



# Disproportionality And Disparity of Outcomes In Child Welfare

Fairness and Equity Conference  
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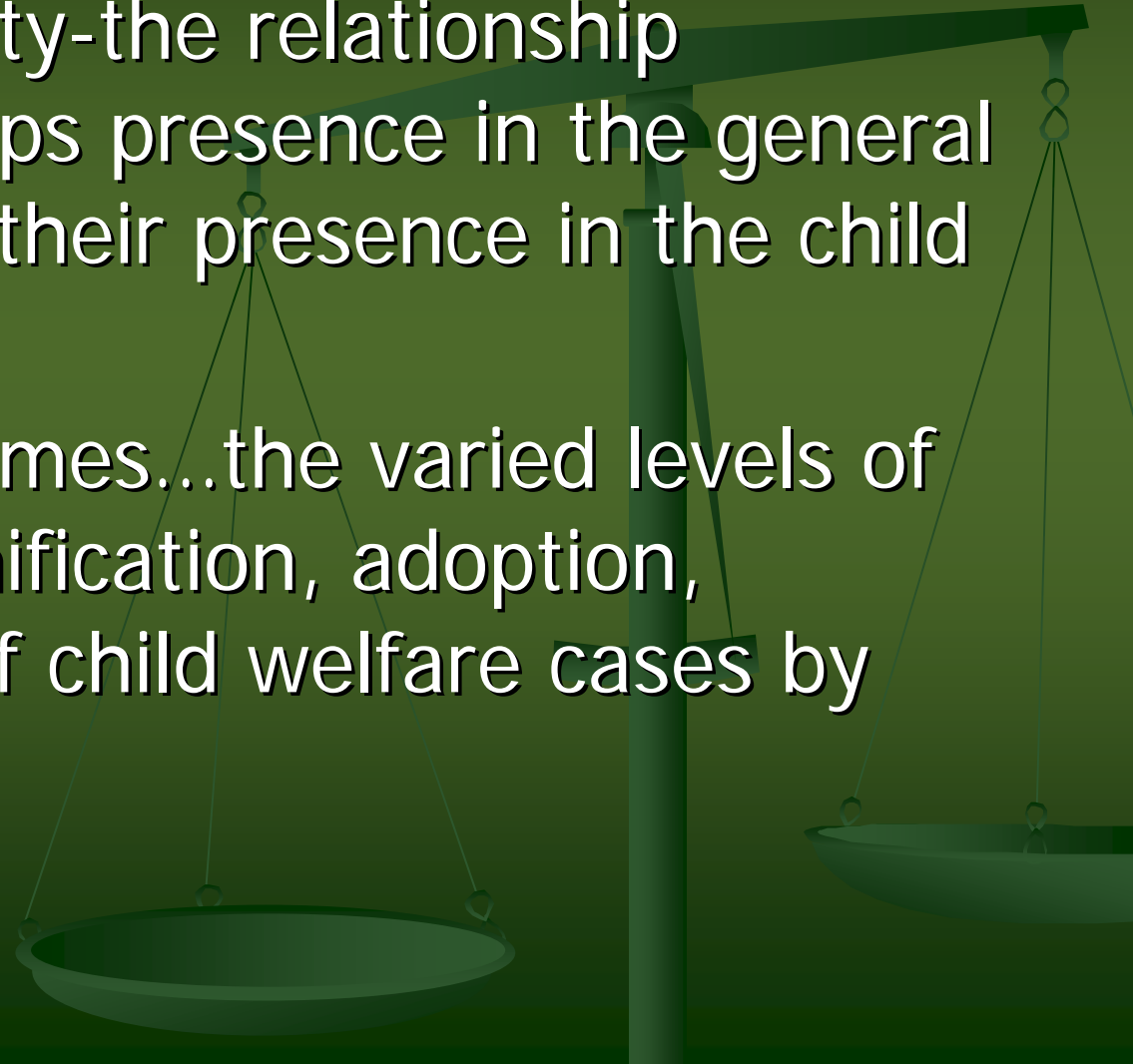
# Goals of the Conversation

- Define the terms
- Describe how disproportionality is evidenced in child welfare
- Explore the historical roots
- Impact on children and communities

