

An Evaluation of Factors Related to the Disproportionate
Representation of Children of Color in
Santa Clara County's Child Welfare System:

Child and Family Characteristics
and Pathways Through the System

Phase 2
Final Report

Submitted to the County of Santa Clara
Social Services Agency
Department of Family and Children's Services

By

The Child Welfare Research Team
College of Social Work
San Jose State University

August 31, 2002
(revised October 7, 2002)

*Principal Contributors
Child Welfare Research Team*

Alice M. Hines, Ph.D.

Principal Investigator

Peter Allen Lee, Ph.D.

Co-Investigator and Primary
Data Analyst

Laurie Drabble, Ph.D.

Co-Investigator and Primary
Researcher on Key Informant
Interview Segment

Lonnie R. Snowden, Ph.D.

School of Social Welfare,
University of California at
Berkeley, Consultant on Data
Collection and Data Analysis

Kathy Lemon, M.S.W.

Senior Research Assistant

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<i>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</i>	<i>vii</i>
I. <i>Introduction</i>	1
II. <i>Study Objectives and Approach for Phase 2</i>	4
III. <i>Summary of Related Research and Relevant Santa Clara County Statistics</i>	7
Parent and Family-Related Factors and Child Maltreatment	7
Bias in Initial Reporting and Subsequent Service Delivery	12
Poverty and Characteristics of Impoverished Communities That Increase the Risk of Children of Color Entering and Staying In the Child Welfare System	14
The Impact of Recent CW Policy Initiatives on the Involvement Of Children of Color in the Child Welfare System	18
Summary	22
IV. <i>Phase 2 Study Methods and Procedures</i>	23
Case Record Review – Procedures	23
Case Record Review – Data Analysis	24
CWS/CMS Database of Closed Cases – Procedures and Data Analysis	25
Key Informant Interviews – Procedures and Analysis	26
V. <i>Pathways Through the Child Welfare System: Case Studies by Ethnic Group</i>	28
African American	28
Family Reunification Case	28
Family Maintenance Case	29

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
White	30
Family Reunification Case	30
Family Maintenance Case	31
Hispanic/Latino	32
Family Reunification Case	32
Family Maintenance Case	34
Asian American/Pacific Islander	35
Family Reunification Case	35
Family Maintenance Case	37
VI. <i>Overall Closed Case Sample: Results</i>	39
Child Demographics and System-Related Characteristics	39
Child Characteristics	40
System-Related Factors	41
Summary of Key Findings from the Overall Closed Case Sample	51
VII. <i>Case Record Reviews</i>	53
1. General Child and Family Characteristics by Ethnic Group	56
Child Characteristics	56
Father Characteristics	61
Mother Characteristics	62
2. System-Related Characteristics by Ethnic Group	73
3. Services and Other Interventions Ordered at the Jurisdictional/Dispositional Hearing by Ethnic Group	86
4. Hearings and Case Changes by Ethnic Group	94
VIII. <i>Key Informant Interviews</i>	100
Key Informant Interviews— Methods	100

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Key Informant Interview—Findings	101
Social and Economic Factors	101
Individual Bias Based on Race, Class, and Immigration Status	102
Systemic Inadequacies and Structural Bias	103
Factors Related to Family Characteristics	104
Factors Related to Laws and Policies	104
Interviewee Recommendations	105
 IX. <i>Summary and Conclusions</i>	 108
Pathways Through the Child Welfare System: Summary Descriptions by Ethnic Group and Implications for the Child Welfare System	108
African Americans	108
Child and Family Characteristics	108
System-Related Factors	109
Implications for Intervention with African American Children and Families in the Child Welfare System	110
White	111
Child and Family Characteristics	111
System-Related Factors	111
Implications for Intervention with White Children and Families in the Child Welfare System	112
Hispanic/Latino	112
Child and Family Characteristics	112
System-Related Factors	113
Implications for Intervention with Hispanic/Latino Children and Families in the Child Welfare System	114

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Asian American/Pacific Islander	114
Child and Family Characteristics	114
System-Related Factors	115
Implications for Intervention with Asian American/ Pacific Islander Children and Families in the Child Welfare System	116
Overall Conclusions	119
 <i>References</i>	 124
 <i>Attachments</i>	
1. Sampling Procedures	
2. Data Collection Process and Procedures	
3. Child Welfare System Case Record Data Extraction Form	
4. Reliability Study	
5. Variable Checklist	
6. Sampling Summary: Case Availability Status Analysis	
7. <i>Table 1:</i> Demographic and System Characteristics of Children, Santa Clara County Open Cases, December 2000.	
<i>Table 2:</i> Demographic Characteristics for Children in Out of Home Placement (OHP), Santa Clara County Open Cases, December 2000.	
<i>Table 3:</i> Case Characteristics for Children in Out of Home Placement (OHP), Santa Clara County Open Cases, December 2000	
<i>Table 4:</i> Demographic and System Characteristics by Race/Ethnicity in Out of Home Placement (OHP), Santa Clara County Open Cases, December 2000	

