



# Better Outcomes for *All* Children

## Addressing Disproportionality and Disparity

### When Working with CASA/GAL Youth

#### Objectives:

After attending this session, participants will be able to:

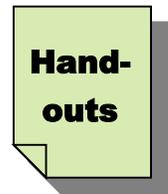
- Explain the meaning of disproportionality and disparate outcomes and provide examples of each
- Utilize two National CASA resources to effectively address some of the issues related to disproportionality and disparate outcomes experienced by children in the child welfare system
- Identify how advocacy can positively impact disparate outcomes experienced by children in the child welfare system

#### Materials:

- Copies of the [“Institutional Bias Checklist for Volunteers”](#)
- Copies of the [“Decision Inventory Questionnaires”](#) (DIQ) from *A Question of Balance*
- Facilitator needs statistics on children of color in foster care from their local region

#### Handouts:

- Handout #1: Disproportionality and Disparity
- Handout #2: Case Study
- Handout #3: Resources
- Optional Handout: [“Seven Important Facts CASA/GAL Volunteers Need to Know When Advocating for Children of Color”](#)
- Optional Handout: PowerPoint slides (facilitator created)

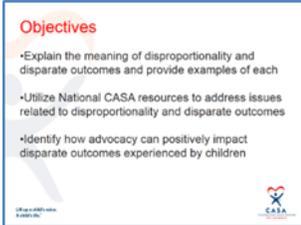


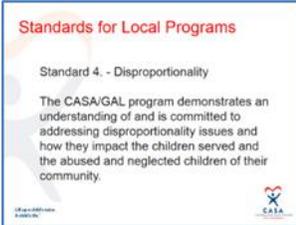
#### Outline:

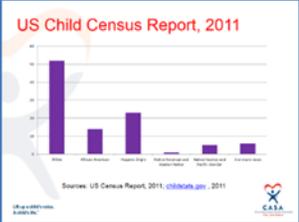
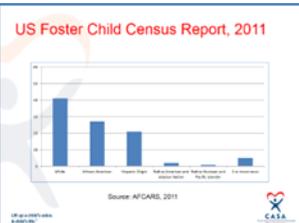
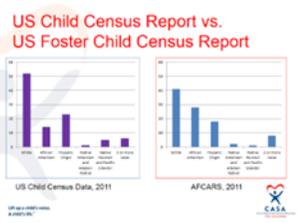
1. Introduction	10 minutes (anchor)
2. Disproportionality	20 minutes (content)
3. Disparity	20 minutes (content)
4. Tools	5 minutes (future use)
5. Case Application	25 minutes (future use, application)
6. Closure	5 minutes (re-anchoring)
<b>Total time</b>	<b>85-minutes</b>

#### Facilitator Notes:

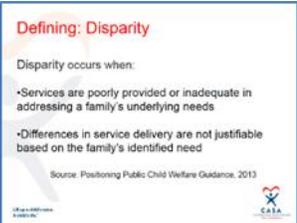
- If used as a continuing education unit, participants should receive two hours in-service credit.
- Facilitators need to be familiar with the child demographics within their respective foster care system.

Outline	Content	Notes
<p>Welcome/Introductions</p>  <p>#1</p>	<p>Welcome everyone to the session and introduce yourself.</p> <p>Have participants introduce themselves by briefly sharing their name, the role they play in your program and how long they have been involved with CASA/GAL.</p>	<p>As a sign of support, consider having the executive director or a board member welcome the group.</p>
<p>Objectives</p>  <p>#2</p>	<p>Summarize the session objectives.</p> <p>By the end of the session participants will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the meaning of disproportionality and disparate outcomes and provide examples of each</li> <li>• Utilize two National CASA resources to effectively address issues related to disproportionality and disparate outcomes</li> <li>• Identify how advocacy can positively impact disparate outcomes experienced by children in the child welfare system</li> </ul> <p>Inform participants that they will revisit the objectives towards the end of the session to determine if they have been met.</p>	
<p>Agenda</p>  <p>#3</p>	<p>Review the agenda.</p> <p><b>Say:</b> This workshop will be fast paced, but the content will be clear and concise. You also will have an opportunity to practice some of the ideas and tools we discuss.</p>	
<p>Why These Issues Are Important</p>  <p>#4</p>	<p>Discuss why these issues are relevant to the work of the volunteer advocate. Refer to National CASA Standards 4 and 7.</p> <p><b>Say:</b> We are here to promote better and equitable outcomes for all children. You will have an opportunity to increase your knowledge about these issues facing children in care and to continue developing multicultural competency. Our goal is to become proactive in addressing disproportionality and disparate outcomes.</p>	

