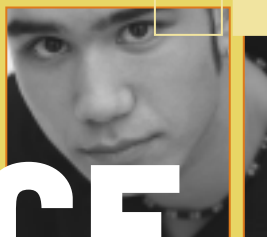


An Embedded
Inequities Lens for
CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE

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RACE matters



The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Center
for the
Study
of Social
Policy



RACE matters

An Embedded Inequities Lens for CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE

Embedded Inequities...

- Is a term that is used to define the many factors that work to produce and maintain racial inequities in America today.
- Identify aspects of our history and culture that have allowed the privileges associated with “whiteness” and the disadvantages associated with “color” to endure and adapt over time.
- Point out the ways in which public policies and institutional practices produce inequitable racial outcomes.

An Embedded Inequities “Lens” Highlights...

- **Chronic racial disparities**, not just race relations
- **Specific power arrangements**—especially public policies and institutional practices—that perpetuate chronic disparities
- **General cultural assumptions and stereotypes** that allow disparities to go unchallenged
- **Progress and retrenchment** how gains on some issues can be undermined by forces operating in other spheres or by oppositional actors
- **Political, regional and other contextual factors** that contribute to the interlocking nature of inequity

Implications for Child Welfare Practice...

- Recognize that concentrated poverty, racially segregated neighborhoods and popular cultural stereotypes can trigger negative presumptions that fuel inappropriate/intrusive access and scrutiny by child protection workers in ways that contribute to racial disproportionality in child welfare.
- Hold child welfare leadership accountable for racial equity as an outcome standard (so that ultimately the allocation of resources, benefits and burdens are not predictable by race)—beginning with substantiations of abuse/neglect and continuing through exit strategies.
- Review existing child welfare practices to ensure that seemingly race neutral policies do not reinforce or worsen inequities for families of color.
- Compile and track racial disparity data at all key decision points in order to set benchmarks, monitor progress and ensure racially equitable treatment and outcomes.
- Ensure that services and staff are culturally competent by including families as partners in team decision-making and providing culturally appropriate pre-service/in-service training and technical assistance for staff.