IARCA Outcome Measures Project

Snapshots

Racial Equity Data

In response to nationwide demands in the summer of 2020 for more action on racial justice issues, the IARCA Institute identified ten data points from its Outcome Measures Project that could potentially shed light on racial equity issues within Indiana's child and family welfare community.

Founded over twenty years ago, the Project tracks dozens of points of data across thousands of children each year. The data is shared on a voluntary basis by more than 50 Indiana agencies service children and their families. The Institute releases an Annual Report summarizing the data and occasional special issue reports analyzing specific pieces of data.

In 2020, the Project also began to share weekly *Snapshots* of data points that may be of interest to a wide variety of audiences. The first *Snapshots* series focused on what particular data points look like across racial and ethnic groups. These data points are just the beginning of what Outcomes data can tell us about racial disparities. They are a quick look across all service lines, including home-based services, foster care, residential, independent living, and older youth services. The Institute will continue to look at these data points within particular service lines to see if greater variation exists by type of service.

For the purposes of *Snapshots*, the data points are collected when a youth begins a particular service, when a youth is discharged from a service, and six months after a youth was discharged. Just for clarity sake, this generally does not mean when a youth begins to receive any services to the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) or all services are completed. A youth may receive several specific services from one or more child and family welfare agency while in DCS's care. These data points were collected in conjunction with those specific services.

Intake

In 2019, the Outcome Project collected data on 4995 instances when program services for a child started. Of those children:
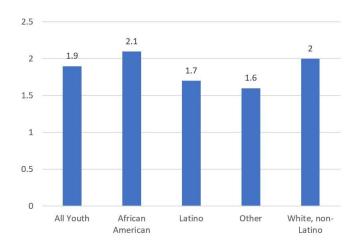
- 966 are African American
- 3132 are white, non-Latino
- 229 are Latino
- 668 are multi-racial, Asian-American, or categorized as "other"

Number of prior placements

The "number of prior placements" is the number of services or programs the youth received in the past. The number of prior placements is measured for all youth. The measurement of the number of prior placements is one of several measurements considered to be a child risk factor. Child risk factors generally indicate a higher probability of needing services. Other child risk factors are witness to domestic violence, grade retention, and use of psychotropic medication.
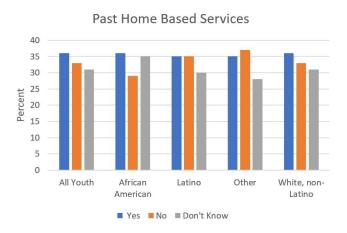
The data below indicates the mean number of prior placements across all programs for the population being measured. A mean calculation is the average of all values presented.

Number of prior placements

Past home-based services

"Past Home-Based Services" measures whether the youth has ever received these services (either during their current case or a prior case that has since closed). It is a point of measurement for all youth. The question, "Has the child received Home-Based services in the past?" elicits responses of "Yes", "No", or "Don't Know." They are expressed as percentages in the graph. "Don't Know" responses are significant in the overall measurement as definitive 'yes/no' responses may not be known or expressed by the referral source, family, or youth.

Past Home Based Services

Discharge

In, 2019, the Outcome Project collected data on 4480 instances when program services for a child ended. Of those children:
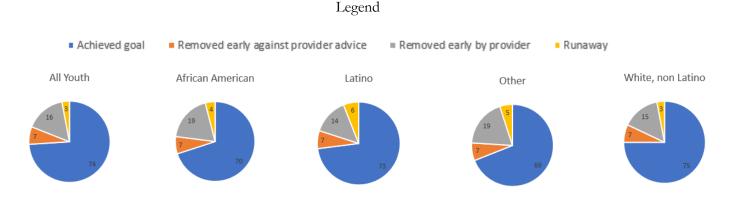
- 851 are African American
- 2957 are white, non-Latino
- 179 are Latino
- 493 are multi-racial, Asian-American, or categorized as "other"

Why services ended

This Snapshot focuses on why the youth stopped receiving services from a particular program. The Outcomes Project categories four reasons for why services in a program would end:

- Achieved goals - the youth's goals for the program have successfully been achieved,
- Removed early against provider advice - DCS or county probation have ended those services before the youth's goals were achieved against the advice of the agency providing them,
- Removed early by provider - the agency has requested that DCS or county probation end the services before the youth's goals have been achieved because the youth is not succeeding in the program, or
- Runaway - the child has left the program without permission.

