**Disproportionality in Special Education  
Text-Only Slideshow 1

**Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR)**<http://www.parentcenterhub.org>

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The Center for Parent Information and Resources is pleased to provide this text-only version of the slides in Slideshow 1 of the training module *Disproportionality in Special Education*. This version is made available to ensure the accessibility of the slide content to individuals with disabilities, including those with blindness or visual impairment.

**Slide 1 / Title Slide**

Disproportionality in Special Education

**Slide 2 / Agenda Slide**

This training session focuses on:

* Defining disproportionality
* Why disproportionality is an important concern
* IDEA regulations
* How “significant disproportionality” is determined
* What SEAs, LEAs, Parent Centers, and communities can do to reduce disproportionality

**Slide 3 / What is Disproportionality?**

What is Disproportionality?

***Over***representation | When the percent of students of a specific ethnicity or race in the school’s population is *less* than the percent of such students in special education

***Under***representation | When the percent of students of a specific ethnicity or race in the school’s population is *greater* than their percent in special education

**Slide 4** / **What is Disproportionality?** *(continued)*

*Over*representation means “too many”

*Under*representation means “too few”

Noteworthy differences in special education practices for specific ethnic or racial groups:

* Who is **referred** to special education and what **disability** “label” they receive
* Where students receive special education services (**placement**)
* How school **discipline** matters are handled (suspension, expulsion)

**Slide 5** / **Examples of Disproportionality**

**In referring students for evaluation**Black/African-American students are...more likely than White students to be referred for evaluation, especially in schools where the student population and staff are largely White

**In disability identification**

* American Indian/Alaskan Native students are… twice as likely to be identified with specific learning disabilities than all other racial/ethnic groups
* Black/African-American children are…twice as likely as their peers to be identified as having intellectual disabilities or emotional disturbance

**Slide 6** / **Examples of Disproportionality** *(continued)*

**In placement** |*Where* students receive special education services

Students with disabilities who are:

* African-American
* Hispanic
* American Indian/Alaska Native
* English language learners

…are ***more likely*** to be taught in separate classrooms or schools than…

…students with disabilities who are:

* White
* Asian/Pacific Islander

**Slide 7** / **More** **Examples of Disproportionality** *(continued)*

**In disciplinary action** | Suspension, expulsion, restraint and seclusion

Students with disabilities are more than twice as likely to receive an out-of-school suspension (26%) as students without disabilities (12%)

* Black *preschool* children are 3.6 times as likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions as their White peers
* Black K-12 males are 3.8 times as likely to receive out-of-school suspensions in a year as White males

**Slide 8** / **What, Me Worry?**

Yes. Yes. Yes.

**Slide 9** / **Consider…**

“For ethnic minority students, misclassification or inappropriate placement in special education programs can have ***devastating*** consequences”

--Elementary and Middle Schools Technical Assistance Center (EMSTAC)

**Slide 10** / **In-School Concerns**

Students receiving special education services:

* tend to remain in special education classes
* often encounter a limited, less rigorous curriculum
* have less access to academically able peers and their peers in general
* may be stigmatized socially
* often become isolated from the “pulse” of school life and activities

**Slide 11 / Being Suspended or Expelled from School**

Means lost classroom and learning time

Disconnects students from school

Increases likelihood of:

* being retained a grade
* landing in the juvenile justice system
* dropping out

**Slide 12 / Lifelong Consequences**

“The disproportionate placement of African American (and Latino and Native American) students in special education programs reverberates throughout the lifespan”

--The Association of Black Psychologists

**Slide 13 / Post-School Consequences**

Dropout Rates

African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American students are disproportionately represented among the nation’s dropouts

Unemployed but not in school (18-24 year olds)

* 29% | Native American/Alaska Native
* 22% | African American
* 20% | Pacific Islander
* 16% | Hispanic
* 11% | White
* 7% | Asian