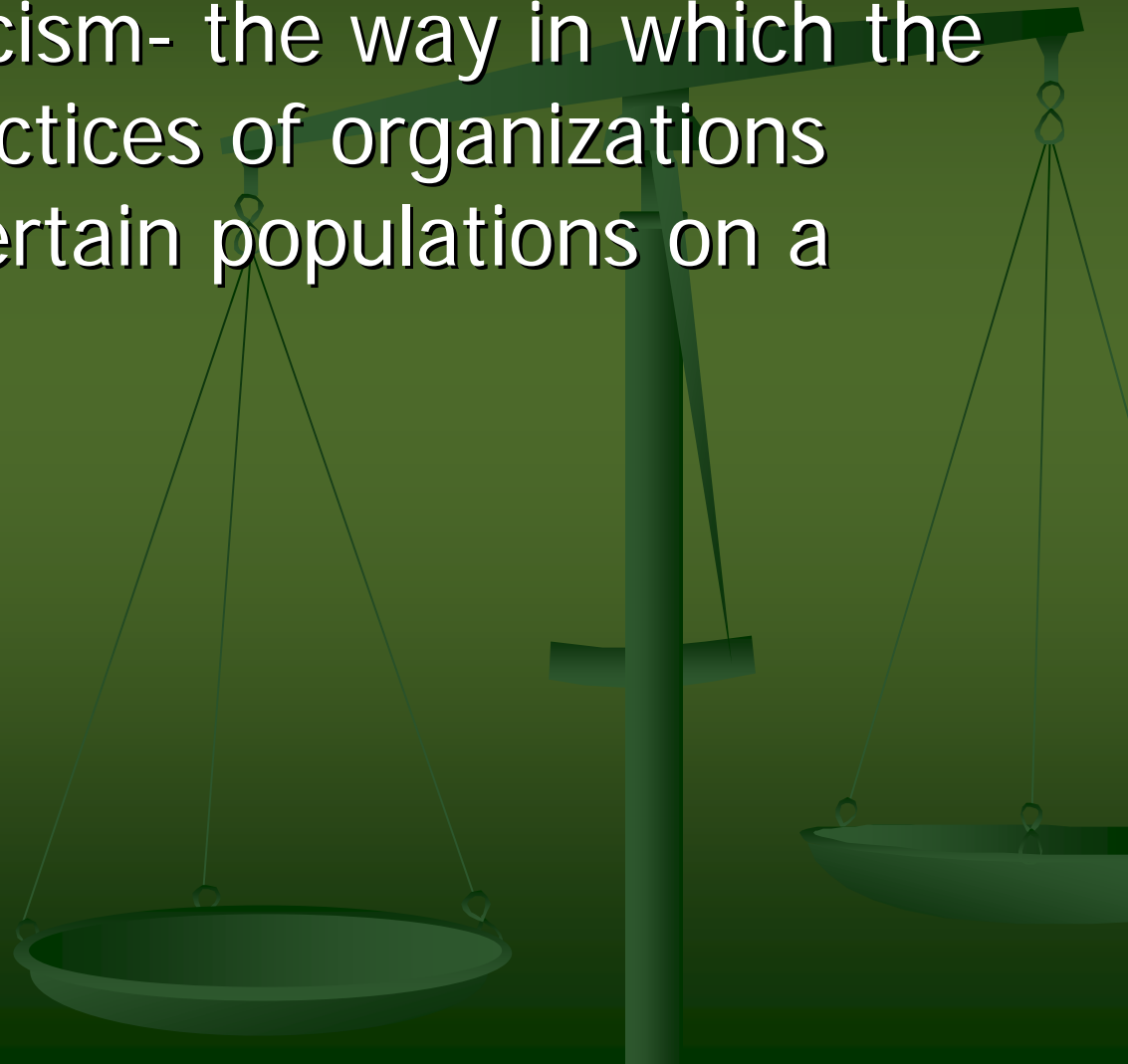


# Disproportionality & Disparate Outcomes

- Disproportionality-the relationship between a groups presence in the general population and their presence in the child welfare system
- Disparate outcomes...the varied levels of resolution (reunification, adoption, guardianship) of child welfare cases by group



- Institutional Racism- the way in which the policies and practices of organizations disadvantage certain populations on a consistent basis



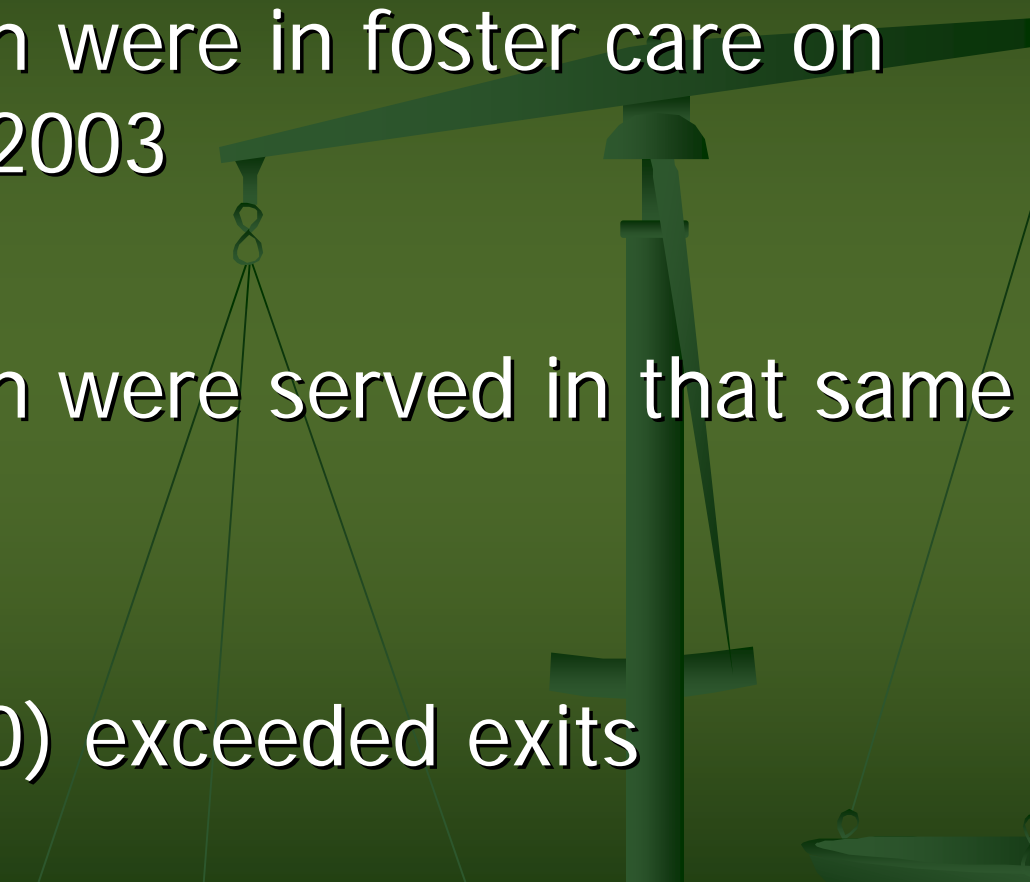
# SCOPE



According to AFCARA, in 2002

- 896,000 children were found to be maltreated
- Kinds of substantiated maltreatment
  - Neglect = 60%
  - Physical Abuse = 20%
  - Sexual Abuse = 10%
- One fifth of the victims were placed in foster care

