



TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services

Disproportionality Report

Fiscal Year 2020

June 2021

Background on Disproportionality Work



2005 In 2005, The Texas Legislature mandated the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) examine and address racial disproportionality in the Texas child welfare system and, if found, develop a remediation plan to ameliorate disparities. The resulting analysis indicated disproportionality existed. A strategy and remediation plan were developed focusing on areas of the state with the highest rates of disproportionality. The legislation, since incorporated into Texas Family Code Sec. 264.2041, mandates that DFPS develop and deliver cultural competency training to all service delivery staff; increase targeted recruitment efforts to ensure diversity among department staff; and develop collaborative partnerships with community groups, agencies, and faith-based organizations to provide culturally competent services to children and families of all races and ethnicities.

Since the legislation was passed, DFPS has analyzed data related to enforcement actions, reviewed policies and procedures in each CPS program, and developed and implemented programs to reduce disparities. DFPS initially hired a Child Protective Services (CPS) state disproportionality manager, regional disproportionality specialists, and a state-level disproportionality specialist. With disproportionality specialists stationed in each region, community work on disproportionality was supported and specialists served as resources to CPS staff.

2012 In January 2012, the regional disproportionality specialists were transferred to the Health and Human Services Center for the Elimination of Disproportionality and Disparities (HHS CEDD). The state-level disproportionality specialist remained at CPS until the position was transferred to Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) in 2016. The regional disproportionality specialists provided technical assistance not only to CPS but also other HHS agencies. The transfer elevated disproportionality efforts to all human service agencies and expanded the state efforts. The Office of Minority Health, Statistics, and Engagement (formerly was CEDD) was defunded and closed on August 31, 2018. Currently, all efforts to eliminate disproportionality and disparities in the Texas child welfare system are managed by the CPS state disproportionality manager.

2021 This position is vacant as of May 31, 2021.



Ongoing Disproportionality Work



Current efforts executed by the CPS Disproportionality Manager focus on:

- engaging with local communities such as the Dallas County Disproportionality Committee and the Travis County Race Equity Collaborative;
- information sharing activities with youth, parents, stakeholders, and community partners;
- cultural responsiveness training procurement, development, and implementation (such as *Undoing Racism*, *Knowing Who You Are*, *Working with Families Who Are Impoverished*, *Equity: Together We Can Achieve It*, *The Latino Experience: The Impact of Latinos in America*, *Poverty Simulations*, *Introduction to Courageous Conversations*, and the *Disproportionality Webinar Series*);
- data analysis;
- policy and practice reviews;
- collaborating across systems with Casey Family Programs, court-appointed special advocates, the Advisory Committee on Promoting Adoption of Minority Children, and the Supreme Court of Texas Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth, and Families;
- collaborating with the three federally recognized tribes located in the state of Texas. The partnerships with our tribal partners at the regional and state level ensure that Texas remains in compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act and promotes DFPS's commitment to positive outcomes for all children;
- technical assistance at the local, state, and national level.

The following CPS programs are part of the ongoing disproportionality efforts at the regional and state levels:

- Kinship Care
- Family Group Decision Making
- Permanency Care Assistance
- Fatherhood Initiative
- Parent Collaboration

Disproportionality Report



This report focuses on race and ethnicity of children involved in the DFPS system at various stages, over time, and compared to the Texas child population. The purpose of this report is to give detailed information about how children progress through DFPS with an eye to disproportionality and disparity. The data presented in this report and the DFPS Annual Legislative Report (Rider 40) complement one another. Both reports present the proportion of children of different races/ethnicities at decision points in DFPS, and this report digs deeper into decision points, examines trends across fiscal years, and provides regional data.

