RACIAL DISPROPORTIONALITY IN CHILD WELFARE

TOPIC:
- RD Movement
- Genly known as Casey-CSSP Alliance position on RD
- I see as a problem: Article title: The RD Mvmt: False Facts & Dangerous Directions
- Is the hot issue in Child Welfare/Child Maltreatment/CPS (Fred Wulczyn):
  - those who think about Fam Pres, ASFA, MEPA policy issues/debates shld focus on RD:
  - those promoting FamPres, Same-Race matching, now focused on RD

TODAY WILL DISCUSS:
- Nature of the Movemt
- Power of the Movemt
- What’s Wrong with the Movemt: their theory & policy proposals
- What’s Right in Movemt position & What’s Right To Do – yes RD is a problem, but different problem with different policy implications
  - More child oriented
  - More radical in terms of black group empowerment

MY POSITION ON RACE ISSUES, MY POLITICAL ORIENTATION:
- Important bc Movement characterizes itself as Civil Rights advocate
- My background in Civil Rights; I believe in Statistical/Group theories as in DI & AA; Also in Child Rights
- My belief: RD Mvmt is ignoring Rights of Black Kids

NATURE OF RD MOVEMENT
- Group of Foundations, non-profits & academics
- Movement bc very strategic & policy oriented
- Claim is Discrimination: RD equates with Child Welfare System Discrimination (Removal & Retention)
- Policy Solution: Stop RD by stopping Disp Removal and increasing Fam Reunification for Black Kids
- Goal: “Racial Equity” – Removal & Rep in Fcare Proportionate to Population

POWER OF RD MOVEMENT

- Leaders: the Casey Foundations and Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP)
  - very influential in Alternative Track / Community Partnership Movement, which quite successful
  - Caseys have huge $$; overwhelming all other public&private for Research and Policy Advocacy
- Organizations/Government Entities indicating support for RD include:
  - almost all Child Welfare Establishment: CWLA, ABA, Nat’l Assoc of Public Welfare Administrators, Amer Public Human Services Administration, Nat’l Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, Pew Comm’n on FosterCare
  - roughly half the States already responsive by issuing Reports mimicking Movement position; many State laws endorsing RD position
  - Federal Gov targeted and already responsive: Mvmt goal is to get Congress to make RD reduction marker for success & receipt of Fed $; Rangel hearings 2008; GAO Report 2007; federal agencies like HHS Admin on Children & Families endorse Mvmt

- Time to stop it now: Before power & momentum translated into more significant Policy Change
WHY STOP IT: WHAT’S WRONG WITH RD THEORY & POLICY PROPOSALS; WHAT’S RIGHT & WHAT TO DO

**RD Theory:**

- RD Theory: RD in foster care, therefore discrimination: Presume equal maltreatment rates: Problem is that if Maltreatment Rates Not Equal, & if Black Kids maltreated at higher rates, then *should remove at higher rates to protect*

- Are Maltreatment Rates Same or Higher in Blk Community? Almost certainly Higher:
  - Risk factors that predict CAN higher (poverty, single, substance abuse, mental illness)
  - Self-Reports higher (for extreme violence to kids)
  - CAN Death Rates higher (2.5 or more) & track official CAN
  - RD Movement relies mainly on NIS 1-3: but now NIS-4 (2010) reverses and agrees Blk Maltreatment rate very significantly higher (2x White rate)

- Recognize that many/most systems reflect bias – but Child Welfare may well be different from most bc: Disp Minority Emt & For Yrs Extensive Socialization for Anti-Racism & Vs Blk Removal

**RD Policy:**

- RD Policy: Stop removing Black Kids “Disp” & Do more Reunification: Puts Kids at risk: see/quote *Contra Costa Times AZ* at 886 for the dangers.

- Instead Policy should be:
  - Stop the Disproportionate CAN
- Upfront Prevention Programs: Intensive Home Visitation
- Substance Abuse programs designed to protect Blk & Wt kids – keep at home if possible, move on to Adoption if not: Family Drug Treatment Programs including for Drug-Affected Infants
  - More radical social reform

CONCLUSION:

I do agree RD a problem:
- kids subject to CAN, removed to f-care, are at risk;
- bad not just for them but also the Black Community since continues/exacerbates the Racial Inequality problems in nation

But not a solution to keep Blk kids victimized by CAN at home: not for them or the Community

WHAT TO DO?? RD Conference: Have just gotten funding for Conference Jan 2011, designed to bring Facts to bear on Policy.