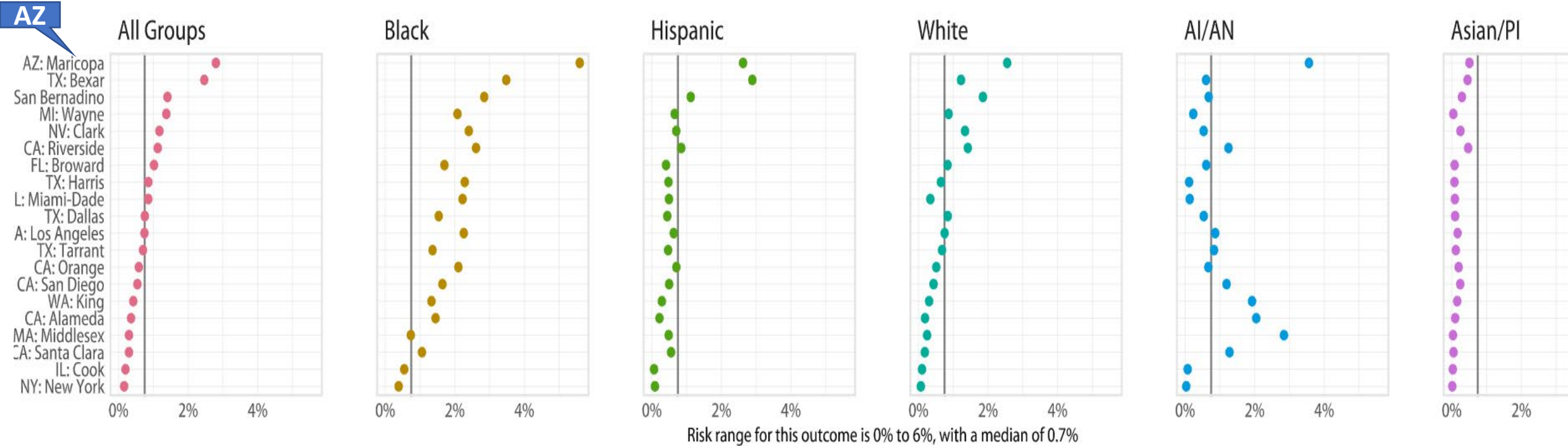
## Foster Care

AZ



# 20 Largest Counties – Risk of Termination

## Termination of Parental Rights





# CHILDREN ENTERING OUT-OF-HOME CARE (12, 14 & 15)

07/01/2022 through 12/31/2022

	APACHE	COCHISE	COCONINO	GILA	GRAHAM	GREENLEE	LA PAZ	MARICOPA	MOHAVE	NAVAJO	PIMA	PINAL	SANTA CRUZ	YAVAPAI	YUMA	STATEWIDE
Reported Children																
Children reported during period	295	1859	1121	582	444	69	196	51,430	3276	1318	13921	6676	376	2711	2214	86,488
% Reported Statewide	0.3%	2.1%	1.3%	0.7%	0.5%	0.1%	0.2%	59.5%	3.8%	1.5%	16.1%	7.7%	0.4%	3.1%	2.6%	100%

Removed Children																
Children removed during period*	6	82	47	29	13	7	15	1,793	127	51	744	232	25	66	37	3,274
% Removed Statewide	0.2%	2.5%	1.4%	0.9%	0.4%	0.2%	0.5%	54.8%	3.9%	1.6%	22.7%	7.1%	0.8%	2.0%	1.1%	100%

Voluntary Placements (0-17 years)																
Children removed during period*	6	82	47	29	13	7	15	1,793	127	51	744	232	25	66	37	3,274
Voluntary Placements	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	11	0	0	17	3	3	2	2	40
% of Voluntary Placements per removal	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	1.3%	12.0%	3.0%	5.4%	1.2%

Prior Removal Within Previous 12 Months																
Children removed during period*	6	82	47	29	13	7	15	1,793	127	51	744	232	25	66	37	3,274
Children with prior removal in previous 12 months	0	6	0	1	0	1	0	53	4	2	30	4	0	2	2	105
% of children with prior removal within 12 months per removal	0.0%	7.3%	0.0%	3.4%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	3.0%	3.1%	3.9%	4.0%	1.7%	0.0%	3.0%	5.4%	3.2%

Prior Removal Within Previous 13-24 Months																
Children removed during period*	6	82	47	29	13	7	15	1,793	127	51	744	232	25	66	37	3,274
Children with prior removal in previous 13 to 24 months	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	52	3	0	38	2	1	3	0	105
% of children with prior removal within 13 to 24 months per removal	0.0%	2.4%	4.3%	0.0%	15.4%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%	2.4%	0.0%	5.1%	0.9%	4.0%	4.5%	0.0%	3.2%

\* Children removed during the period may be part of reports received during the prior reporting period. Thus, children removed during the period may not be part of the total count of children reported during the period.