<p>Standards</p>  <p>#5</p>  <p>#6</p>	<p>Point out that addressing these issues is national concern and a part of the standards for all CASA/GAL programs.</p> <p><b>Say:</b> Disproportionality and disparity are two issues that have impacted and continue to impact the outcomes for certain children in care. There are National CASA standards requirements to offer in service training on disproportionality and disparity. There are other resources available on the National CASA website. These include podcasts, recorded webinars, articles and links to other resources.</p>	<p>If your audience is entirely made up of volunteers, you could omit the two slides on the standards while still making the point that these issues are part of a national discussion.</p>
<p>Introduction to Disproportionality</p>  <p>#7</p>	<p><b>Ask:</b> What comes to mind when you think of disproportionality?</p> <p>If not mentioned, add poverty/social-economic status, race, and ethnicity.</p> <p><b>Say:</b> Disproportionality is largely a local phenomenon. What you think of depends on where you are, that is, what you experience locally.</p>	<p>Repeating back participants' responses demonstrates active listening, encourages other to respond and can help ensure that all in the room hear what is said.</p>
<p>Definition of Disproportionality</p>  <p>#8</p>	<p><b>Say:</b> Before we begin to discuss why disproportionality exists, let's come to a common definition and understanding of what disproportionality is and what it looks like for the population of children we serve.</p> <p><b>Ask:</b> When we speak of disproportionality, what are we talking about? Disproportionate to what?</p> <p>Review the definition from Dr. Robert Hill on the slide:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Disproportionality is defined as the level at which groups of children are present in the child welfare system at higher or lower percentages or rates than in the general population.</p> <p><b>Say:</b> Many of you identified socioeconomic status as a characteristic tied to disproportionality. Consider this: the poorer the family, no matter what race, the greater likelihood of involvement with social services. Households with an annual income of \$15,000 or less are six times more likely to have social services involvement. There is no question that there exists a strong connection between child welfare and poverty.</p>	

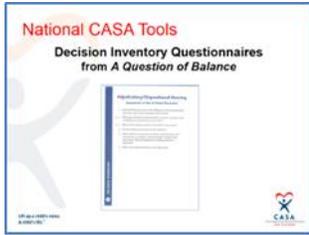
<p>The General Population</p>  <p>#9</p>	<p>Review the graph from the US Census on the child population in this country.</p> <p><b>Ask:</b> When you look at the graph what stands out for you?</p> <p>If not mentioned, add that there are twice as many white children as Hispanic children and more than three times the number of white children as African American children.</p> <p>Although it is not evident from this graph alone, there is an overall increase in the number of children of two or more races.</p>	<p>The graph shows the % of children in the US by race. You will need to update this slide when new data is available.</p> <p>Take at least two responses to this question.</p>
<p>The Foster Care Population</p>  <p>#10</p>	<p>Review US Foster Child Census Report represented in the graph.</p> <p><b>Say:</b> The information used to develop this graph is taken from AFCARS—the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System. AFCARS collects case-level information from state and tribal Title IV-E agencies on all children in foster care and those who have been adopted with the Title IV-E agency involvement. Because there is no uniform way to collect this data across the US, AFCARS reporting period is normally 1–2 years behind the current calendar year.</p>	<p>You will need to update this slide when new data is available.</p>
<p>Data Comparison</p>  <p>#11</p>	<p>Direct participants to observe the two graphs. After a minute ask for their thoughts.</p> <p><b>Ask:</b> What do you observe? Describe the difference between the two graphs.</p> <p><b>Say:</b> From what you have said, there is a difference between the foster care population and the general US population. Some children are underrepresented and some over represented in the system—in particular, African American, Native American and children of two or more races are over represented.</p> <p>In the past ten years disproportionality of African American children nationwide decreased from 2.5 to 2.0.</p>	<p>The goal is to have the group develop a definition of overrepresentation.</p> <p>Enlist a scribe to write down responses on chart paper.</p>