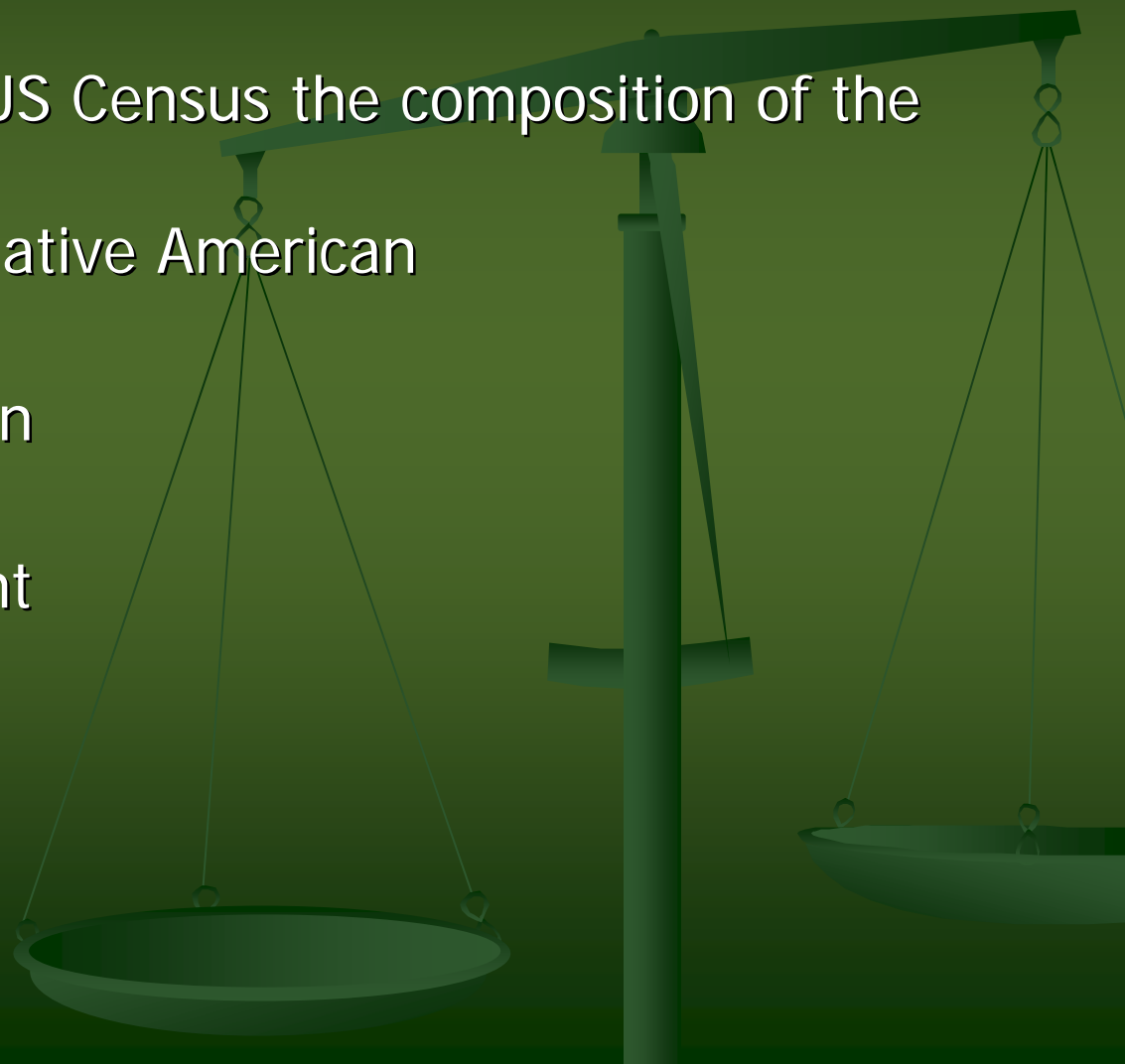
# SCOPE

- 523,000 children were in foster care on September 30, 2003
  - 800,000 children were served in that same fiscal year
  - Entries (297,000) exceeded exits (281,000)
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# The Child Population: The Baseline

According to the 2000 US Census the composition of the child population was

- 1% Alaskan Native/Native American
- 4% Asian Pacific
- 15% African American
- 16% Hispanic
- 64% European decent



# Race and Maltreatment

- ACCORDING TO THE NATIONAL INCIDENCE STUDY OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT # 2 and # 3
  - There were **no significant race differences** in the **incidence** of maltreatment and maltreatment related **injuries**.



# Substantiation: Decision One

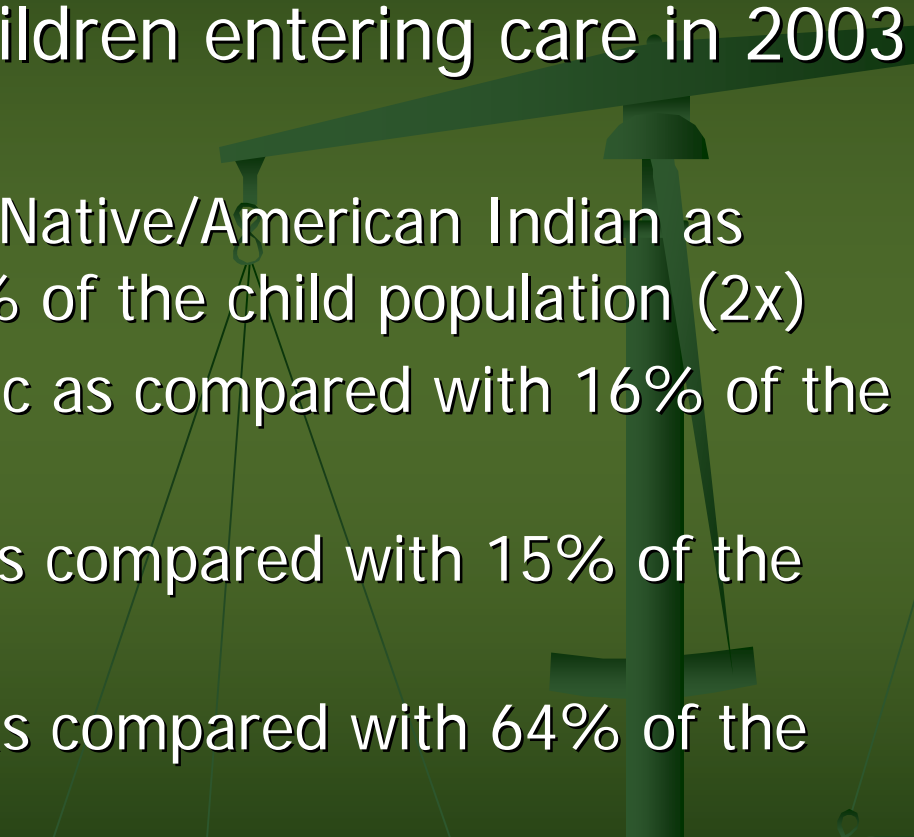
- According to Child Maltreatment 2002, rates of substantiated maltreatment vary by race and ethnicity.
  - Native America/ Alaskan Native and African American children have the highest rates of substantiated maltreatment when compared to white children
    - White = **10.7 per 1,000 children**
    - American Indian /Alaskan native = **21.7 per 1000**
    - African American = **20.2 per 1000**

# Question #1

If there are no differences in incidence rates and injury rates why are there such dramatic differences in substantiation rates?



# Entry into Care: Decision Two

- Of the 297,000 children entering care in 2003 AFCARS reports
    - 2% were Alaskan Native/American Indian as compared with 1% of the child population (2x)
    - 17% were Hispanic as compared with 16% of the population (1x)
    - 27% were Black as compared with 15% of the population (1.8x)
    - 46% were white as compared with 64% of the population (.71x)
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# Questions