Number and Percentage of Children in Out-of-Home Care				
	as of 12/31/2022		as of 06/30/2022	
	# of Children	% of Total	# of Children	% of Total
AGE (20A)				
0 to 12 Months	944	8.1%	1,079	8.6%
12 to 36 Months	1,810	15.5%	1,958	15.6%
3 to 5	1,842	15.7%	2,041	16.3%
6 to 9	2,009	17.2%	2,159	17.2%
10 to 12	1,283	11.0%	1,323	10.5%
13 to 15	1,586	13.6%	1,658	13.2%
16 to 17	1,347	11.5%	1,408	11.2%
18 and Over	875	7.5%	920	7.3%
TOTAL OOH	11,696	100%	12,546	100%
ETHNICITY (20B)				
African American	2,033	17.4%	1,856	14.8%
American Indian	1,123	9.6%	1,054	8.4%
Asian	144	1.2%	126	1.0%
Hispanic	4,001	34.2%	3,539	28.2%
Caucasian	3,720	31.8%	3,412	27.2%
Other	675	5.8%	2,559	20.4%
TOTAL OOH	11,696	100%	12,546	100%
CASE PLAN GOAL (PERMANENCY GOAL) (20C)*				
Return to Family	3,933	33.6%	5,486	43.7%
Adoption	2,376	20.3%	2,532	20.2%
Long Term Foster Care	154	1.3%	113	0.9%
Independent Living	1,126	9.6%	1,197	9.5%
Guardianship	184	1.6%	94	0.7%
Case Plan Goal Being Developed	3,923	33.5%	3,124	24.9%
TOTAL OOH	11,696	100%	12,546	100%
LENGTH OF TIME IN CARE (20E)				
1 to 30 Days	417	3.6%	562	4.5%
31 Days to 12 Months	4,663	39.9%	4,868	38.8%
13 to 24 Months	3,246	27.8%	3,691	29.4%
More Than 24 Months	3,370	28.8%	3,425	27.3%
TOTAL OOH	11,696	100%	12,546	100%
Average Number of Placements	2.1		2.0	
Median	2		2	
Minimum Range	1		1	
Maximum Range <sup>8</sup>	31		24	

<sup>8</sup> Placement maximum includes any change in placement setting which includes each detention, hospitalization, and runaway episode.

\* The Department continues to diligently address data quality issues and will continue to update data as issues are identified and resolved. This data element will be updated and resubmitted in future iterations of this report.

TYPE OF OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT, CATEGORIZED BY AGE (20D)											
as of 12/31/2022											
	UNLICENSED KINSHIP / FICTIVE KINSHIP	FAMILY FOSTER	GROUP HOME	INSTITUTION / RESIDENTIAL <sup>11</sup>	INDEPENDENT LIVING	RUNAWAY <sup>12</sup>	MISSING CHILD <sup>12</sup>	TRIAL HOME VISIT	NO IDENTIFIED PLACEMENT <sup>13</sup>	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL
<b>UNDER 1</b>	492	431	3	1	0	0	3	0	14	<b>944</b>	8.1%
<b>1</b>	575	450	2	1	0	0	1	0	27	<b>1,056</b>	9.0%
<b>2</b>	423	308	3	0	0	0	1	0	19	<b>754</b>	6.4%
<b>3</b>	331	281	1	2	0	0	1	0	11	<b>627</b>	5.4%
<b>4</b>	356	247	1	4	0	0	1	0	9	<b>618</b>	5.3%
<b>5</b>	348	216	10	2	0	0	1	0	20	<b>597</b>	5.1%
<b>6</b>	310	200	23	3	0	0	0	0	16	<b>552</b>	4.7%
<b>7</b>	283	162	36	1	0	0	2	0	17	<b>501</b>	4.3%
<b>8</b>	291	152	64	2	0	0	1	0	12	<b>522</b>	4.5%
<b>9</b>	224	130	63	5	0	0	0	0	12	<b>434</b>	3.7%
<b>10</b>	230	109	63	3	0	0	2	0	14	<b>421</b>	3.6%
<b>11</b>	225	107	97	3	0	0	1	0	12	<b>445</b>	3.8%
<b>12</b>	204	80	109	11	0	0	1	0	12	<b>417</b>	3.6%
<b>13</b>	206	94	144	10	0	0	3	0	17	<b>474</b>	4.1%
<b>14</b>	214	81	163	26	0	8	3	0	19	<b>514</b>	4.4%
<b>15</b>	222	81	194	51	0	23	2	0	25	<b>598</b>	5.1%
<b>16</b>	202	76	211	53	0	45	5	0	30	<b>622</b>	5.3%
<b>17</b>	192	80	283	61	2	63	5	0	39	<b>725</b>	6.2%
<b>18 &amp; Older</b>	25	27	149	3	606	3	0	0	62	<b>875</b>	7.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,353</b>	<b>3,312</b>	<b>1,619</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>11,696</b>	100%
<b>% of TOTAL</b>	45.8%	28.3%	13.8%	2.1%	5.2%	1.2%	0.3%	0.0%	3.3%	100%	

<sup>11</sup> This category includes shelter, detention, and hospital placement types.

<sup>12</sup> This category includes children whose parents absconded with the child(ren) or were missing children who could not be located during the process of the investigation.