Each pie chart demonstrates the percent of children whose services ended for each of the four reasons listed above.
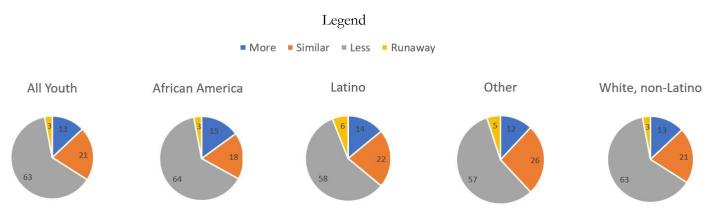
Legend

■ Achieved goal   ■ Removed early against provider advice   ▪ Removed early by provider   ■ Runaway

All Youth	African American	Latino	Other	White, non Latino

Where did they go next?

One important data point in assessing whether a child is moving forward in meeting their goals is where they go after completing a particular program. Specifically, are they moving to a living environment that is as restrictive, less restrictive, or more restrictive?

Generally, a child is advancing with their goals if they are moving to a less restrictive environment. There are times when even a change to a similarly restrictive environment can represent a move forward. And, generally, when a child moves to a more restrictive environment, we haven't been successful yet in helping her or him make forward progress on their goal. When children leave a program without permission, they are classified as having runaway and are not assessed for restrictiveness of environment.

Each pie chart indicates the percent of children whose living environment was as restrictive, less restrictive, more restrictive, or a runaway.

Legend

■ More   ■ Similar   ▪ Less   ■ Runaway

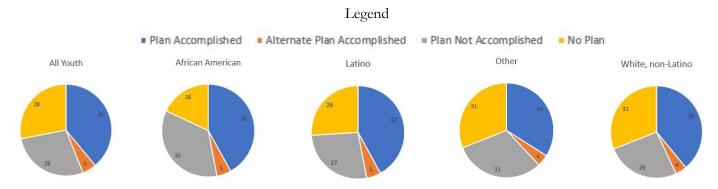| All Youth	African America	Latino	Other	White, non-Latino

Did we help children accomplish their plans?

When a youth is referred for services, the agency making the referral (oftentimes Department of Child Services or a county probation office but also private placement) will include a plan, such as the permanency plan for youth in DCS care.

When a service ends, Outcomes Project participants document whether we have helped a youth accomplish that plan or an alternate plan. Or whether we did not help a youth achieve the plan or if a plan was never received by the participating agency. Sometimes, even when a plan is supposed to be in place, the referring agency does not have one. Other times, a plan is not required for a youth.

It's important to note that these plans are separate from the individual goals that are part of a particular service. Success in achieving those goals are documented separately.

- Plan accomplished – Commonly, the planned outcome is reunification with parent(s) or adoption.
- Alternate plan accomplished – Oftentimes, the alternate plan is emancipation/ independent living or another planned living arrangement.
- Plan not accomplished – There was plan but it was not accomplished. This is sometimes the outcome when the service being provided was not intended to be the final step but was instead helping the youth or family to make progress on the plan.
- No plan – Either a required plan was not provided, or no plan was required.

Each pie chart indicates the percent of children for whom their plan was accomplished, an alternate plan was accomplished, a plan was not accomplished, or there was no plan.

Legend

■ Plan Accomplished   ■ Alternate Plan Accomplished   ■ Plan Not Accomplished   ■ No Plan

| All Youth | African American | Latino | Other | White, non-Latino |

Educational Outcomes

When a service ends, Outcomes Project participants assess educational outcomes for the youth in three ways: school attendance, school-related behavior, and academic improvement. The outcome is indicated as positive, negative, or not applicable.
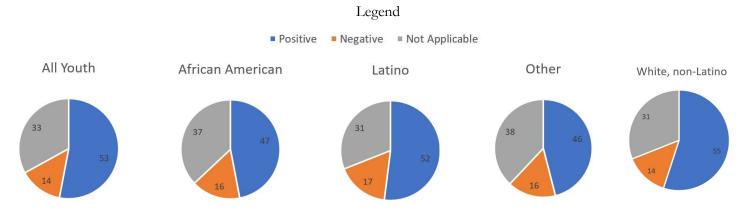
Positive outcome – either:
- The youth had positive assessments on two of the three above outcomes, or
- The youth obtained a certificate of completion, GED, or diploma while receiving services.