It is important to note that efforts to address disproportionality and disparities in the child welfare systems require a multiprong approach. The factors contributing to disproportionality in child welfare are complex and are interconnected with other systems such as

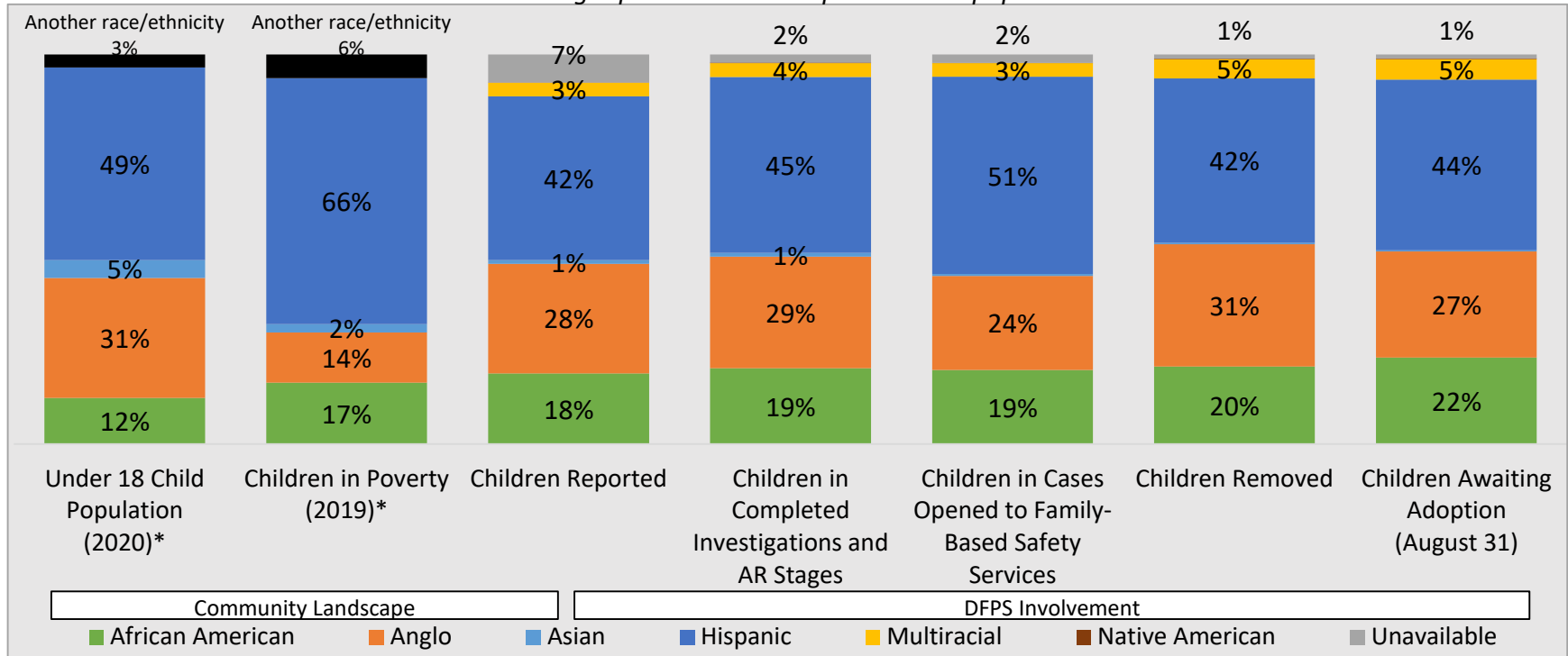
the criminal justice and judicial systems. Recognition that CPS does not operate in a silo is critical to addressing the problem. The literature outlines four key areas of explanatory factors: racial bias and discrimination; geographical context; family risk; and system processes and resources. CPS's disproportionality efforts are designed to address these factors utilizing the Texas Model for Eliminating Disproportionality and Disparities. Utilizing the Texas Model includes data collection, leadership development, cultural responsiveness, cross-systems engagement, and community engagement as its key elements. While it can be difficult to disentangle all of the causes of racial and ethnic disproportionalities and disparities in child welfare, this report is intended to support strategies to address them. The trends in reporting and regional breakdowns provide data to support active community efforts to advance racial equity.