<sup>13</sup> When children do not have a placement identified in the CHILDS database, this is most often attributable to a lag in data entry or data errors. This data is updated on an ongoing basis through a continuous quality assurance process. The location of the child is known and documented in case notes, court reports and other documentation.

\* Known issues with the Guardian system has been repaired and data will be updated. The Department continues to diligently address data quality issues and will continue to update data as issues are identified and resolved. This data element will be updated and resubmitted in future iterations of this report.

CHILDREN with a PETITION for TERMINATION of PARENTAL RIGHTS (TPR) by COUNTY and STATEWIDE

07/01/2022 through 12/31/2022

[illegible]



# How did we get here?

A system based on and created by fear, greed, hate, and ignorance.



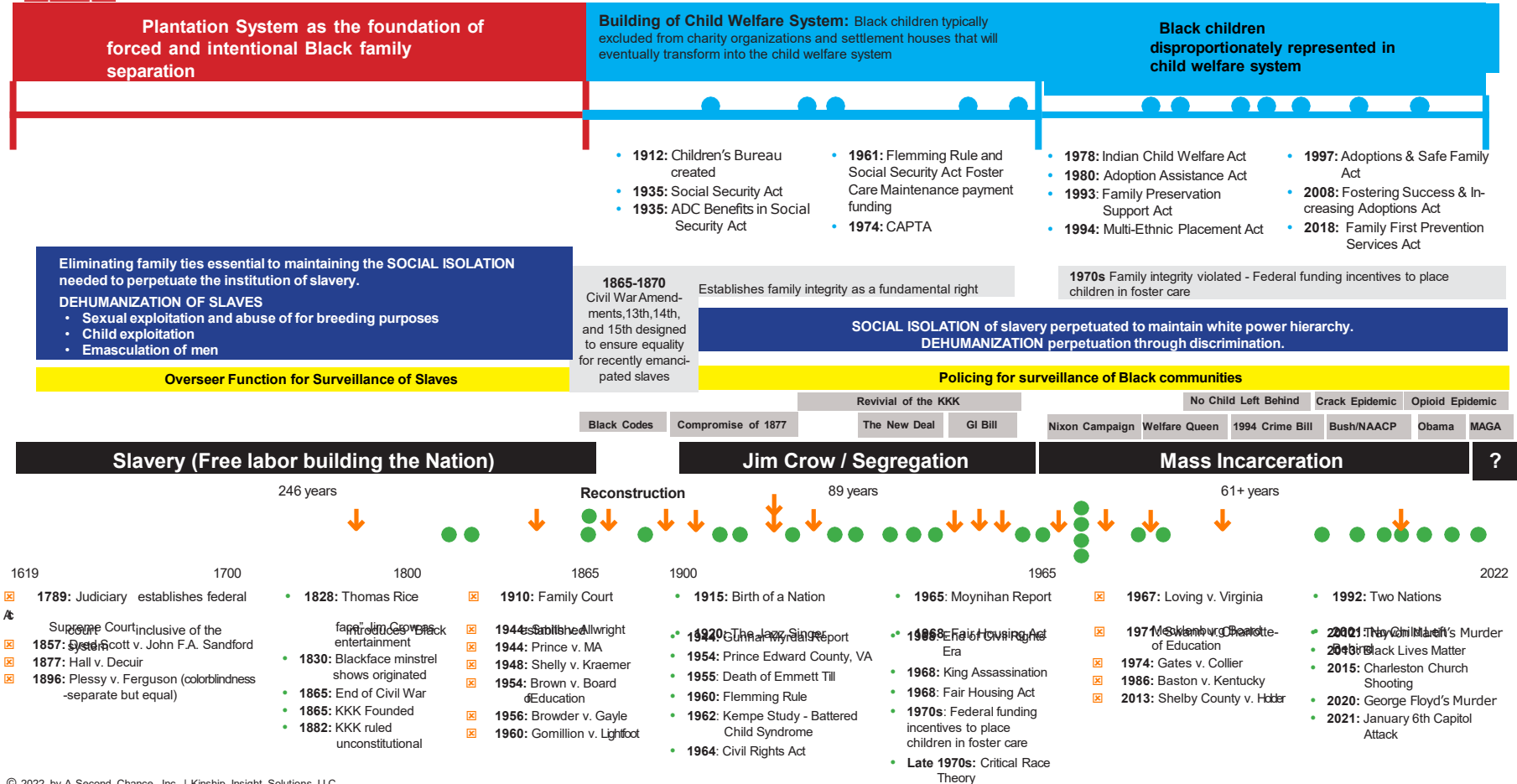
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# The Layering of Racism in Child Welfare



