

# The Implications of Race on Child Welfare Outcomes and Permanency in the Greater New Orleans Area

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## Introduction

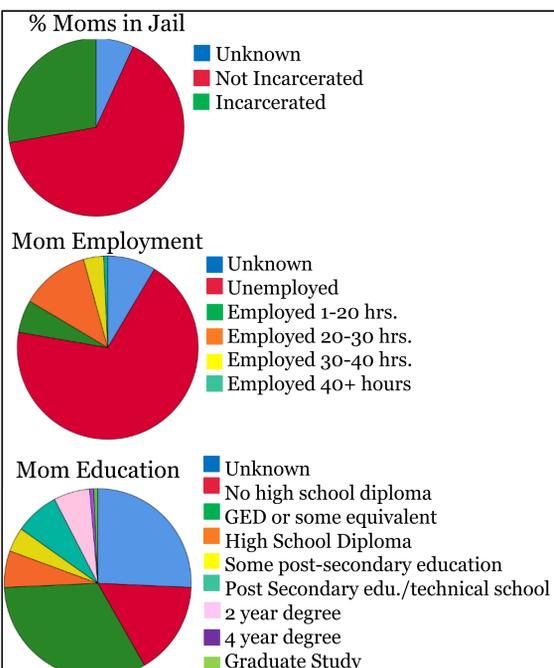
- The Child Welfare System (CWS) has suffered the effects of institutional racism and has negatively impacted minorities, especially African Americans.
- African Americans are at a greater risk for poverty, housing instability, and educational issues
- In the U.S., Black children account for 23% of the foster care population while only accounting for 13% of the total child population (Children's Bureau, 2021).
- Child abuse claims against African American families are 11% more likely to be substantiated (Maguire-Jack et al., 2020).
- African American children have a greater chance of experiencing out-of-home placement changes, termination of parental rights, and lengthier foster care cases (Cantey et al., 2022)
- African American parents are more likely to have their parental rights terminated than White parents when abusing substances (Sieger, 2020).
- The LSUHSC Infant Team provides mental health services to families with children 0-5 years old who enter CWS.

## Objective

This study aims to determine the effect of race on the length of time the child spends in foster care and the resulting legal resolution in the greater New Orleans Area. Demographic characteristics will also be examined to determine the association between these factors and the child's outcome.

- Hypothesis:** African American mothers will experience longer case times and lower reunification rates than White mothers with similar case characteristics.

## Sample Demographics



## Race and Reunification

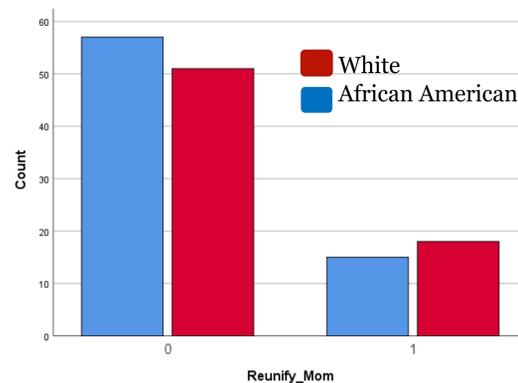
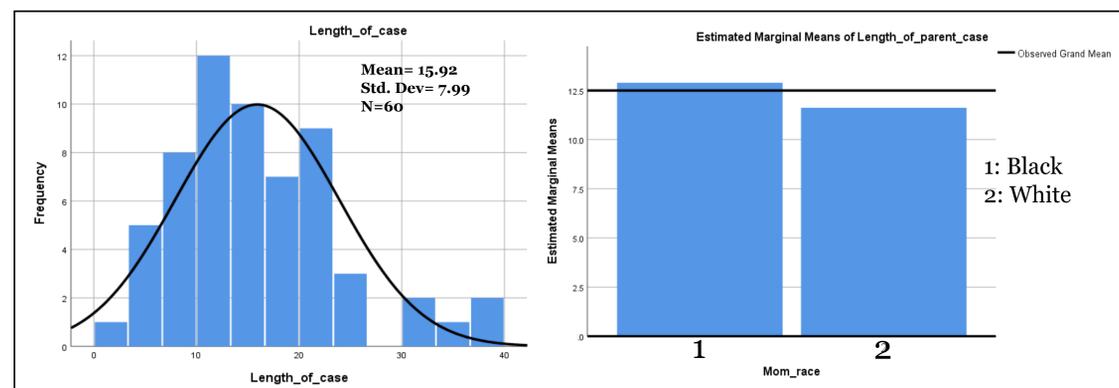