<p>Local Data</p> <p>#12</p>	<p>Compare child census data with foster child data from your local area.</p> <p><b>Ask:</b> From your observations, which groups appear to be over-represented?</p>	<p>Create a slide with two side-by-side graphs one with data about children in your local area's general population and the other with data about children in care in your local area.</p>
<p>Calculating the Disproportionality Rate</p> <p>#13</p>	<p>Explain the formula for determining the disproportionality rate.</p> <p><b>Say:</b> CASA/GAL staff are asked to do this as part of the standard's self-assessment process. This data demonstrates the existence and level of disproportionality for any given region. We can see that disproportionality exists; the next question is why does it exist?</p>	
<p>Why Disproportionality Exists</p> <p>#14</p>	<p>Using handout #1A talk about some of the reasons behind disproportionality.</p> <p><b>Say:</b> According to the Child Information Gateway, there are several reasons for disproportionality, including the ones listed on your handout #1A.</p> <p>National dialogue on disproportionality focuses on race because there is a strong prevalence of racial disproportionality in the child welfare system. However, disproportionality can also relate to socioeconomic status, disability and sexual orientation/gender identity.</p>	<p>Remember disproportionality is largely a local phenomenon. You will want to be familiar with the child demographics within your local foster care system</p>
<p>Addressing Disproportionality</p> <p>#15</p>	<p>Discuss practical ways CASA/GAL volunteers and staff can address issues of disproportionality.</p> <p><b>Say:</b> Considering this information, when it comes to the issues of disproportionality and its continued existence, we as advocates have the power to address some of these issues.</p> <p><b>Ask:</b> Can you think of any ways CASA/GAL volunteers and staff can proactively address disproportionality through their advocacy?</p> <p>If not mentioned, include raising their own awareness, engaging in conversations with others, and intentionally looking at a case with an eye to these issues.</p>	<p>Enlist a scribe to write down responses on chart paper.</p>

	<p>If your audience is made up of primarily of staff add the following: As a CASA/GAL staff member, you may become involved in conversations or discussion with other agencies or the courts about some of these issues. This makes the program an active player in addressing disproportionality.</p> <p><b>Say:</b> So far we have discussed the concept of disproportionality or over-representation of certain races of children in foster care. We now move on to talk about the related concept of disparity.</p>	
<p>Introduction to Disparity</p>  <p>#16</p>	<p><b>Say:</b> In child welfare, when we refer to disparate outcomes or disparity, we mean certain children in the child welfare system experience less-than-positive outcomes while involved in the child welfare system when compared to children in the general population.</p> <p>For example, children who age-out are more likely to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Homeless</li> <li>•Under-educated</li> <li>•Unemployed</li> <li>•Involved in the criminal justice system</li> </ul>	
<p>Definition of Disparity</p>  <p>#17</p>	<p>Review the definition of the slide.</p> <p><b>Say:</b> Disparity occurs when services to one segment of the community, relative to other segments, are presumptively allocated, poorly provided or inadequate in addressing a family's underlying needs, and when differences in service delivery are not justifiable based on the family's identified need, available agency resources or other objective criteria.</p> <p>These differences may appear unnecessary, avoidable, unfair or unjust. In the context of child welfare, such disparity may result in the family's inability to access quality care, resources, services or opportunities to thrive. The issue of disparity in public child welfare warrants great concern because families that do not get the help they need are at increased risk of experiencing negative child, youth and family outcomes.</p>	

<p>Where Disparity Exists</p> <p>#18</p>	<p>Using handout #1B talk about some of the situations where disparity can exist.</p>	
<p>Addressing Disparity</p> <p>#19</p>	<p><b>Ask:</b> Can you think of ways CASA/GAL volunteers can approach disparity in their cases and proactively advocate for the children and perhaps their families?</p> <p>If not mentioned, include advocating for services, placements, more frequent visits, etc.</p> <p>Point out that if needed services do not exist or are scarce, then advocates can alert staff who in turn can alert the courts and other agencies.</p> <p>Also, the absence of disproportionality does not necessarily mean disparities are absent.</p> <p><b>Ask:</b> What questions do you have about what is meant by children experiencing disparate outcomes in the child welfare system?</p> <p><b>Say:</b> Working together, we each have a part to play in addressing disproportionality and disparate outcomes for foster children.</p>	<p>Enlist a scribe to write down responses on chart paper.</p>
<p>National CASA Tools</p> <p>#20</p>	<p><b>Say:</b> Let's now review two tools to help advocates proactively address disproportionality and disparity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first tool was developed by National CASA Regional Program Officer, Janet Ward, as part of her book <i>A Question of Balance</i>.</li> <li>• The second tool originally was developed by the National Conference of Juvenile and Family Court Judges [NCJFCJ] called Courts Catalyzing Change, but edited for a CASA/GAL perspective.</li> </ul> <p>After we review these tools, you will have an opportunity to practice using them as part of a case study activity.</p>	<p>If not done already, distribute copies of the "Institutional Bias Checklist for Volunteers" and the "Decision Inventory Questionnaires" from <i>A Question of Balance</i>.</p>

The Decision Inventory Questionnaires



#21

Review the “Decision Inventory Questionnaires” (DIQ).