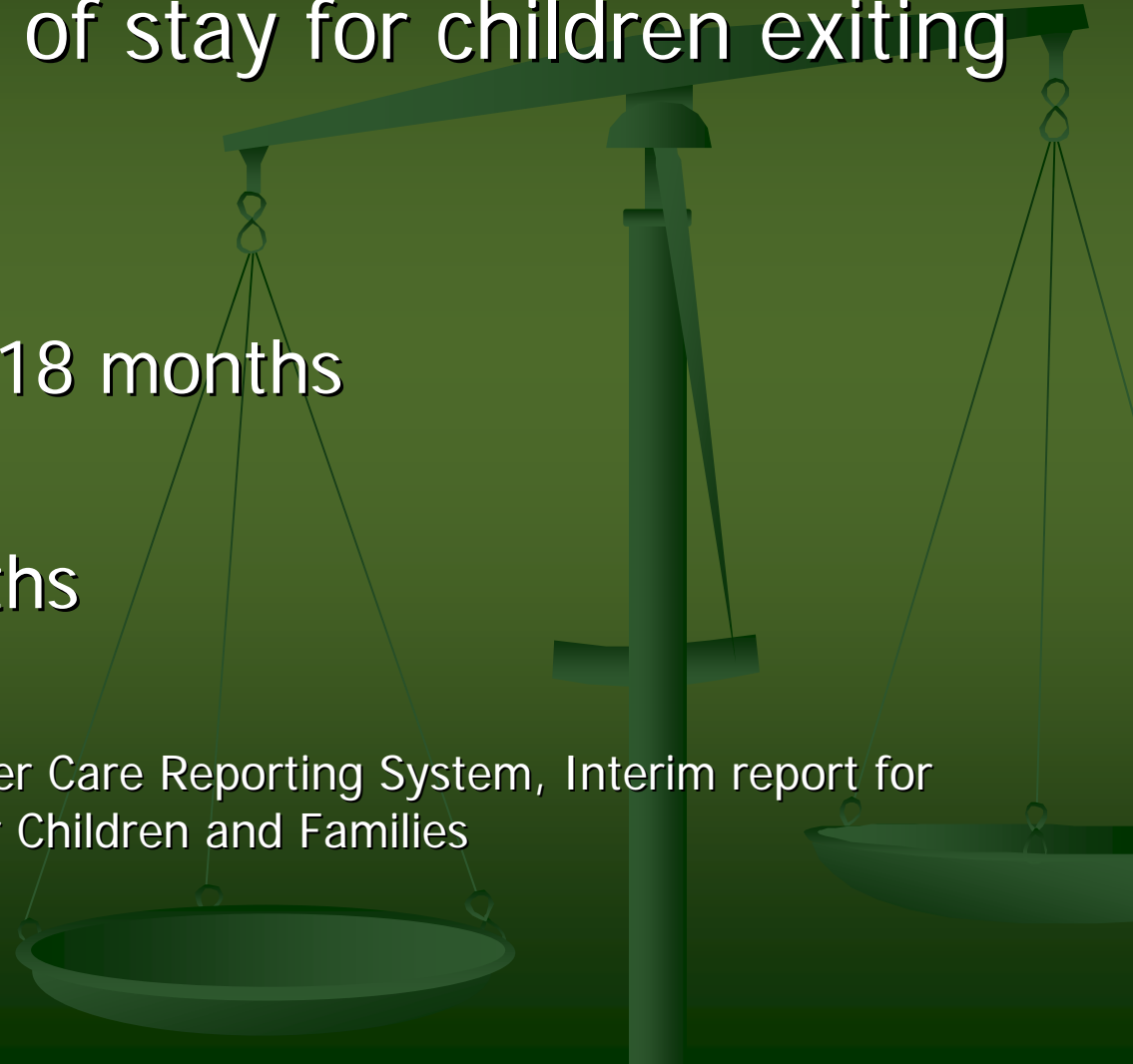


- Are there differences in family characteristics, and or needs?
- Are there differences in pre-placement service delivery?
- Are there cultural factors that influence the decisions and service delivery?
- Are there racial factors that influence decisions and service delivery?

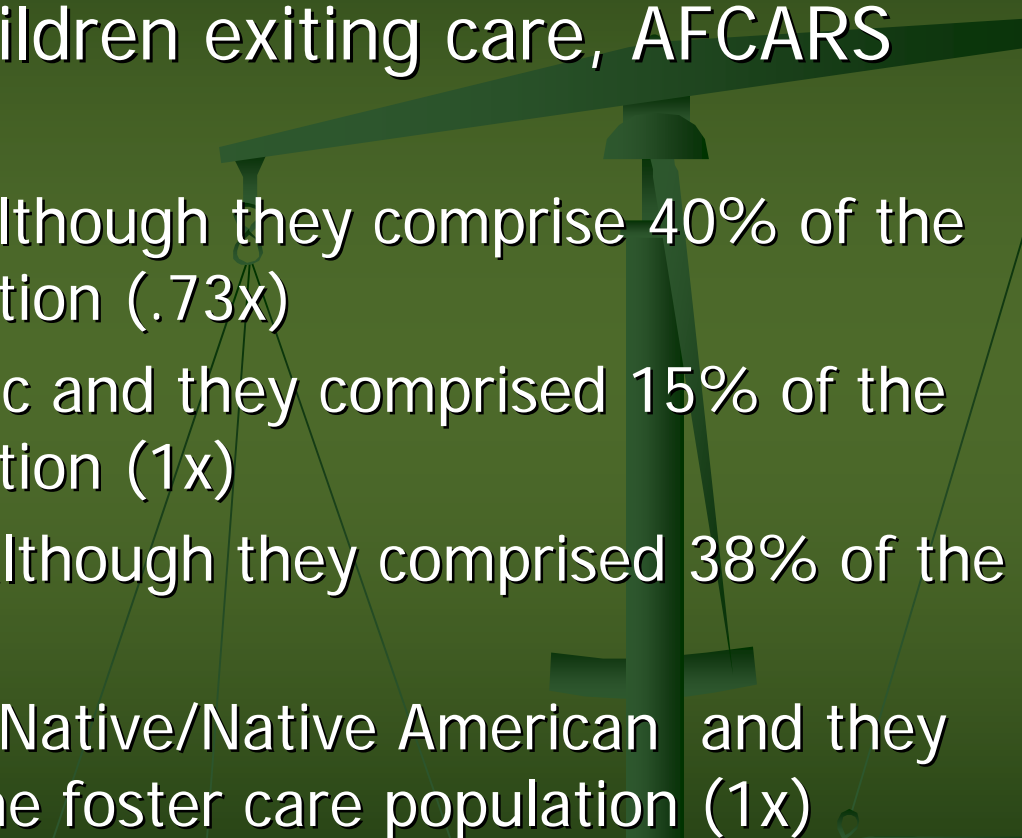
# Length of Stay

- Average Length of stay for children exiting care
  - Black children- 18 months
  - White- 10 months