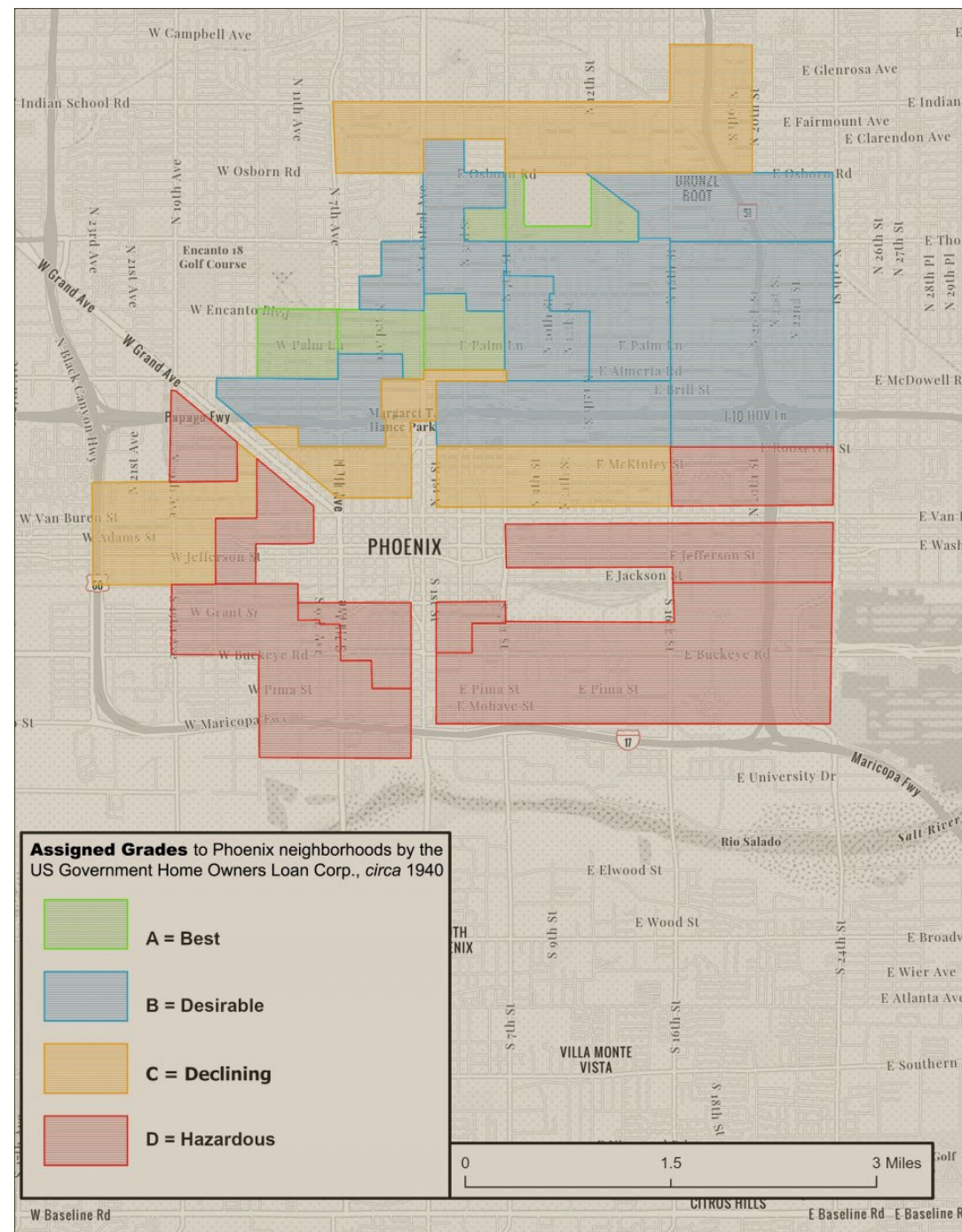
Child Welfare System maintains Black Family Separation