The DIQ is divided into four hearing types.

- Shelter care detention hearings—which may not come into play very often for volunteer advocates
- Adjudicatory/dispositional hearings—various questions covering out of home placement, the child, the risk and the caregiver
- Subsequent review hearings—opportunity for advocate to monitor important aspects of the case
- Termination of parental rights hearing—special consideration may be needed here to facilitate development of the child’s racial and ethnic identity if placed outside of their family and community

Give participants a few minutes to look over the DIQ. Direct them to the questions with an asterisk. These questions may involve cross cultural issues and could be helpful in addressing the over-representation of children in foster care.

**Ask:** Have you ever used any of these DIQ questions or similar questions in advocating for your child?

Have participants share their experiences. If no one has used these questions before, be prepared to share your own experience using them.

**Ask:** What questions do you have about the DIQ?

**Say:** Keep these inventories as a tool that can help you effectively advocate for your CASA/GAL child.

Because the list is extensive, only point out a couple of questions from each questionnaire. You may choose not to include questions related to shelter care detention hearings if your advocates are not typically involved at this point in a case.

Institutional Bias Checklist for Volunteers



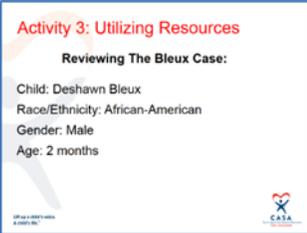
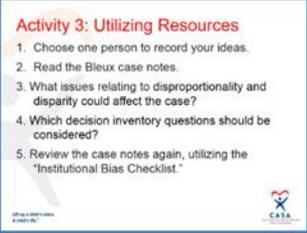
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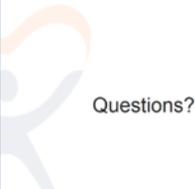
Review the “Institutional Bias Checklist for Volunteers.”

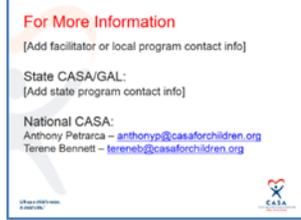
**Say:** As CASA/GAL staff and volunteers, through the very nature of our roles, we have the ability to impact change when advocating for children of color.

One of the reasons cited for disproportionality is worker bias. This is not limited to social workers, judges, attorneys or juries; we all make judgment calls based on our own values and belief systems. It is important that we are aware of our personal values when working with families, especially families of color, in order to avoid unconscious bias.

To assist National CASA developed the *Institutional Bias Checklist for Volunteers*.

	<p>Please take a minute or so to read over this checklist.</p> <p><b>Ask:</b> What are some ways this checklist can be helpful to you in your advocacy?</p> <p>Have a few participants share their ideas. Also be prepared to share your own thoughts on how this tool can be useful.</p> <p><b>Say:</b> Add this checklist to your advocacy toolkit. Both the “Institutional Bias Checklist for Volunteers” and the DIQ can be downloaded from the “Advocacy Resources” section of the National CASA website.</p>	<p>If your group is unfamiliar with the National CASA website, post the web address: <a href="http://www.casaforchildren.org">www.casaforchildren.org</a> so it can be written down.</p>
<p>Case Study Activity Introduction</p>  <p>#23</p>	<p>Introduce the case study activity. The activity is broken into two parts: part one focuses on applying the tools, part two consists of a large group debrief.</p> <p><b>Say:</b> To better understand the usefulness of the tools we have just discussed, we are now going to apply them to a case study. The goals of this case study activity are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine situations where disparate outcomes <i>could</i> occur.</li> <li>• Identify applicable questions on the volunteer inventory sheet.</li> <li>• Utilize the “Institutional Bias Checklist for Volunteers” to check our own perceptions and ideas.</li> </ul> <p>For this activity, I am going to divide you into small discussion groups.</p>	<p>Distribute Handout #2: the Bleau Case.</p>  <p>(This case was adapted from <i>Case Studies: Working It Out Together</i> by Ruth Kravitz, MSW, training administrator, North Carolina Guardian ad Litem Program.)</p> <p>Divide the participants into groups of 3 to 5. Also, give each group a piece of chart paper.</p>
<p>Case Study Activity Part One</p>  <p>#24</p>	<p>Review the instructions for the activity as listed on the slide.</p> <p><b>Say:</b> Choose one person to be the recorder. The recorder will write your ideas on a piece of large chart paper. Take a few minutes to read over the case notes, then as a group discuss questions 3 and 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What issues relating to disproportionality and disparity could affect the case?</li> <li>• Which decision inventory questions should be considered?</li> </ul> <p>Finally, review the case notes again utilizing the “Institutional Bias Checklist for Volunteers.”</p>	<p>Model the process for the group, in particular, the kinds of ideas that a group could come up with.</p> <p>Review the case in advance and note possible incidents where application of the “Institutional Bias Checklist for</p>