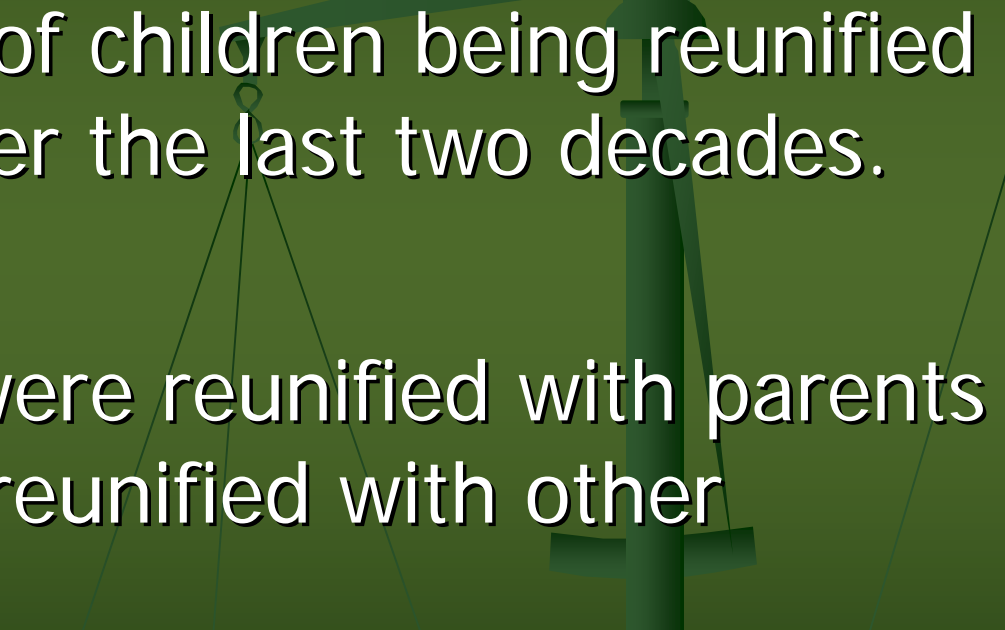
Source: Adoption and Foster Care Reporting System, Interim report for 2003. Administration for Children and Families



# Exit from Care: Decision Three

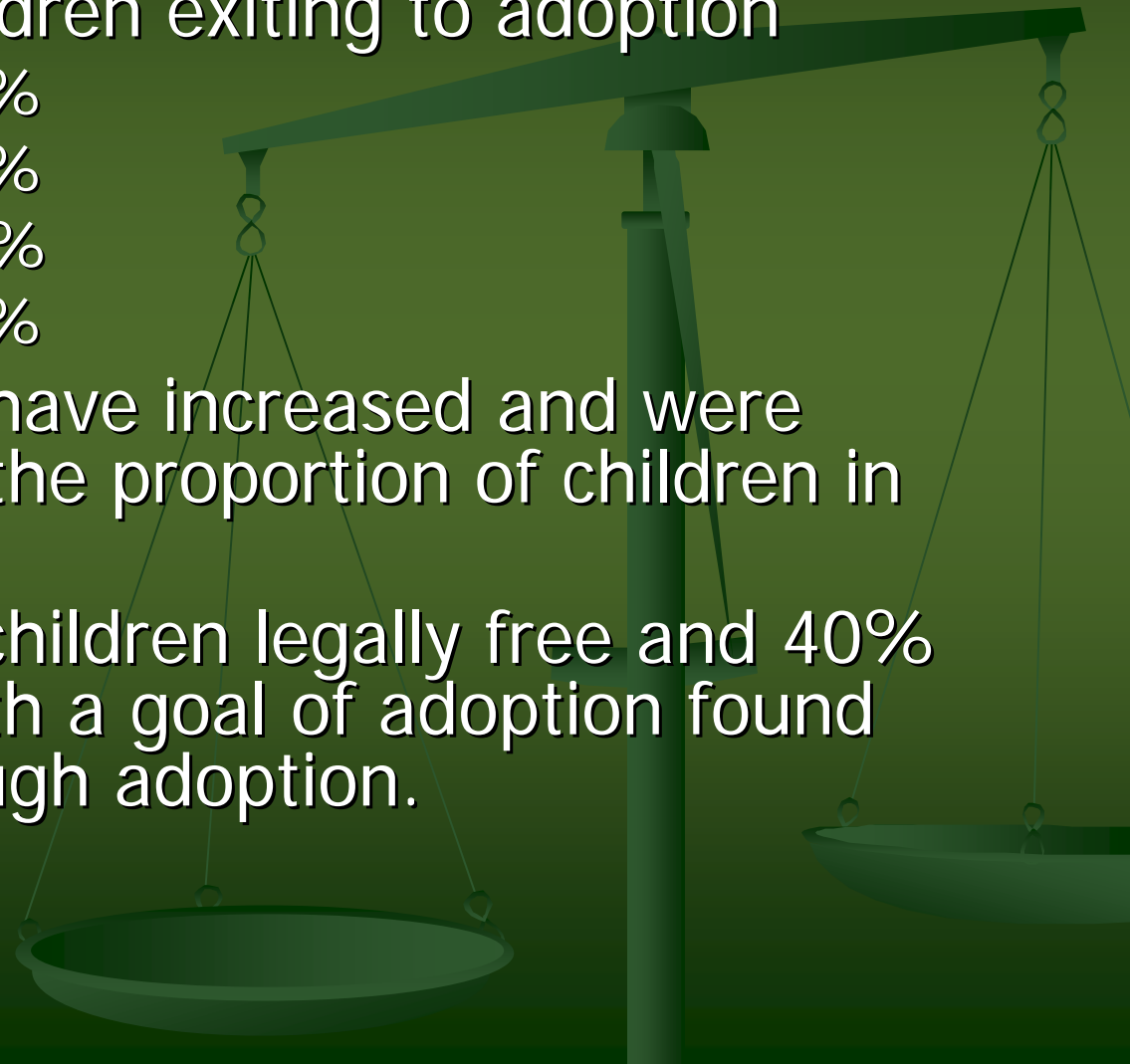
- Of the 281,000 children exiting care, AFCARS reports:
    - 29% were Black although they comprise 40% of the foster care population (.73x)
    - 16% were Hispanic and they comprised 15% of the foster care population (1x)
    - 46% were white although they comprised 38% of the population ( 1.2x)
    - 2% were Alaskan Native/Native American and they comprise 2% of the foster care population (1x)
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# Exits to Reunification

- The proportion of children being reunified has declined over the last two decades.
  - In 2003, 55% were reunified with parents and 11% were reunified with other relatives.
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# Exits to Adoption