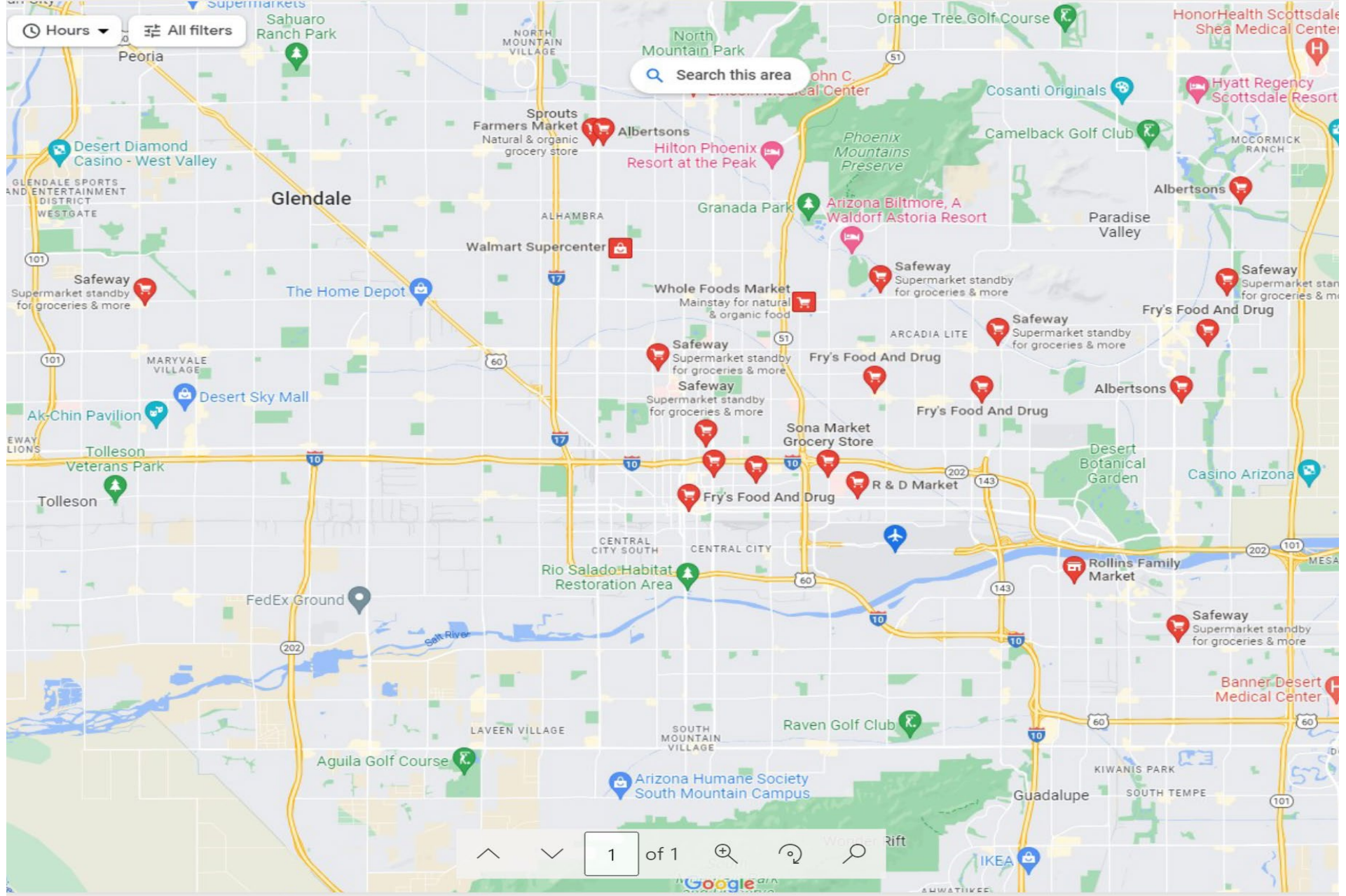
# REDLINING

“Present-day factors that determine where and how one can buy a home are influenced by historical public policy choices,” according to the report. “Past policies encouraged white homeownership, protected white people from economic downfall, and created segregation between white people and people of color.”

Redlining Still Being Felt in South Phoenix More Than 50 Years Later,  
[www.scottsdalerealators.org](http://www.scottsdalerealators.org)

