

Racial Inequity Remains Large for Maryland's Families

Tracking Disparities Is a Critical First Step

Executive Summary

Large racial disparities for Maryland's children exist in health, education, child welfare, and juvenile services. Minority children are more likely to be born low birthweight, die as infants, enter foster care, fail achievement tests, be suspended from school and be arrested. The State must collect better data and implement proven solutions to address these inequities.

Background

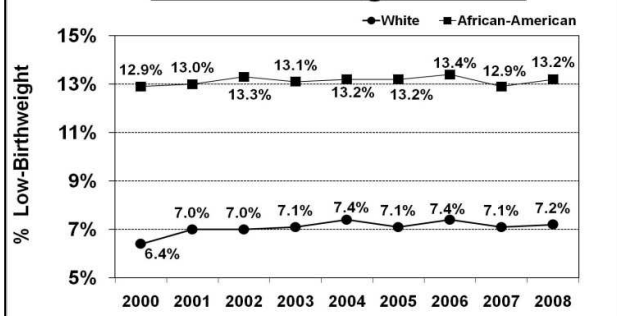
This report examines racial equity across the issues relating to children and then discusses solutions.

Findings

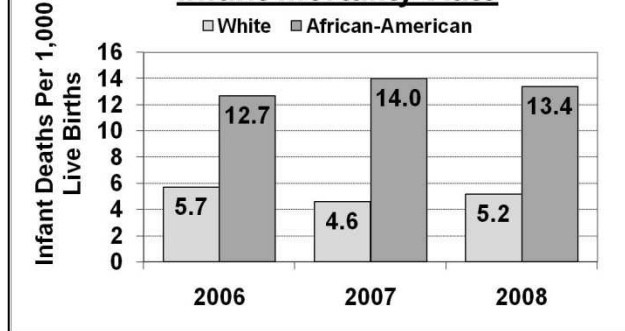
Health

In 2008, 7.2 percent of white babies were born at a low birthweight, compared with 13.2 percent of African-American babies. African-American infants die at 2.5 times the rate of white infants.

Low Birthweight Births



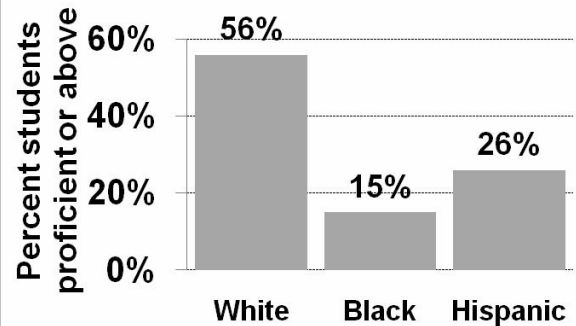
Infant Mortality Rate



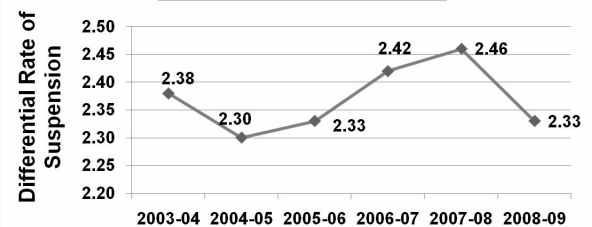
Education

Only one-third of Hispanic and one-fifth of African-American fourth graders scored proficient or above on the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress in math. Maryland's African-American students are 2.3 times more likely to be suspended than their white counterparts, a statistic that has remained generally static for several school years.

Proficient 8th Graders



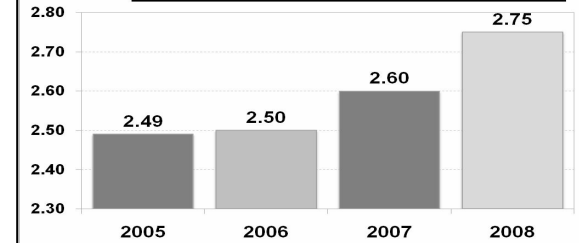
% Students Suspended African-American vs. White



Juvenile Justice

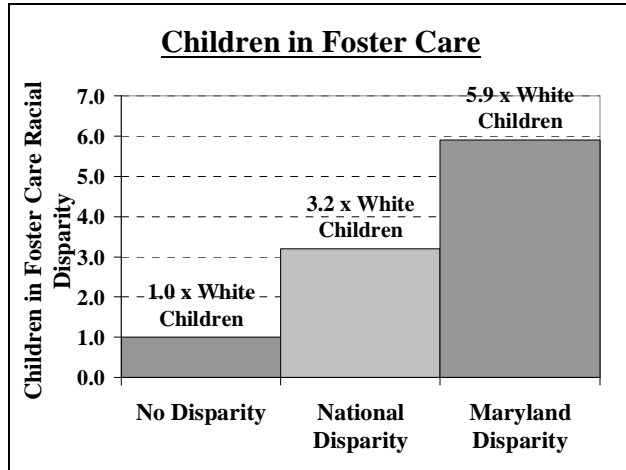
An African-American youth in Maryland is 2.75 times as likely to be arrested as his or her white counterpart, with a steady increase since 2005.

Youth Arrests: State Relative Rate Index



Child Welfare

African-American children in Maryland are 5.9 times more likely to be in foster care than white children, almost double the national disparity.¹



Recommendations

1. **Recognize the issue:** Acknowledgement of racial disparity is essential to finding ways to eliminate inequities for Maryland's children.
 2. **Tracking equity data:** Including racial equity indicators in bi-weekly StateStat reports for the Department of Human Resources, Department of Juvenile Services and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and adding a State report which includes these indicators for the Maryland State Department of Education, will help identify and track disparities and move forward with solutions to correct the inequities.
 3. **Provide interconception care:** Health services for women after a complicated pregnancy can delay and improve the outcomes of a second pregnancy.
 4. **Give extra help for students in need:** Early interventions for struggling students and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports can help ensure all children are achieving at grade level and avoiding suspension.
5. **Create family teams:** Family-centered case practice in child welfare can help reduce racial disparities in foster care by taking advantage of the extended networks of support that are particularly strong in minority communities.
 6. **Enhance police training:** Cultural competency training for law enforcement agencies can help reduce the disparity in juvenile arrests, providing it teaches availability and effectiveness of alternatives to arrest, the use of objective risk assessments and arrest protocols, and youth development, particularly among different cultures, races and ethnicities.

Want to Know More?

Health

Advocates for Children and Youth, *Maryland's Infants Continue To Fare Poorly* (Sept. 2009)

Education

Advocates for Children and Youth, *National Tests Show Maryland Needs To Help More Students Earlier* (Oct. 2009)

Advocates for Children and Youth, *School Suspensions Drop Sharply* (Dec. 2009)

Child Welfare

Advocates for Children and Youth, *Huge Racial Disparities Found in Maryland Child Welfare* (Aug. 2008)

Juvenile Justice

Advocates for Children and Youth, *Racial Disparities Widen for Maryland's Youth* (June 2009)

All issue briefs are available at www.acy.org.

¹Updated based on recent information from the Maryland Department of Human Resources.