



Safe & Equitable Foster Care Reduction in Multnomah County

Portland Children's Levy
National Foster Care Month Recognition
Wednesday, May 11th, 2011



casey family programs.



“AND...HOW ARE THE CHILDREN?”
(Masai Tribe)

Safe & Equitable Foster Care Reduction in Oregon

Overall Goal: ***Safely and equitably reduce children in foster care by 20% by 2011***

Partnership between:

- DHS
- OCCF & Local Commissions
- Tribes
- Casey Family Programs
- Oregon Judicial Department
- Portland State University School of Social Work



Why?

- **Oregon has one of the highest foster care placement rates in the country.**

The 2009 Foster Care placement rate per 1000:

National average = 5.6

Oregon = 10.0;

Mult. Co. = 13.8;



- The approximately 2500 children in foster care in Multnomah county are more likely than other kids to drop out of school, commit crimes, abuse drugs and become teen parents.
- Foster care is, by design, temporary.

Safe & Equitable Reduction Goals

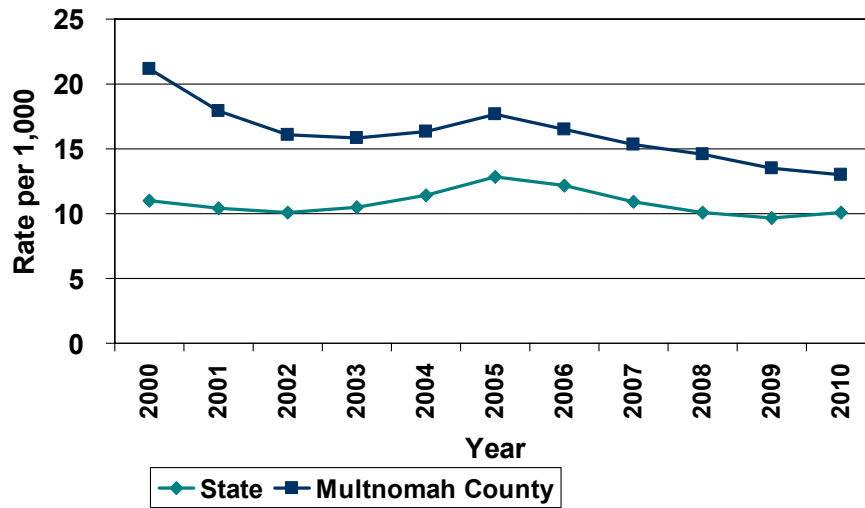
Six statewide goals to be met by 2011:

Overall: **Safely** reduce children in foster care by 20%

- Reduce children entering care
- Increase foster care exits
- Increase relative placements
- Reduce disproportionality & disparities for Native and African American children
- Hold the child re-abuse and neglect rate stable

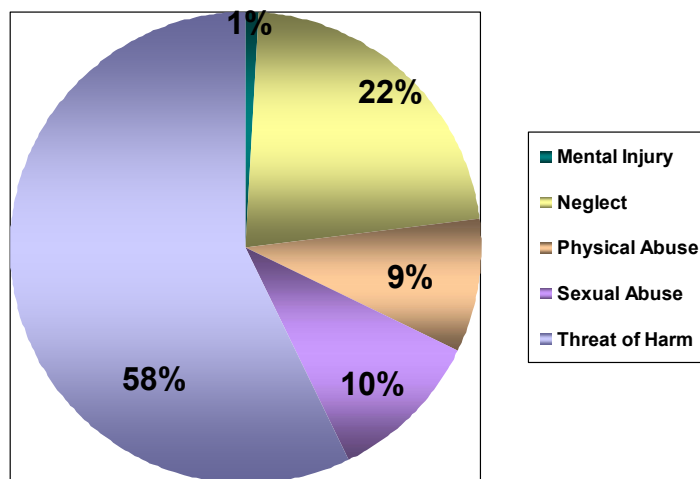


Children in Foster Care on 9/30 for Years 2000-2010



Child Abuse & Neglect Incidents

Multnomah County (2009)



Decision Point Research

- I. Literature review on disproportionality and disparity and promising practices
- II. Administrative Data that explores the differences in pathways and outcomes for children and families
- III. Focus groups that obtain individuals' perspectives on the differences in pathways and outcomes for children and families