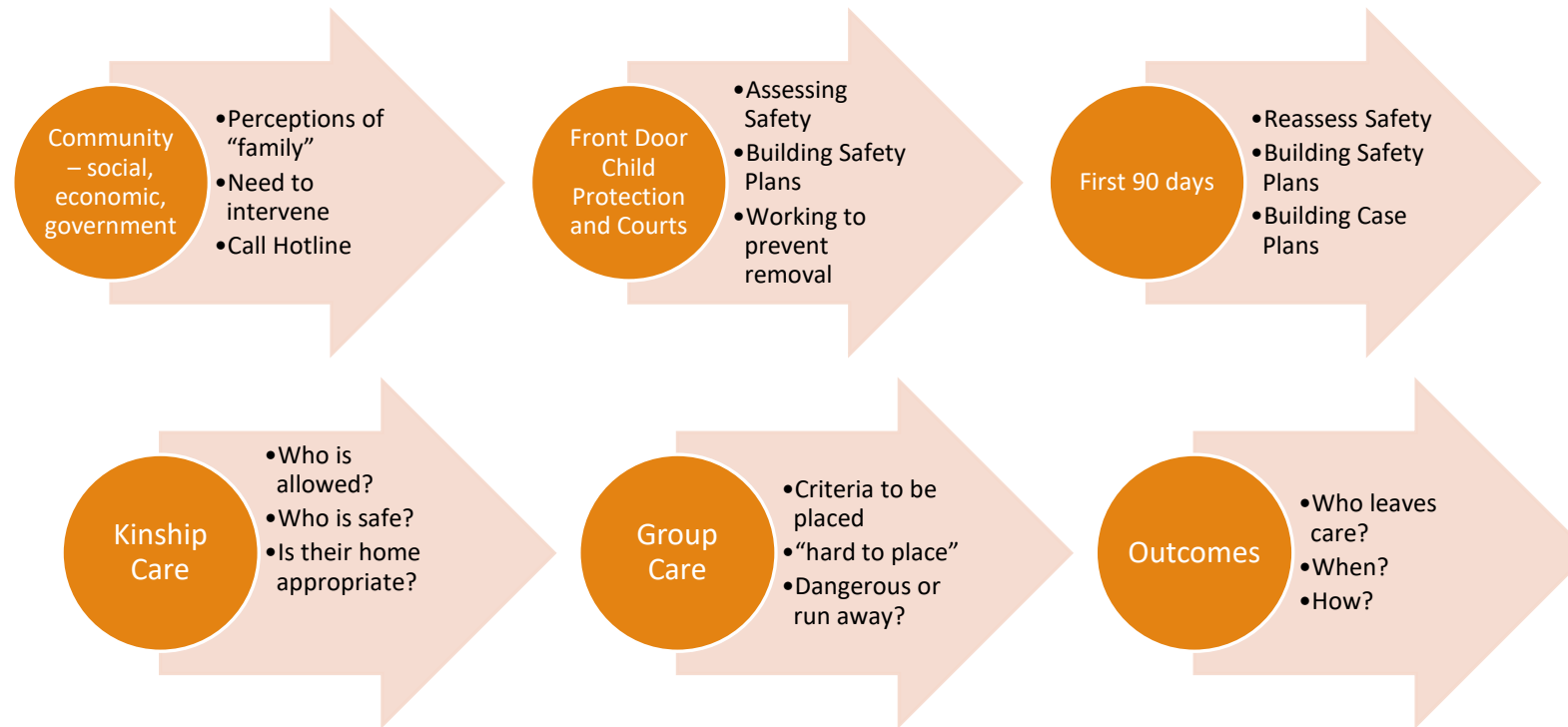






# Where might bias show up?

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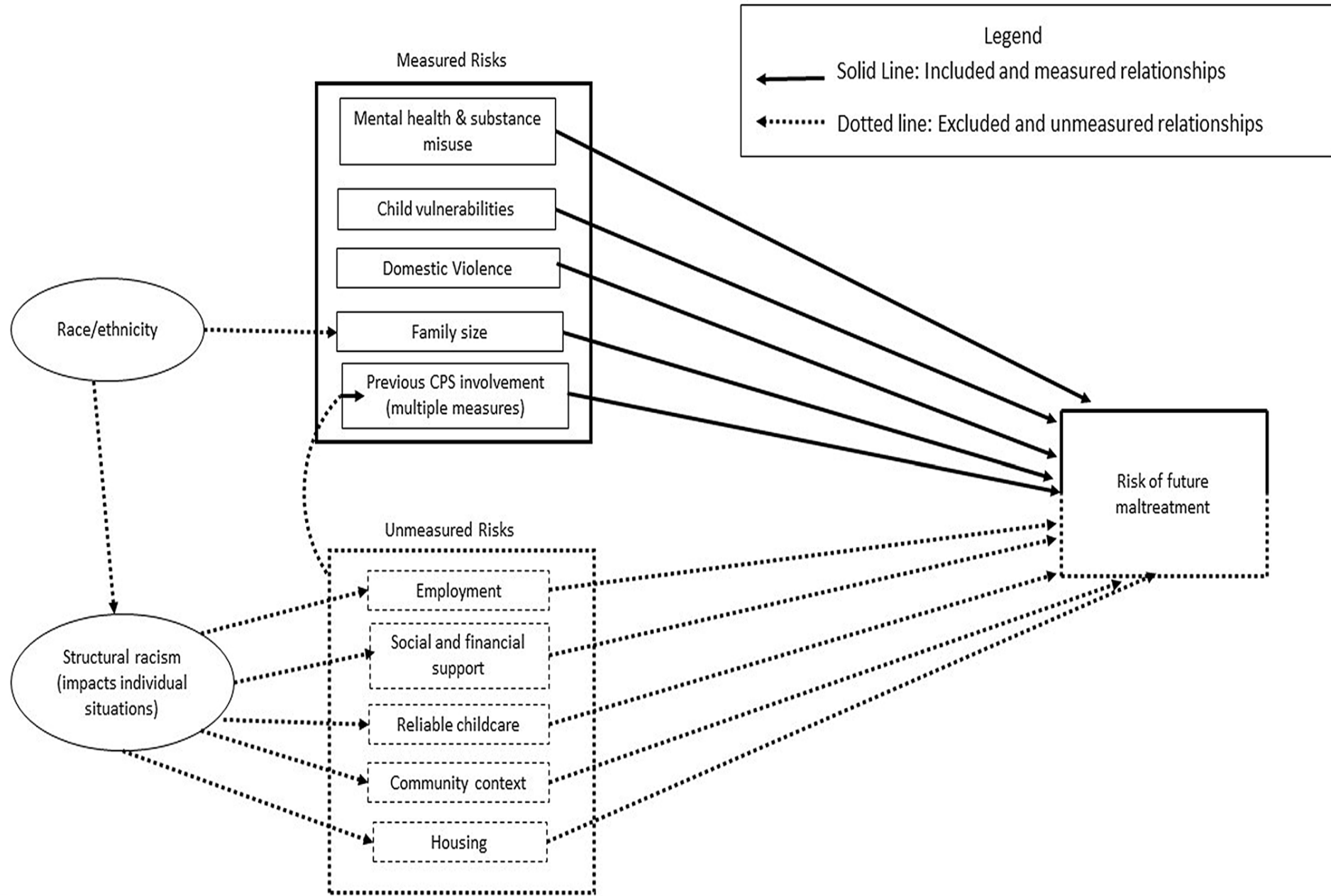


## That Which is Essential is Made Invisible...

- Racial Disproportionality in CP exists
- Poverty and financial hardship increase risk of CP system involvement.
- BIPOC families are at increase risk of poverty and financial hardship as a result of structural racism.
- Risk Assessments do not account for structural racism.