Negative outcome – The youth had positive assessments in only one or none of the three above outcomes.

Not applicable – There are several situations where an outcome measurement is not applicable (for example, the youth under age 6, school was not in session during the treatment period, or the treatment duration was less than 14 days in length).
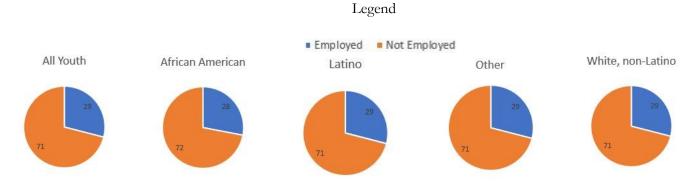
Each pie chart indicates the percent of children for whom the cumulative educational outcomes were positive, negative, or not applicable.

Legend

■ Positive   ■ Negative   ■ Not Applicable

All Youth	African American	Latino	Other	White, non-Latino
33, 53, 14	37, 47, 16	31, 52, 17	38, 46, 16	31, 55, 14

Employment Status

Employment status is one of the areas measured for youth 16 and older. When a particular service ends, Outcomes Project agency participants assess whether the youth is employed or not employed. While there are many reasons why a youth finishing a particular service would not be employed, this data point can be a helpful measure of job readiness.
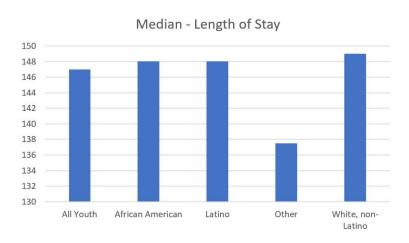
Each pie chart indicates the percentage of youth 16 or over who are employed or not employed.

Legend

■ Employed   ■ Not Employed

All Youth	African American	Latino	Other	White, non-Latino
29, 71	28, 72	29, 71	29, 71	29, 71

Length of stay

Length of stay is one of several measurements for the effectiveness of placement. The length of stay period for this Snapshot is the number of calendar days a child or youth was receiving the specific service. It is not the total number of days the child or youth has received any DCS services.

The data below indicates the median length of stay in number of days across all programs for the population being measured. A median calculation is the most central value in a list of numbers and is generally preferred over an average.

Median - Length of Stay

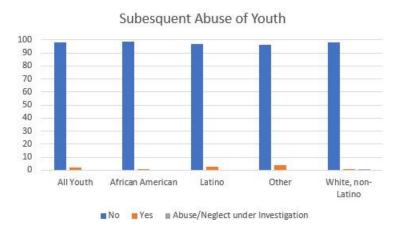| All Youth	African American	Latino	Other	White, non-Latino
147	148	148	137.5	149

Six month follow up

The following data was collected six months after a particular service has ended. Data after six months can be collected during one of three contact attempts. If contact was unable to be made after three times, the case is marked as, "Unable to make contact."

In 2019, the Outcome Project collected data on 971 instances when contact was able to be made for follow up measurements. Of those children:

- 159 are African American
- 698 are white, non-Latino
- 36 are Latino
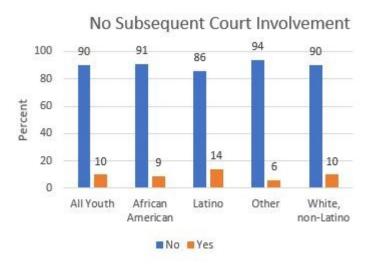- 85 are multi-racial, Asian-American, or categorized as "other"

Subsequent abuse of children

The question, "Was the child a victim of substantiated abuse or neglect since discharge?" elicits responses of "Yes", "No", or "Investigation currently in progress."

Subesquent Abuse of Youth

Subsequent Court Involvement

The question, "Was the child in any court because of his/her actions since discharge – not simply a customary review hearing or a traffic infraction?" elicits responses of "Yes" or "No." The below graph shows, of the youth that were contacted, the percentage of "yes" and "no" by racial or ethnic group.

No Subsequent Court Involvement