

# RACE, ETHNICITY, AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Allison De Marco, MSW PhD  
Advanced Research Scientist  
Frank Porter Graham Child Development  
Institute  
UNC-CH  
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## SESSION OVERVIEW

- Levels of racism and impacts on children
- Disproportionate discipline in childhood
- Impact of justice involvement
- Systems change: UpEnd movement in child welfare
- Remedies

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## What Racism Looks Like

**Institutional racism**  
Institutional racism is distinguished from the explicit attitudes or racial bias of individuals by the existence of systematic policies or laws and practices that provide differential access to goods, services and opportunities of society by race. Institutional racism results in data showing racial gaps across every system. For children and families it affects where they live, the quality of the education they receive, their income, type of food they have access to, their exposure to pollutants, whether they have access to clean air, clean water or adequate medical treatment, and the types of interactions they have with the criminal justice system.

**Housing**  
Racial disparities in housing are a result of institutional racism. Black and Hispanic households are more likely to live in substandard housing, have higher rates of overcrowding, and are more likely to be renters than homeowners. Black and Hispanic households are also more likely to live in high-poverty areas with fewer resources and services.

**Banking**  
Racial disparities in banking are a result of institutional racism. Black and Hispanic households are more likely to be unbanked or underbanked, and are more likely to use payday lenders and check cashing services. Black and Hispanic households are also more likely to be denied credit and to receive higher interest rates than white households.

**Criminal Justice**  
Racial disparities in the criminal justice system are a result of institutional racism. Black and Hispanic individuals are more likely to be arrested, charged with violent crimes, and sentenced to prison than white individuals. Black and Hispanic individuals are also more likely to receive longer sentences and to be sentenced to life in prison.

**Public Health**  
Racial disparities in public health are a result of institutional racism. Black and Hispanic individuals are more likely to die from heart disease, stroke, and cancer than white individuals. Black and Hispanic individuals are also more likely to have lower rates of health insurance and to receive lower quality of care than white individuals.

**Education**  
Racial disparities in education are a result of institutional racism. Black and Hispanic students are more likely to attend underfunded schools with fewer resources and services than white students. Black and Hispanic students are also more likely to be suspended and expelled than white students.

**Meet Ryan and Jamal**  
Ryan and Jamal are two young boys who live in a high-poverty area. Ryan is white and Jamal is Black. They both attend the same school, but Ryan's school has more resources and services than Jamal's school. Ryan's family has more income and access to services than Jamal's family. Ryan is more likely to be accepted into a college than Jamal is.

**The equity solution**  
The equity solution is to address the root causes of institutional racism. This means changing the policies and practices that create and maintain racial disparities. This means ensuring that all individuals have equal access to goods, services and opportunities of society. This means ensuring that all individuals are treated with respect and dignity.

For more information: <http://cplc.edu/socialix>

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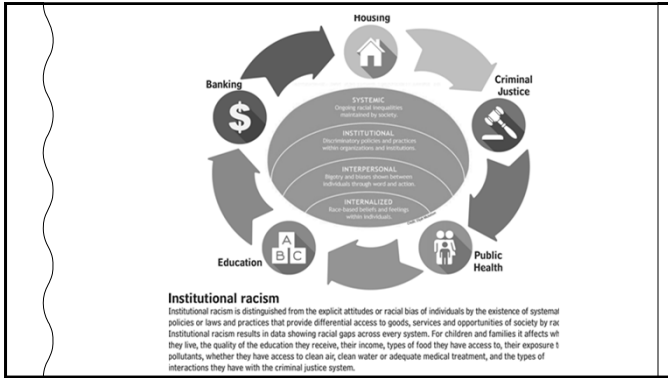
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**Meet Ryan and Jamal.**

Meet Ryan and Jamal. They are both 8 years old. Their lives and the lives of their families are powerfully shaped by the communities in which they live (Sampson, 2011) and the institutions with which they interact. Institutional racism has influenced the lives of both boys, giving Ryan a host of opportunities and privileges while creating significant disadvantages for Jamal.

**Housing & Wealth-building**  
 Although both Jamal and Ryan's parents earn similar incomes and manage their finances well, because of public and private discrimination practices (ex. redlining, real estate steering, restrictive covenants), Jamal's family lives in a high poverty neighborhood, like many African Americans. Jamal's family was one of the numerous middle class minority families targeted for a predatory high-interest loan during the mortgage crisis. As a result, they lost their family home which wiped out decades of financial growth, setting them back almost an entire generation (Burd-Sharps, & Rasch, 2015). They currently rent an apartment that they share with Jamal's grandmother. Ryan's family was also hit during the mortgage crisis, but they were able to rely on financial support from Ryan's grandfather to soften the blow. Ryan's grandfather took advantage of the GI bill, which paid for his education and gave him a government guaranteed housing loan to buy a home in a fast-growing suburb. As a result, Ryan's grandparents were able to save money and used the equity in their home to give Ryan's family a down payment for a new home. This reflects the national pattern: 72% of White families own homes compared to 42% of Black families (US Census, 2018). For 2016, the median wealth for black families was \$17,600 and for white families was \$171,000 (Federal Reserve Board, 2017).