# That Which is Essential is Made Invisible...

- Exclusion of race, ethnicity, and structural factors inflates the importance of individual characteristics in risk assessment.
- Result...
  - over emphasis on individual characteristics in risk assessment
  - Overuse of individual therapeutic service array
  - Heightened focus on individual bias as solution to race inequity and disproportionality.



A Step in the Right  
Direction

# TEAM BASED PARENT REPRESENTATION

SOCIAL WORKER

PEER PARENT NAVIGATOR

ATTORNEY





# Team Based Parent Representation (TBPR) Analysis

Emily Rian Saeteurn, MSW  
Judy Krysik, MSW, PhD  
Natalia Vasiliou, MSW

The logo for the ASU Center for Child Well-Being is located in the bottom left corner. It features the ASU logo in red, followed by the text "Center for Child Well-Being" in black, and "Arizona State University" in red below it.

**ASU** Center for  
Child Well-Being  
Arizona State University



**Table 1.** *Team Based Parent Representation Themes and Sub-themes*

Theme	Sub-Themes
Team Based Parent Representation takes a holistic approach to success	TBPR strives for reunification but is open to alternate case outcomes
Team Based Parent Representation serves as a bridge between DCS and parents	<p>TBPR provides umbrella of support and services to child welfare involved parents</p> <p>Peer Parent Navigators forge a unique connection with child welfare involved parents through lived experiences</p> <p>Parents do not feel alone in the child welfare process</p>
Foundational work is vital for the future growth of TBPR	<p>Internal and external challenges impede program's growth</p> <p>Team members hope to expand program to all child welfare involved parents</p>

# TBPR in action

- TBPR take a holistic approach to success
- TBPR strives for reunification but is open to alternate case outcomes
- TBPR serves as a bridge between DCS and parents
- TBPR provides “umbrella of support” and services to child welfare involved parents
- Peer Parent Navigators forge a unique connection with child welfare involved parents through lived experiences
- Parents do not feel alone in the child welfare process
- Foundational work is vital for the future growth of TBPR

# SOCIAL WORKER

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- COMMUNITY RESOURCES
- CONNECTION TO DCS
- SYSTEM NAVIGATION
- FOSTER A GOOD WORKING  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
PARENTS AND DCS CASE  
MANAGERS



# Social Worker Impact

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- “There’s lot of things the social worker can do that I cannot do as an attorney. One of those things is communicating directly with DCS.”
- “I can see little things not becoming big things.”
- “It[TBPR] really empowers the parents, because oftentimes the parents feel so alone in the process.”





A woman with long dark hair is leaning over a young girl with dark hair in pigtails. They are both looking down at a book or paper on a desk. The woman is holding a yellow pencil. The girl is wearing a pink and white striped sweater. The background is slightly blurred, showing a home interior.

## PEER PARENT NAVIGATOR

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- EMPATHY
- SUPPORT
- GUIDANCE
- TRUE UNDERSTANDING
- CONNECTED TO THE COMMUNITY
- USE LIVED EXPERIENCE TO  
CHALLENGE UNHELPFUL  
THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS
- SYSTEM IMPACT EXPERT



# Peer Parent Impact

- “One of the biggest successes that I’ve seen is that the Peer Parent Navigators are able to ask some of the questions and get the ball rolling, will get the services started, and to continue in going in a way that parents sometimes cannot do.”
- “So, the Peer Parent Navigator . . . I like to refer to them as like cheerleaders with experience.”







# ATTORNEY

- ASSESSES CLIENTS FOR TBPR DEFENSE
- LEGAL GUIDANCE AND ADVICE
- ADVOCACY IN AND OUT OF THE COURTROOM
- BE HONEST ABOUT POSSIBLE OUTCOMES