Imprisonment Rates

* African Americans are 6 times as likely to be incarcerated than Whites
* Hispanic adults are 3 times as likely to be incarcerated as Whites

**Slide 14 / Why? Some Hypotheses**

Lack of responsiveness to cultural and socioeconomic differences among children and their families

Misidentification, misuse of tests

Lack of access to effective   
instruction

Bias and misperception

Teachers who are less well prepared

Problems associated with poverty

**Slide 15 / December 2016**

U.S. Department of Education publishes final regulations for IDEA re: disproportionality

Important changes are made in how states, LEAs, and schools will now measure their levels of disproportionality in special education

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/final-idea-rule-on-disproportionality/>

**Slide 16 / What States Must Do**

*Effective immediately*

States must monitor for disproportionality in the state and in its LEAs and meaningfully **identify LEAs with *significant* disproportionality**

--Section 300.646 of IDEA

**Slide 17 / Looking at Specific “Trouble” Areas**

IDEA requires states to annually collect and examine data to determine whether significant disproportionality based on race or ethnicity is occurring in the state and its LEAs in:

* **Identification** of children as children with disabilities, including identification as children with particular impairments
* **Placement** of children in particular educational settings
* **Disciplinary actions taken** (incidence, duration, and type of actions, including suspensions and expulsions)

**Slide 18 / “Racial and Ethnic Groups” | Which?**

To identify LEAs with significant disproportionality, states must look at data specific to *these* “racial and ethnic groups”

* Hispanic/Latino of any race (this includes individuals that are Latino only)
* American Indian or Alaska Native
* Asian
* Black or African American
* Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
* White
* Two or more races

**Slide 19 / “Identification of Children with Disabilities”**

Are children from any of the mentioned racial or ethnic groups more (or less) likely than others to be identified by an LEA as…

* having a disability?
* having one of the disabilities listed below?

—Intellectual disabilities

—Specific learning disabilities

—Emotional disturbance

—Speech or language impairments

—Other health impairments

—Autism

**Slide 20 / “Placement” of Children with Disabilities**

Are children from any of the mentioned racial or ethnic groups more (or less) likely than others to receive their special education services in a **particular place or setting**?

*Especially in any of* ***these*** *placements?*For children with disabilities ages 6 through 21:

* Inside a regular class less than 40% of the day
* Inside separate schools and residential facilities\*

**Slide 21 / “Placement” of Children with Disabilities** *(continued)*

*And how about in any of* ***these*** *disciplinary placements?*

For children with disabilities ages 3 through 21

* Out-of-school suspensions and expulsions

—of 10 days or less

—of more than 10 days

* In-school suspensions and expulsions

—of 10 days or less

—of more than 10 days

* Disciplinary removals in total

**Slide 22 / How is “Significant Disproportionality” Determined?**

By collecting & examining numerical data using the methods in §300.647

—***Not*** based on a district’s policies, procedures, or practices

**Slide 23 / Definining “Significant Disproportionality”**

State defines for LEAs and for state in general

State determines what level of disproportionality is “significant” using the **standard methodology** in §300.647

**Slide 24 / Stakeholder Involvement Required!**

The standard methodology requires each state to consult with **stakeholders** to define key elements in the state’s plan

**Who's a "Stakeholder"?**

All of us, really!

* IDEA doesn’t define the term but explicitly does mention the State Advisory Panel (which includes individuals with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities)
* IDEA also requires states (when amending policies and procedures) to hold public hearings, ensure adequate notice of those hearings, and provide an opportunity for public comment

**Slide 25 / Wrapping All This Up**

Activity Time: Circle, Square, Triangle

**Slide 26 / Thank you very much for joining us today!**

Together let us strive to give all our children an equal opportunity to learn, grow, and *become* in our schools and communities.

This training curriculum is a product of the Center for Parent Information and Resources, 2020, available online at:   
<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/disproportionality-in-special-education/>

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