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**Public Health.**  
 Because housing discrimination limits the areas in which Jamal's family can reside, he lives in a neighborhood where housing stock is deteriorating. The poor housing quality worsens Jamal's asthma, causing school absences and expensive trips to the emergency room. Faced with high crime rates, dilapidated housing stock, and the stress and marginalization of poverty, residents of very poor neighborhoods demonstrate a higher incidence of poor physical and mental health outcomes, like asthma, depression, diabetes, and heart ailments. (Kneebone & Holmes, 2016)

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**Education & Criminal Justice.**  
 Ryan attends a top-ranked school where most of the students come from high income families, Jamal on the other hand attends his chronically underfunded poor-performing neighborhood school which has fewer resources, less experienced teachers, and higher dropout rates. Jamal's favorite subjects are science and math but unlike Ryan's more affluent high school, Jamal will not have access to the full range of math, science and college preparatory courses at his school. Despite his strong interest in academics, high achievement on standardized tests, Jamal's teacher does not refer him to be screened for the gifted and talented program. Instead, he is more likely to be subjected to harsh disciplinary policies, including excessive suspensions, expulsions, and arrests that would make him miss valuable school time.

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**The cycle continues...**  
 Both Ryan and Jamal graduated from high school and went on to attend and graduate from very good, state-funded universities. However, because he was forced to take out student loans, Jamal was left with significant debt that made it more difficult for him to start accumulating wealth in adulthood. Even though Jamal and Ryan graduated with similar GPAs with majors in engineering, Ryan secured a job interview almost immediately from a friend of the family while Jamal did not get nearly as many call backs. Studies show that you are 50% less likely to get a job interview if your application has a black-sounding name (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004). In addition, Jamal earns substantially less than Ryan (Chetty et al., 2018) and will likely run into the same difficulties his family faced in buying a home and earning equity which will increase the likelihood that his children will be raised in the same type of neighborhood that he grew up in, thus repeating the cycle.

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**Racial Inequities in Preschool Discipline**  
 Black students, especially boys are disproportionately more likely than their white peers to face multiple suspensions from preschool.

**Preschool Enrollment**

**Multiple suspensions**

Disproportionate preschool suspensions are the result of adult behaviors.

- They arise from implicit racial biases which impact teacher expectations (Gilliam et al., 2016).
- Preschool suspensions contribute to **loss of vital school time** that contributes to the achievement gap and can begin students on a negative school trajectory (Losen, et al., 2015).
- Young students who are expelled or suspended are as much as **10 times more likely** to drop out of high school, experience academic failure and grade retention, hold negative school attitudes, and face incarceration than those who are not (Jamont et al., 2011; Petras et al., 2011).

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**TRUE OR FALSE**

48% OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN SUSPENDED MORE THAN ONCE ARE BLACK

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**TRUE OR FALSE**

A 2010 study by researchers at Villanova University showed that the punitiveness of a school's discipline policy was positively correlated with the percentage of students that were Black. It wasn't correlated with students' rates of delinquency or drug use.

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**TRUE OR FALSE**

Black students are 4x more likely to be suspended than their white peers

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### TRUE OR FALSE

The most significant indicator of which children will be suspended is not the type of offense but the color of their skin, their special education status, what school they go to and whether they have been suspended before.

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### IMPACT OF SUSPENSIONS

- Reduce opportunities for instruction and for developing skills needed for school success (Reyes et al., 2013)
- Contribute to lifelong health, well-being, and economic disparities (American Psychological Association [APA], 2012).
- Why is this happening? Implicit bias.

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### STATISTICS ON DISPARITIES FAMILY WELL-BEING

- The child welfare system disproportionately impacts Black and Native children and families
- 23% of children in foster care are Black, yet only 14% of the population (AFCARS, 2019)
- Latinx children are 21% of children in foster care, yet only 23% of the population
- White children are 44% of kids in foster care, yet are 54% of the population
- Children of color significantly more likely to be separated from their families

Minoff, Eliza. (2018). Entangled Roots: The Role of Race in Policies that Separate Families. Center for the Study of Social Policy.

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**CONT.**

- Led to
  - Overrepresentation of Black families in the child welfare system,
  - Criminalization of Black mothers
  - Dismissal of black fathers
- Legacy of colonialism harmed Native communities by removing children under guise of assimilation into White culture.
- These systems punish those who at the intersections of multiple identities (i.e. Black and Latinx LGBTQ youth)

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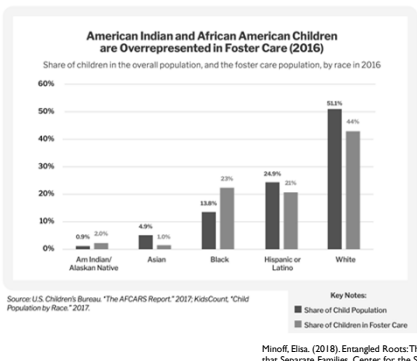
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**American Indian and African American Children are Overrepresented in Foster Care (2016)**



Minoff, Elisa. (2018). Entangled Roots: The Role of Race in Policies that Separate Families. Center for the Study of Social Policy.