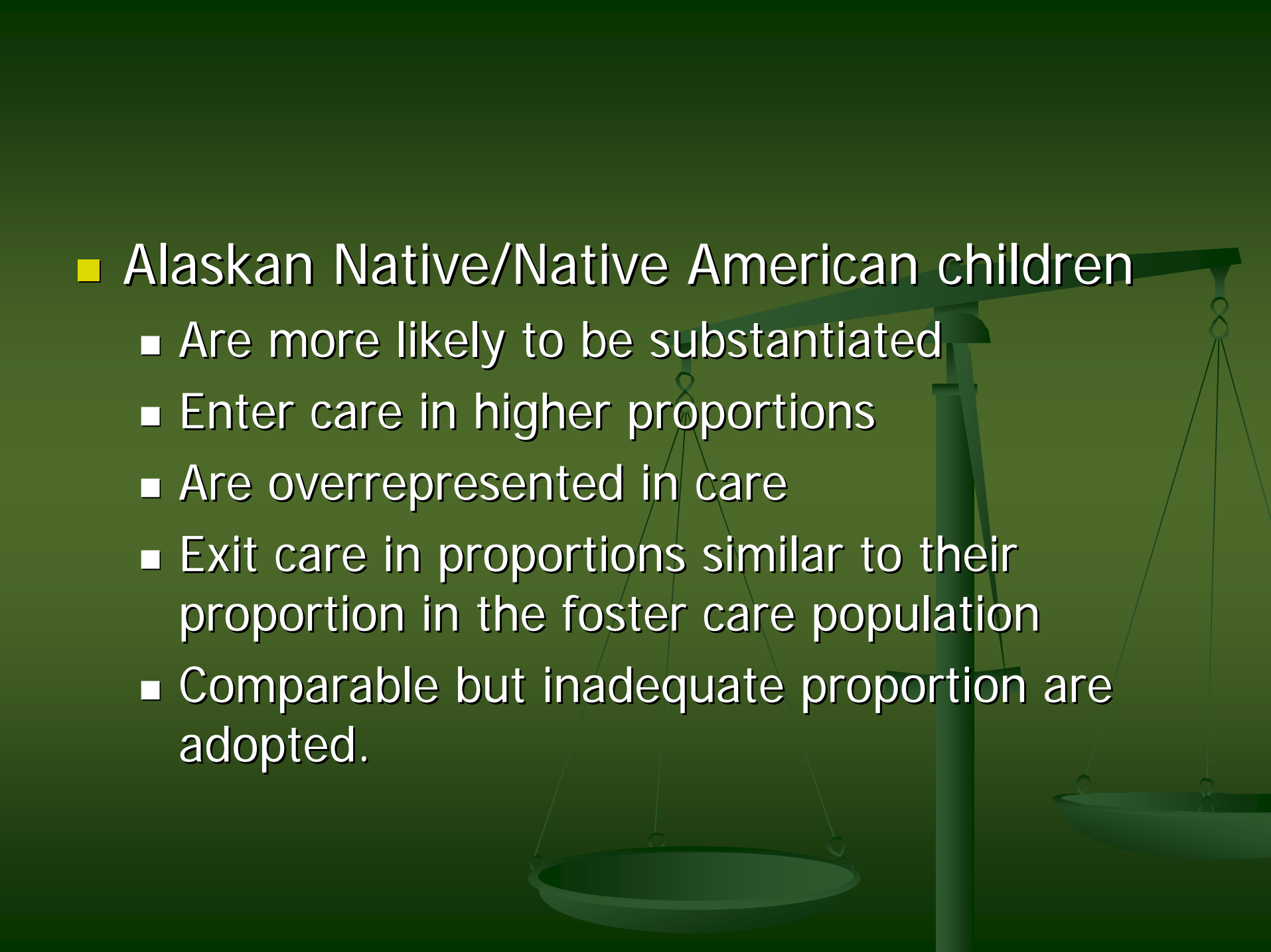
- Of the 50,000 children exiting to adoption
  - Black 39%
  - Hispanic 14%
  - Native 8%
  - White 38%
- Exits to adoption have increased and were comparable in to the proportion of children in care.
- Only 68% of the children legally free and 40% of the children with a goal of adoption found permanency through adoption.

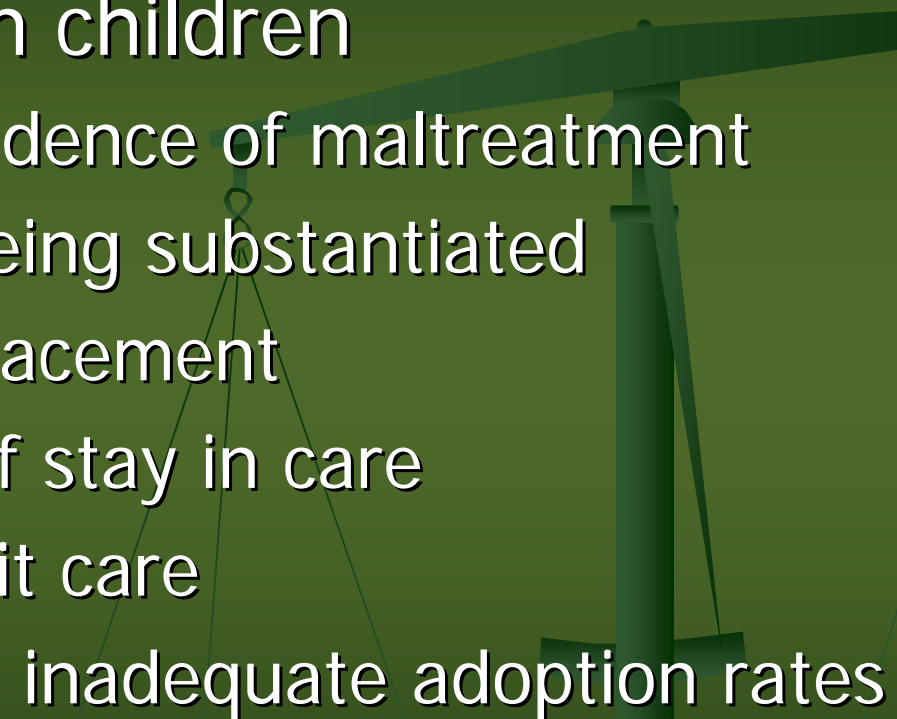


# Waiting children

- Of the 119,000 children waiting to be adopted on September 30, 2003
  - 40% (48,000) were African American
  - 14% (16,200) were Hispanic
  - 37% (44,000) were White
  - 2% ( 2,200) were Native American

Source: AFCARS 2003 Interim report

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- Alaskan Native/Native American children
    - Are more likely to be substantiated
    - Enter care in higher proportions
    - Are overrepresented in care
    - Exit care in proportions similar to their proportion in the foster care population
    - Comparable but inadequate proportion are adopted.

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- African American children
    - Comparable incidence of maltreatment
    - Higher risk of being substantiated
    - Higher risk of placement
    - Longer length of stay in care
    - Less likely to exit care
    - Comparable but inadequate adoption rates



- Hispanic Children

- Appear to be proportionately represented through out the child welfare system
- Concern about the accuracy of the data and possible undercount.

