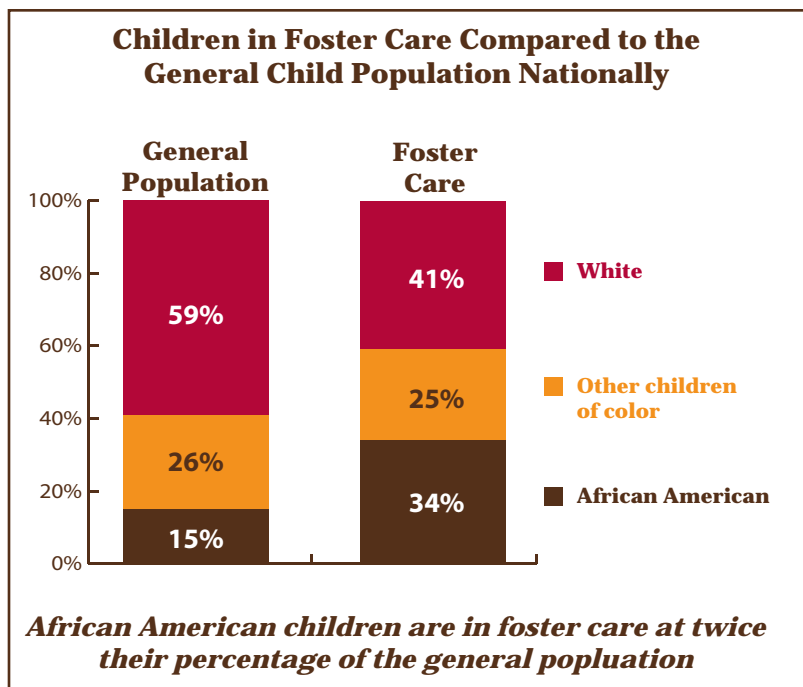


**D**isproportionality is the overrepresentation and disparate treatment of children of color in the child welfare system.

Research shows there is no difference in the rate of abuse and neglect between African American and white children.

**Yet African American children are represented at every stage in the child welfare system in numbers that far exceed their percentage of the general population.**

And at every stage, African American children are treated differently than white children. They are twice as likely to be investigated, reports are twice as likely to be substantiated, and they are 2½ times more likely to be placed in foster care.



Once in foster care, children of color

- experience a greater number of placements and moves
- receive fewer support services
- have less contact with case workers
- stay in the system longer
- are less likely to be reunited with their birth families
- are less likely to be adopted

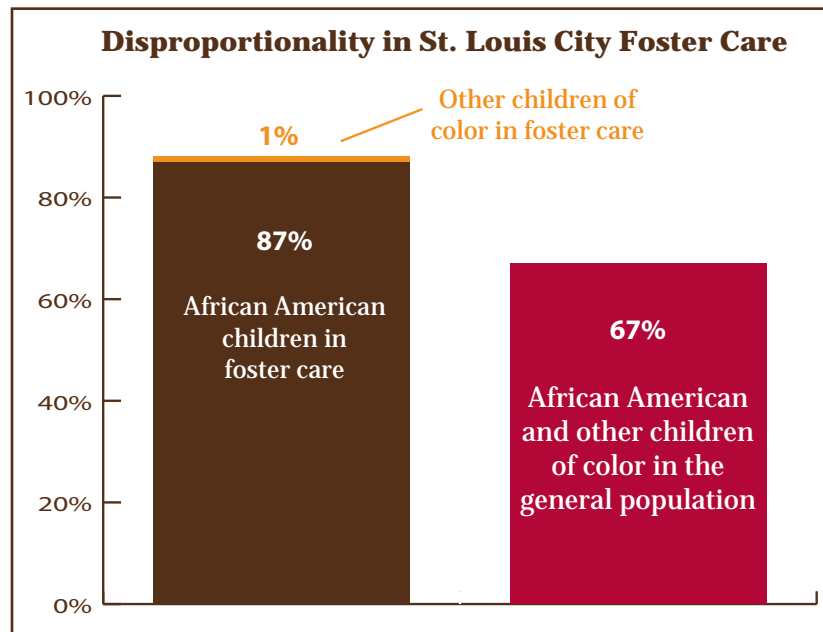
Disproportionality is the result of a combination of political, economic and social factors. The problem has its roots in poverty, classism, racism, organizational culture, service design, service delivery and a lack of resources.

There are 916 children in foster care in the City of St. Louis. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of these children are African American while only 67% of the general child population is African American.

Children have the best chance to thrive growing up in a forever family. They need family connections that last a lifetime. Children who come into foster care face significant challenges in finding their way to a stable, permanent home.

Disproportionality means African American children are even less likely to experience the loving embrace of a forever family.

This holds back our children. This holds back St.Louis.



This is a problem that St. Louis City Children's Division, Voices for Children, the court and other local partners are working together to address for the nearly 800 African American children in foster care in St. Louis city.

**You can help by giving a powerful voice to a child in foster care.  
You can make a difference.**

Sources:

\*Disproportionality: The Overrepresentation of Children of Color in the Foster Care System, a Policy Brief by Casey Family Programs, May 2009

St. Louis City data as of June 30, 2010: St. Louis City Children's Division, Disproportionality & Disparity Minutes, data presented by Betty Teal

National data from the GAO Report GAO-07-816, African American Children in Foster Care, July 2007