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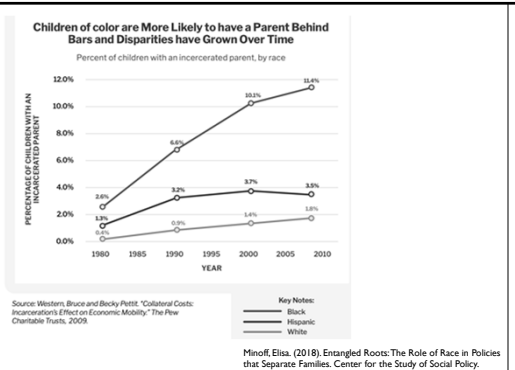
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**Children of color are More Likely to have a Parent Behind Bars and Disparities have Grown Over Time**



Minoff, Elisa. (2018). Entangled Roots: The Role of Race in Policies that Separate Families. Center for the Study of Social Policy.

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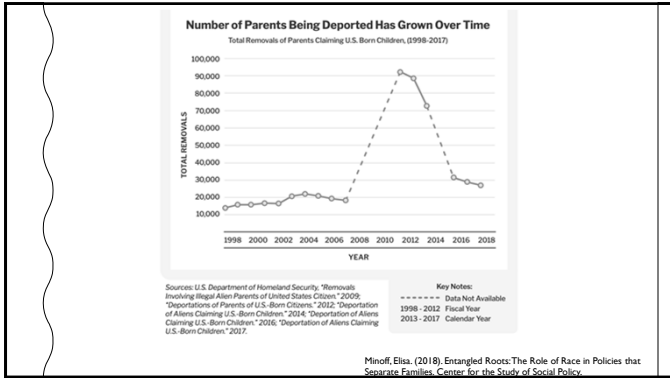
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## THE EFFECTS OF FOSTER CARE



- Causes trauma and harm to many children
- Children experience additional trauma from
  - failed or unsafe placements
  - multiple moves
  - loss of connections
- High risk for negative outcomes
  - Low educational attainment
  - Homelessness
  - Unemployment
  - Economic hardship
  - Mental health disorders
  - Criminal legal system involvement

(American Academy of Pediatrics, 2000).

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## THE UPEND MOVEMENT

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### WHAT IS THE UPEND MOVEMENT?

- Create a society in which forcible separation of children is no longer acceptable
- Reimagine current structures of child welfare and replace with new anti-racist means of keeping children protected and safe in their homes and communities
- Focused on building social and economic supports for families
- Focused on prevention and care, so families and communities are the first responders to crises rather than state intervention



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This is not about ending care; this is the beginning of care for families and communities by ending the current system of foster care and institutional care.

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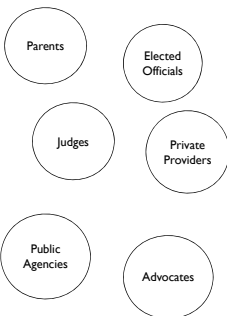
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### WHY UPEND THE SYSTEM?



- Not about modest reform, but ending the current child welfare system and creating new, anti-racist structures and practices
- upEND supports anti-racist policies and practices and joins with organizers working on
  - Adequate, safe, affordable housing
  - A guaranteed minimum income
  - Paid sick leave
  - Affordable and high quality child care
  - Quality and accessible public education
  - Affordable and accessible health & mental health care, substance abuse treatment

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### IMPETUS & GOALS

- Racism has motivated policies that separate children from parents, and it has been institutionalized
- Policymakers' goal across systems should end the routine separation of children from their parents
- Family separations should be rare, and their harm to children should be mitigated in the extremely unusual circumstances when they are necessary



Minoff, Elisa. (2018). Entangled Roots: The Role of Race in Policies that Separate Families. Center for the Study of Social Policy.

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### WAYS TO REDUCE FAMILY SEPARATION

- Federal –
  - Offer 15 extra months of services once the kids return home
  - Provide preventative services to more families
- State –
  - Require consideration of enumerated factors (is kinship available, where the foster home is located)
  - Clarify "reasonable efforts"
- Judicial decision making –
  - Consider whether remaining in the home would be contrary to the child's best interests,
  - Consider their role in determining if an agency made reasonable efforts to prevent removal

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### STEPS THAT WE CAN ALL TAKE...

- Become aware of your own biases
- Raise consciousness
- Deliberate, reflect, and educate
- Change perspectives
- Welcome and embrace diversity among practitioners
- Develop a racial equity lens

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