	<p><b>Ask:</b> What questions do you have before we begin?</p> <p><b>Say:</b> You have 15 minutes for this activity.</p>	<p>Volunteers” would be appropriate.</p>
<p>Case Study Activity Part Two</p> <div data-bbox="103 333 410 569" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Activity 3: Debriefing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•When you reviewed the case utilizing the <i>Institutional Bias Checklist for Volunteers</i> did you view anything differently? Ask different questions?</li> <li>•What advocate actions could be developed to address the possibility of issues of disproportionality and disparity in this case?</li> </ul>  </div> <p>#25</p>	<p>Facilitate a debriefing of the activity using the two questions on the slide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When you reviewed the case utilizing the “Institutional Bias Checklist for Volunteers” did you view anything differently? Ask different questions?</li> <li>• What advocate actions could be developed to address the possibility of issues of disproportionality and disparity in this case?</li> </ul> <p>Thank group for the ideas and thoughts. Encourage participants to use these tools when performing their CASA/GAL advocate duties.</p>	<p>You may need to remind participants the goal of this discussion is to explore the use of these tools, not to have agreement on every idea.</p>
<p>Questions</p> <div data-bbox="103 842 410 1077" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">  <p>Questions?</p>  </div> <p>#26</p>	<p><b>Ask:</b> Before we close, what remaining questions do you have regarding the issues of disproportionality or disparity?</p> <p><b>Say:</b> It is important not only to be informed but also to understand that part of the role of CASA/GAL advocates and staff is to address disparity and disproportionality in our communities so that there can be equitable outcomes for all children.</p>	<p>In response to some questions, you may want to refer participants to the resource list.</p>
<p>Review of Objectives</p> <div data-bbox="103 1241 410 1476" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Objectives: Were They Met?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Explain the meaning of disproportionality and disparate outcomes and provide examples of each.</li> <li>•Utilize National CASA resources to address issues related to disproportionality and disparate outcomes.</li> <li>•Identify how advocacy can positively impact disparate outcomes experienced by children.</li> </ul>  </div> <p>#27</p>	<p>Review what was covered during the day.</p> <p><b>Say:</b> Let’s review what we did today:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We looked at the definitions of disparity and disproportionality.</li> <li>• You received two tools to aid you in your advocacy work: the “Institutional Bias Checklist for Volunteers” and the “Decision Inventory Questionnaires.”</li> <li>• We talked about areas where disparity often exists in hopes that you will be cognizant of these issues as you work a case.</li> <li>• We did a case study activity identifying areas of possible disparity and practicing utilizing the two tools you were given.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ask:</b> With this said, did we meet our session objectives?</p>	<p>After reading each objective, ask participants to raise their hand if they felt the objective was met.</p> <p>For those who feel an objective was not met, you will want to refer them to the resources for further information.</p>

<p>Next Steps</p>  <p>#28</p>	<p><b>Say:</b> As a closing, I would like everyone to think of how they would complete the question on the screen:</p> <p><i>After leaving this session, I plan to use the information and tools provided to...</i></p> <p><b>Ask:</b> Would a couple of you like to share how you completed the statement?</p>	<p>Take 3 to 5 responses.</p>
<p>Closing</p>  <p>#29</p>	<p>Let participants know who to contact for additional information.</p> <p>Thank people for their participation.</p>	<p>Depending on your audience, you may want to add your contact information, your state office contact information and the National CASA training department contact information to the slide.</p> <p>Distribute handout #3: Resources.</p>  <p>You may want to add additional resources to this handout.</p>
 <p>#30</p>	<p>Dismiss the class.</p>	