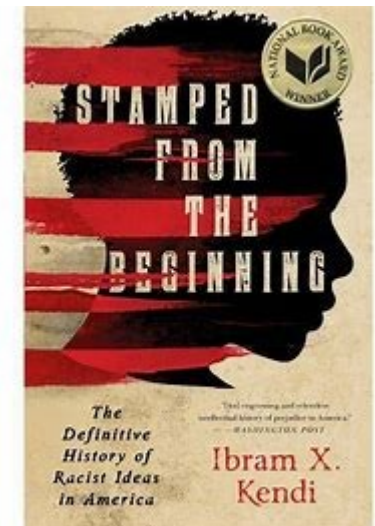
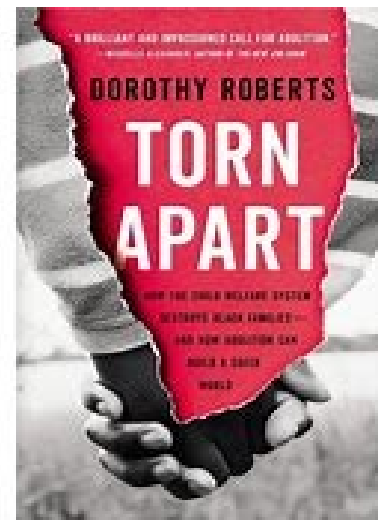
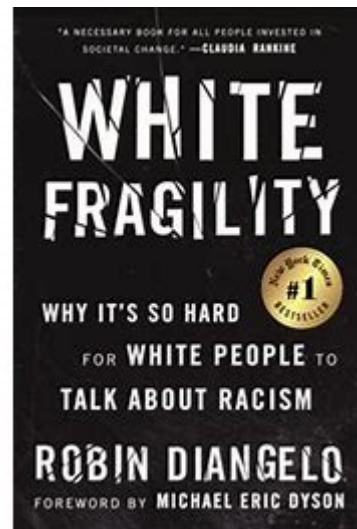
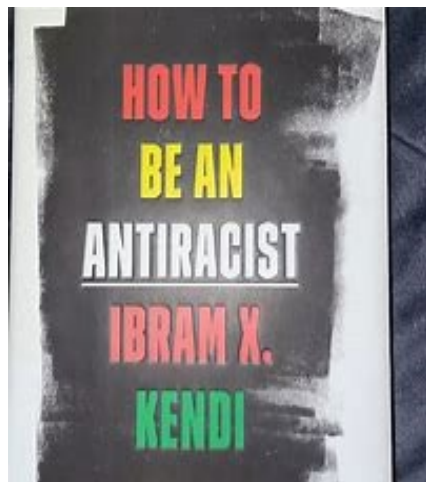
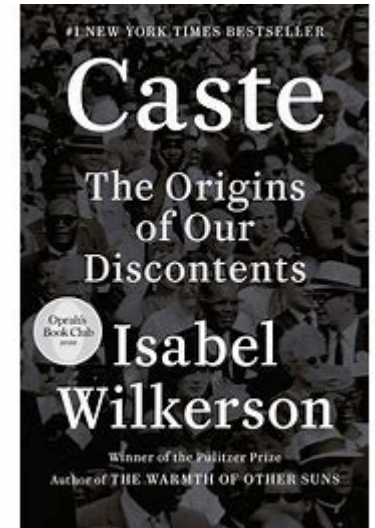
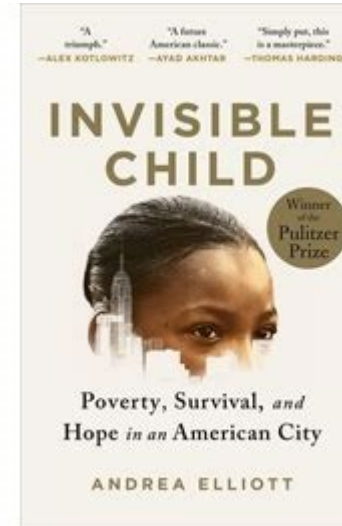
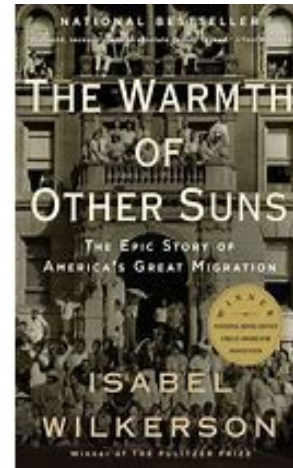
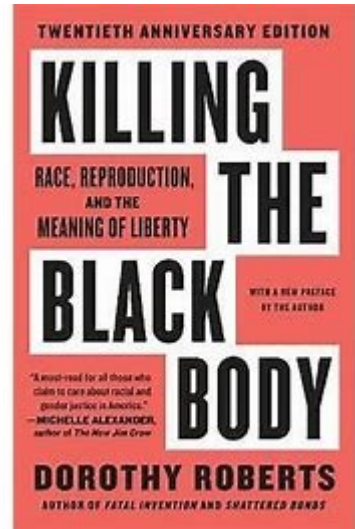
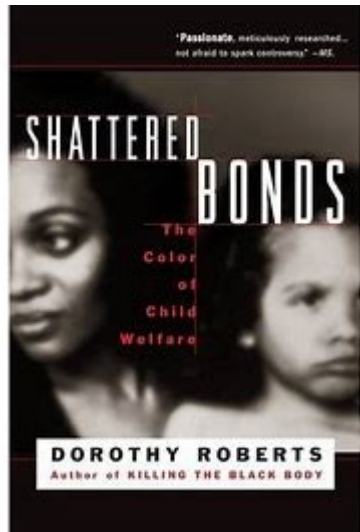
# The Goal

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Helping to overcome systemic racism in child protective systems one family at a time through holistic support and teamwork.



# Recommended Reading



# More Reading Recommendations . . .