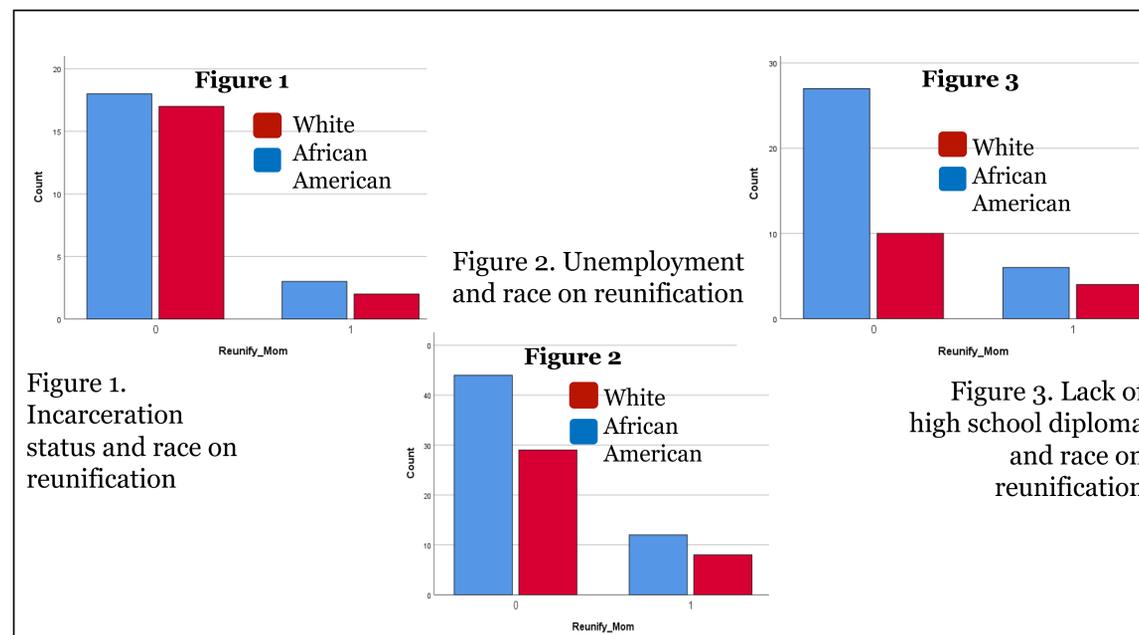
Figure 1. Graph depicting the number of Black and White moms who reunified with their children. 0= No reunification and 1=reunification

		Mom Race		Total	
		1	2		
Reunify Mom	0	Count	57	51	108
		% within Reunify Mom	52.8%	47.2%	100.0%
	1	% within Mom_race	79.2%	73.9%	76.6%
		% of Total	40.4%	36.2%	76.6%
		Count	15	18	33
1	% within Reunify_Mom	45.5%	54.5%	100.0%	
	% within Mom_race	20.8%	26.1%	23.4%	
	% of Total	10.6%	12.8%	23.4%	

## Race and Length of Case



## Incarceration, Employment, and Education



## Methods

- A subsample of 72 White and 72 Black mothers was randomly selected from the LSUHSC Infant Team records (Families in foster care from 1998-2022)
- Legal resolution, case length, education, employment, and incarceration status were selected for and analyzed.
- Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).
- Race and length of time were analyzed with an independent T-test
- Race and reunification were analyzed with a chi-square

## Results

- When race and the likelihood of reunification were analyzed, there was no significant statistical relationship ( $X^2 (1) = 0.542, p = 0.461$ ).
- When race and the case length were compared, the mean case length for Black moms was 15.84 months and 16.17 months for White moms. This demonstrates no significant difference in case length ( $t(58) = 0.364, p = 0.921$ ).
- No significant statistical relationship was found when comparing reunification rates and race with mom's education level ( $X^2 (1) = 0.701, p = 0.403$ ), employment status ( $X^2 (1) = 0.360, p = 0.548$ ), and incarceration ( $X^2 (1) = 0.741, p = 0.389$ ).

## Conclusion

- Although national statistics show significant disparities between White and Black parents in the CWS, the cases examined by the Infant Team demonstrate little to no disparity.
- The percentage of Black moms who did not reunify was higher than White moms—a trend for lower reunification with Black moms may be more evident in a larger sample size.
- Psychological interventions by mental health professionals and collaboration with the court system may be the reasons for improved case outcomes.
- The Children's Bureau suggests improving racial disparities by providing concrete services, family and group decision-making opportunities, and unbiased assessment tools.
- The LSU infant team provides services to all cases referred by the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS), decreasing bias and lack of access to resources.
- The Infant Team provides an external recommendation for families, which may decrease bias in decision-making.
- Similar services should be provided in other regions to assist Child welfare workers in decreasing disproportionate outcomes for minorities.