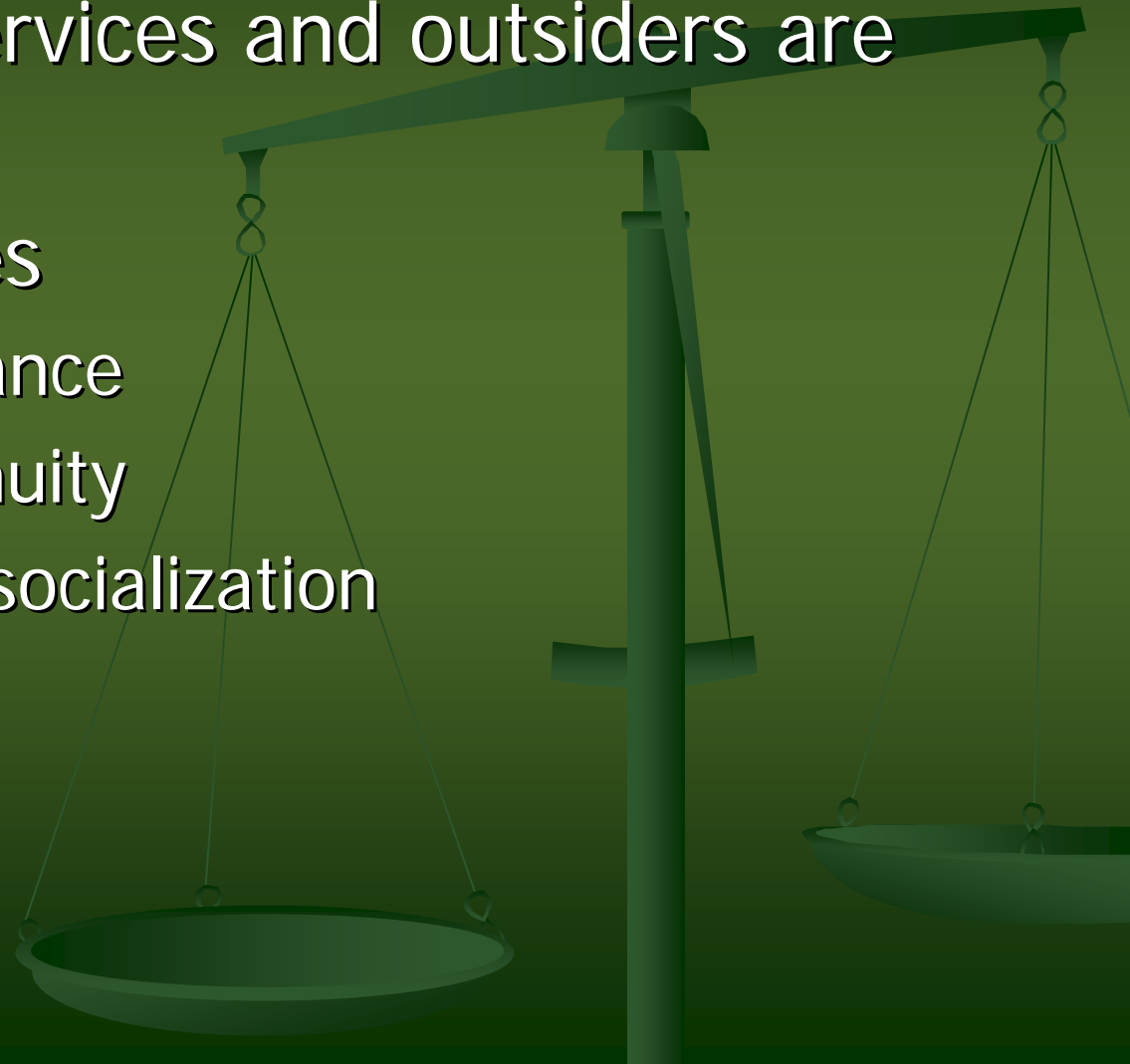


- White children

- Less likely to be substantiated
- Underrepresented at entry into care
- Underrepresented in placement
- Shorter time in care
- Slightly over-represented in adoptions

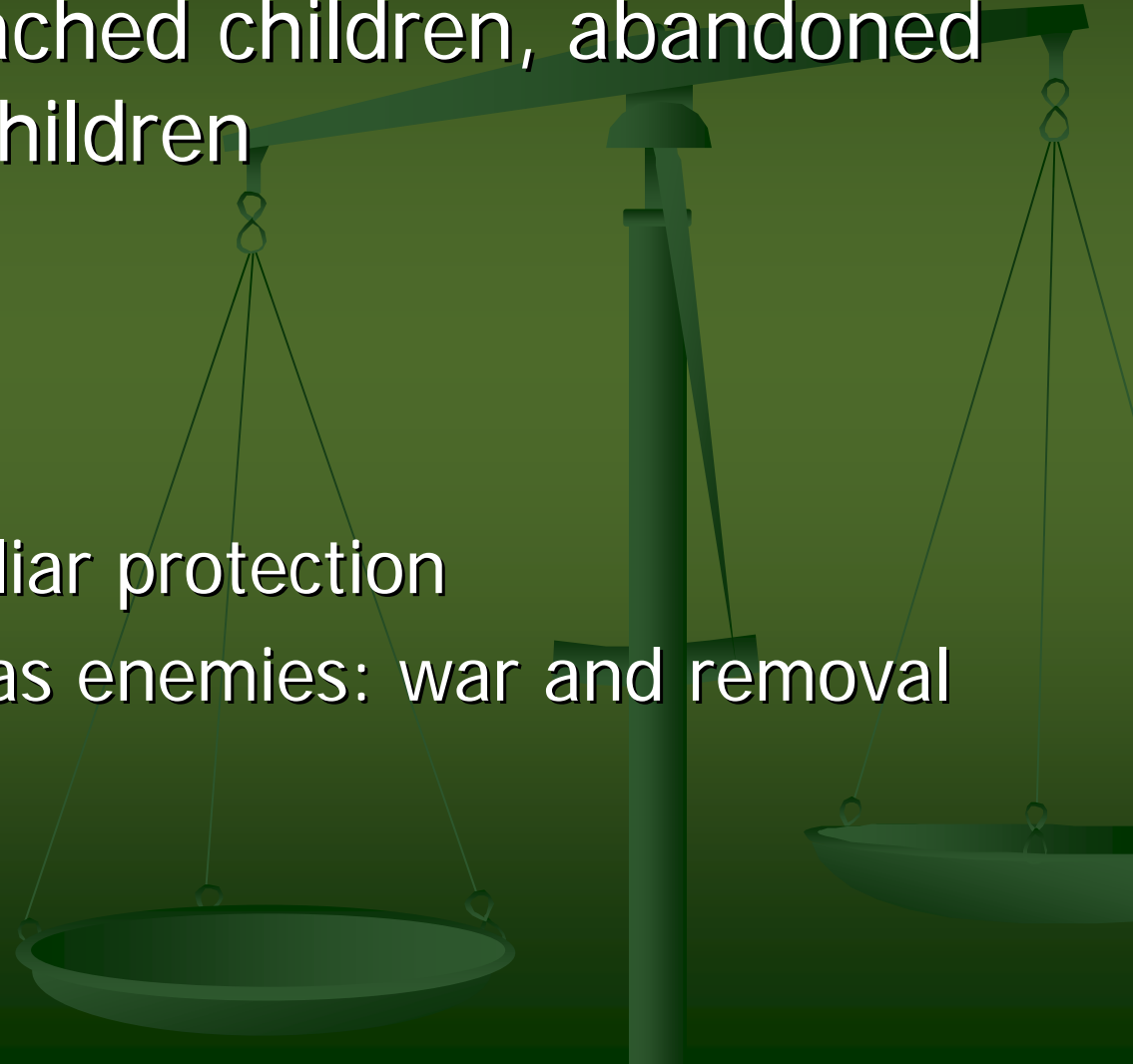
# Child welfare history and themes

- Child welfare services and outsiders are linked
- Common themes
  - Cultural dominance
  - Religious continuity
  - Child rescue/resocialization