Figure 1. Nine Major Decision Points



Goal: Reduce Children Entering Care

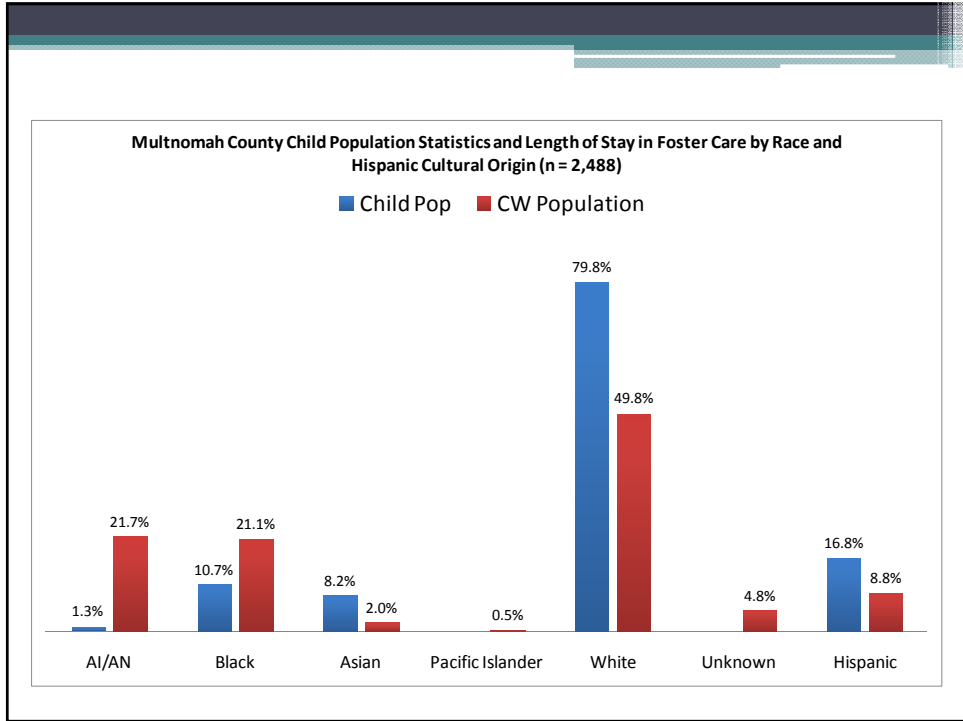
- Intake & Reports
 - AI/AN families are nearly 3x more likely to be reported
 - Black families are over 2x more likely
- Removal:
 - Roughly 40% of all children who are assessed are removed
 - 55% of all AI/AN children who are assessed are removed



We have a social responsibility to do whatever it takes to keep a child *safely* with *their* family.

Change the culture of removal to a culture of safety services.

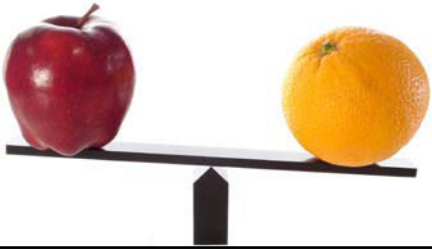




Goal: Reduce the disproportionality for Native and African American children

- In Mult Co.
 - 12% = AI/AN and Black children
 - 80% = White

- In Foster Care
 - 43% = AI/AN and Black children
 - 50% = White



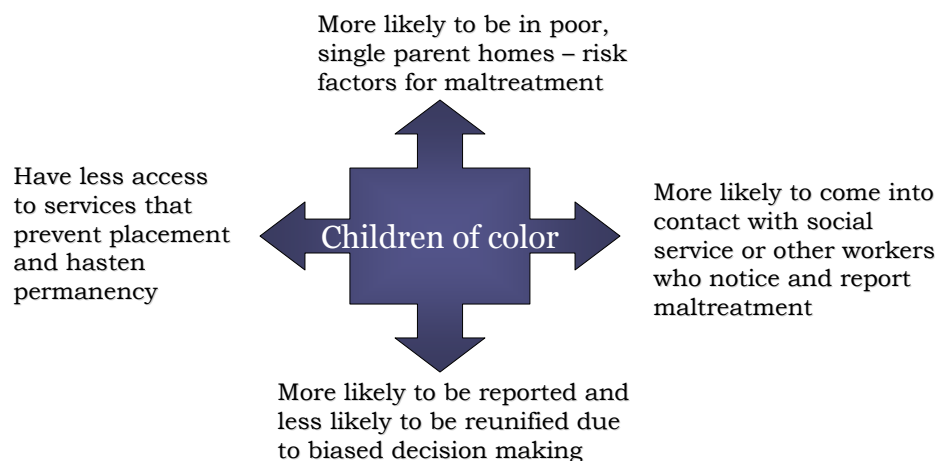
Factors, Challenges and Barriers

- Increased risk factors related to poverty
- Access to quality services
- Institutional racism & personal biases
- Workforce demographics
- Relationship with communities of color
- Data development & analysis



XOHS

Disproportionality Theories: Research



Adapted from Congressional Research Service. August 2005. Race/Ethnicity and Child Welfare.

XOHS

Moving Toward Equity: 6 “critical levers”



DHS

Solutions We Are Working Towards

So far we have...

- Decreased the number of children in foster care
- Increased relative placements

At-risk children who remain safely with their families and natural support systems do better than children in foster care.



Solutions We Are Working Towards

- Increased In-home placements
- Improved In-home services
- Increased culturally specific services
- Developed new partners to work on these issues
- Increased community outreach within African American and Native American communities
- Improving the relationship with African American and Native American communities

Solutions We Are Working Towards

We have does this by...

- DHS & CCFC Re-investing Funds
- Cross-System Collaborations
 - Local steering committee
 - Statewide Equity Task Force
 - County wide workgroup
- Culturally Responsive Services
- Community Empowerment and Engagement
 - Community Forums



AND..... HOW ARE THE CHILDREN?

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Make it **UNACCEPTABLE** for
a child to grow up in foster care.





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Additional Information

The remaining slides
focus on the other two goals:
Relative Placements
and Foster Care Exits



“When I went to live with my Grandma... I just thought I was going to live with my Grandma... [Living] with Grandma means you're staying with family -it's normal.”

- current foster youth

Goal: Increase safe foster care exits

- Length of Stay (ALL children in foster care)
 - 2 or more years = almost 50%
 - 4 or more years = 25%
 - AI/AN and Black children are even more likely to stay in care more than 4 years
- Plan for Permanence
 - 20% of all children = long term foster care as plan

Government does not make a good parent.