



Racial Equity in Pennsylvania's Child Welfare Systems

Following a three-year study, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) published a report in 2021 regarding racial inequities within Pennsylvania's welfare and public assistance programs, including but not limited to the child welfare system, judicial system, and job placement programs.

The study found that many Pennsylvania residents face marginalization due to a combination of factors: race, gender, poverty, disabilities, and sexual orientation. The study also revealed the disproportionate impact of systemic racism and marginalization on Black children in Pennsylvania's child welfare system.

Nationally, the overrepresentation of Black children in the child welfare system has been well documented across numerous studies. In Pennsylvania, Black children make up 35 percent of the foster care population and represent 21 percent of potential child abuse victims in child protective service reports. These numbers are striking, considering Black children account for only 13 percent of the total child population of Pennsylvania.

The **2020 Kids Count Data Book** notes that racial inequities remain deep in the child welfare system. As a nation, the report notes, we have failed to provide African American children and families with the support necessary to thrive, and states have not gotten rid of barriers facing all children of color. Even when risk factors are the same, white families are more likely to receive family and home support, whereas Black families are more likely to have their children removed.

The **2020 State of Child Welfare Report** by Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (PCC) identifies a cause for this disparity as personal and implicit bias. In its report, PCC says these biases directly impact decision-making, which correlates to these outcomes for children and families.

To address this disparity, individuals who work with children must understand the relationship between unconscious biases and systemic racism. Each one of us has a responsibility to recognize and help eliminate these existing disparities.

What Can Be Done?

We must work together to identify examples of racial disparities and biases — both institutional and personal — and find ways to address them so real, positive change can happen.

Black Lives Matter. If we mean these words, then we must move past conversations and act.

Real change begins with each of us examining ourselves and addressing our own personal biases. A great place to start is by understanding your own implicit biases by taking the Implicit Association Tests available through **Project Implicit**.

Every child-caring agency should resolve to take a deeper dive into this issue through:

- ▶ Cultural competency and racial equity training and education for your staff, which help to affirm and value all children and families.
- ▶ Identifying and addressing the systemic issues strategically as an organization through your own areas of influence.

PFSA has committed to acknowledging and growing in our understanding of the issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). A workgroup on DEI was recently formed with PFSA staff, board members, and key partners to learn, identify, and create a plan for how PFSA can impact change. More information on this work will be provided in 2022.

PFSA's CBCAP Network Members

PFSA would like to take an opportunity to welcome two new Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) Network members:



Big Brothers Big Sisters®
OF BERKS COUNTY, PA

We are excited for these two organizations to join the CBCAP Network and contribute to the great work happening across the state to #ProtectPAKids! Welcome, and thank you for joining!



Virtually – throughout the month of April!

Join PFSA in April 2022 as we work to raise awareness and provide education on preventing child abuse in Pennsylvania.

This year, PFSA will host a variety of virtual events throughout April as part of National Child Abuse Prevention Month. PFSA will also honor Blue Ribbon Champions from across the commonwealth.

We invite you to connect with us in April to learn more about what can be done and how you can help prevent child abuse and neglect in your community and across the commonwealth. Visit pafsa.org for more details in the coming weeks!

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

In recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month in April, PA Family Support Alliance will honor individuals from across the commonwealth for exceptional contributions to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. We want to recognize those professionals, volunteers, and everyday heroes among us who keep our children safe. Nominations for this recognition are welcome from

schools, government agencies, community organizations, private practitioners, churches, and other concerned individuals and groups.

PA Blue Ribbon Champions for Safe Kids Award winners are shining examples of people working in Pennsylvania to prevent child abuse and neglect.

These awards are an opportunity to honor champions for children across the state who work tirelessly, often without fanfare or recognition, to improve the lives of our most vulnerable residents.

NOMINATE TODAY!

Individuals will be recognized in April as a Blue Ribbon Champion for Safe Kids.

The nomination deadline is February 25, 2022, by 5 p.m. To download a nomination form or submit a digital nomination form, visit pafsa.org/nominate.

More details regarding awards and events will be announced soon, so stay tuned!



UPCOMING PFSA TRAININGS

Families in Recovery New Facilitator Training

PFSA is excited to announce that our Families in Recovery (FiR) program has additional dates scheduled for new facilitator training. This research-based program is a great resource for parents, guardians, and caretakers recovering from substance use disorder. The program aims to teach healthy coping and parenting skills while balancing the needs of recovery.

New facilitators will be fully prepared to implement the program and provide training after attending a two-day comprehensive session consisting of content, education, and application instruction of the curriculum. FiR site contracts include ongoing technical assistance, program development, facilitator calls, and assistance with data collection procedures. FiR facilitators come together with each other to share program implementation experience,

ideas, and insights following initial training. All organizations interested in implementing the Families in Recovery program are required to enter an agreement contract with PFSA and participate in the evaluation requirements of the program.

Cost: Program costs have recently changed. Please contact Justin Donofrio, Program Services Manager, at jdonofrio@pafsa.org for details regarding contracts and costs.

Date: April 13 & 14, 2022 (*virtual*)
July 13 & 14, 2022 (*virtual*)

Time: 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
(*half-hour lunch break*)

Register: You must pre-register for this training. Email Justin Donofrio, Program Services Manager, at jdonofrio@pafsa.org for contract paperwork, registration information, and program details.

Mandated Reporter Training

PFSA has several options for you and your staff to receive training on how to recognize and report suspected child abuse. This training is for those mandated by law to report suspected child abuse, as defined in the Child Protective Services Law. Curriculum is approved by the Departments of Human Services, Education, and State and meets all requirements for mandated reporters to receive training in recognizing and reporting child abuse (including Act 126).

Certificates are provided to the participants, and upon request, we will upload confirmation of your training to the Department of State or Education for CE fulfillments under Act 31 and/or Act 48.

This curriculum has also been approved for CLEs for attorneys.

LIVE IN-PERSON/VIRTUAL

Cost: Free

How to register: Find and register for a virtual session here: pafsa.org/mandated-reporter-training



#ProtectPAKids

Help us to support the families and communities across Pennsylvania by donating to PFSA today. Your gift will help PFSA continue to deliver successful training, education, and ongoing support to PA families and children. Visit pafsa.org to learn more and donate!

INDIVIDUAL ONLINE, ON-DEMAND

Cost: \$30

Take anytime: pafsa.org/on-demand-online-training

TRAIN-THE-TRAINER

This is an opportunity for organizations to develop their own quality, cost-efficient, in-house training program for employees on child abuse recognition and reporting. With the three-year contract, PFSA provides two days of initial instruction for approved applicants, reports CEs directly to PA Departments of State and Education, and offers ongoing technical assistance.

Cost: \$1,000 per trainer entering into a three-year contract with PFSA (payment can be broken down by year: \$400/year one, \$300/year two, \$300/year three)

Dates: March 23 & 24, 2022 (virtual)
May 12 & 13, 2022 (virtual)

Time: 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
(half-hour lunch break)

How to register: You must pre-register for this training. Email Haven Evans, Director of Programs, at hevans@pafsa.org for the paperwork or to ask any questions.



Did You Know?

PFSA has educational resources available in our **online store**. You can find informative materials covering a wide range of topics designed to assist caregivers, parents, and professionals in an effort to protect children. Please visit our **website** to learn more!