# Colonial Times

- Problem: unattached children, abandoned and orphaned children
  - Indenture
  - Apprenticeship
  - Bonding out
  - Slavery ....peculiar protection
  - Tribal children as enemies: war and removal



# The New Republic

- Almshouses
- Specialized institutions
  - Orphanages
  - Houses of refuges
  - Schools for the deaf and blind
  - Expressions of philanthropy




# Post Civil War Era

## ■ Context

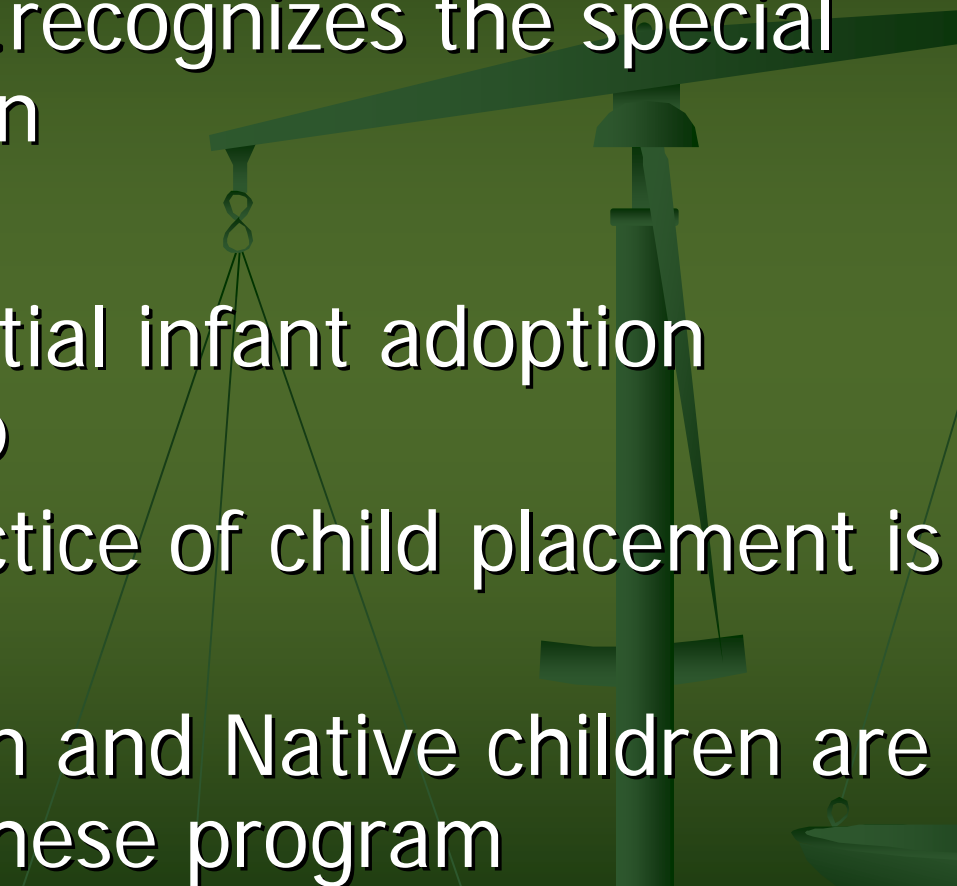
- Disruption of the war
- Immigration increases bring new ethnic and religious groups
- Urbanization
- Social Darwinism/fear of the intergenerational transmission of pauperism
- Visibility of street children



# Post civil war era

- Child caring societies /child protection societies
  - Free foster home movement in the west/children's aid societies
  - Tribal boarding schools are federally funded
  - African American children are cared for within the community and in segregated institutions
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# Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century

- Juvenile court....recognizes the special status of children
  - Mother's aid
  - Private confidential infant adoption services develop
  - Theory and practice of child placement is developed
  - African American and Native children are excluded from these program
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# Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century

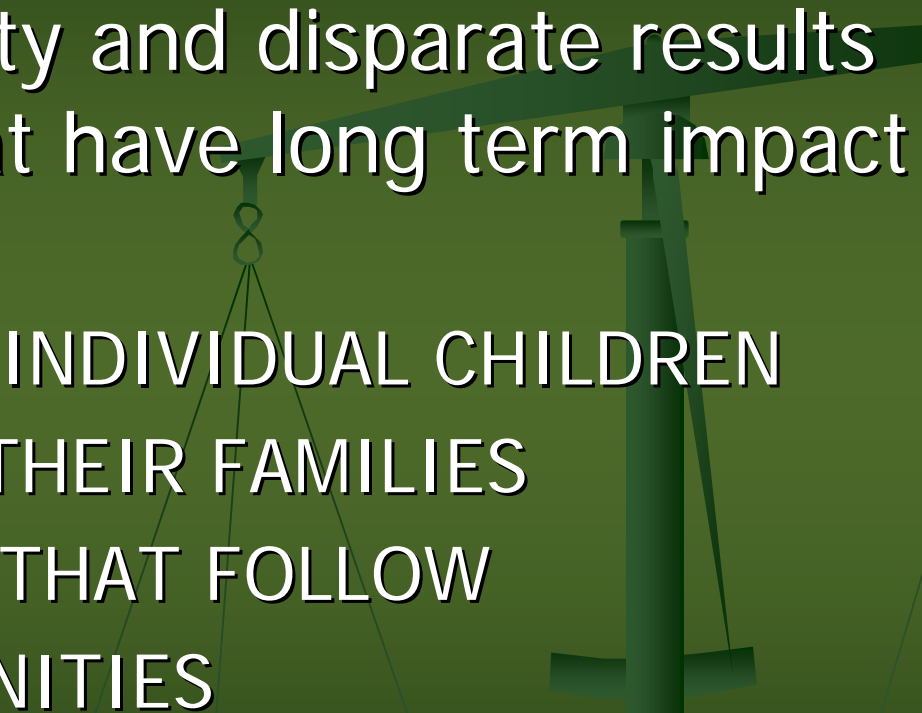
- Child welfare legislation institutionalized child welfare
  - CAPTA
  - ICWA
  - 1980 Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Amendments
  - ASFA
  - MEPA/IEP





■ *During the last fifty years the mainstream child welfare system has gone from exclusion of Tribal and African American children to:*

- *Over-inclusion*
- *Disproportionality*
- *Disparate outcomes*

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- Disproportionality and disparate results have effects that have long term impact on:
    - THE LIVES OF INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN
    - THE LIVES OF THEIR FAMILIES
    - GENERATIONS THAT FOLLOW
    - THEIR COMMUNITIES