Disproportionality means a particular race or cultural group makes up a proportion of those experiencing some event that is greater or smaller than that group's proportion of the population.

Disparity refers to a comparison of an event occurring for one group to another group.

Decision Point Analysis (FY20)

A decision point analysis identifies the racial and ethnic characteristics of children at different decision points. It can be useful in examining representation compared to the population.



*For community landscape data, Native American and Multiracial families are captured in "Another race/ethnicity." Note: Percentages <1% not shown. Native American children comprise 0.1-0.2% and Asian children comprise 0.3-1.0% of children in each stage of DFPS involvement.

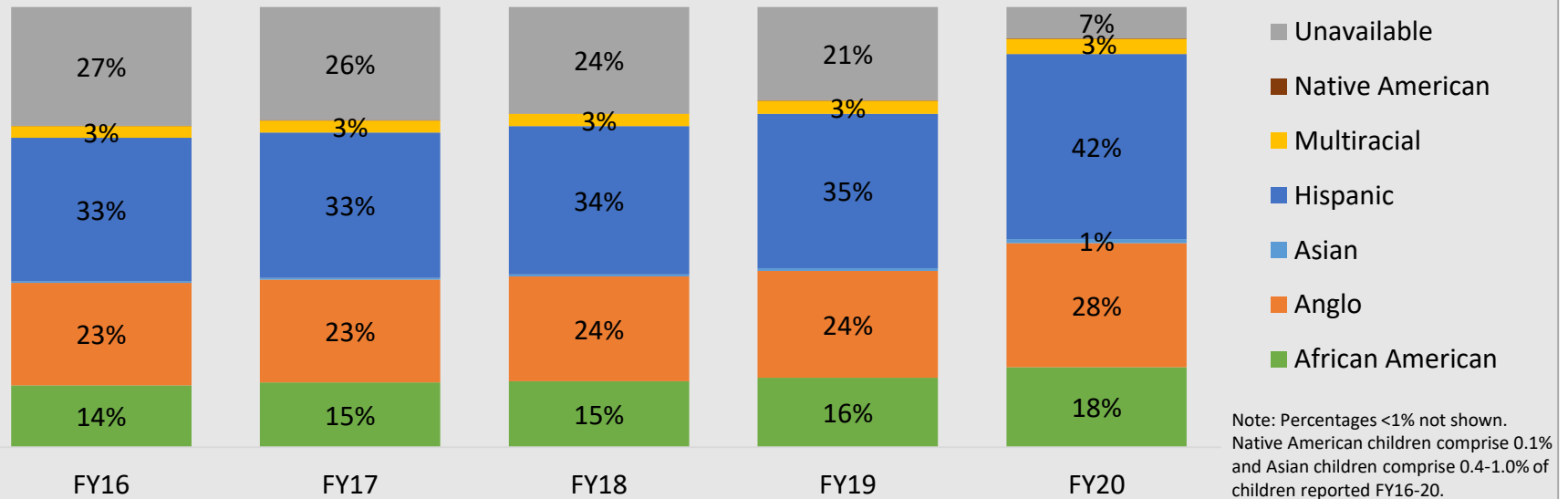
Takeaways

- Children of color are disproportionately represented in the population of children in poverty. Poverty can make it more challenging for parents to meet certain of their children's needs. It is a risk factor for neglect, but poverty does not equate to neglect. Children of color are more likely to live in areas of concentrated poverty. These areas are more likely to lack preventive community level resources.
- African American children make up a larger proportion of children being reported by the community and experiencing DFPS involvement than they do in the child population. Asian children are underrepresented in the population of children involved with DFPS.
- While Hispanic families make up the largest percent of children in poverty, they are reported and investigated at a slightly lower rate than their proportion in the Texas child population.

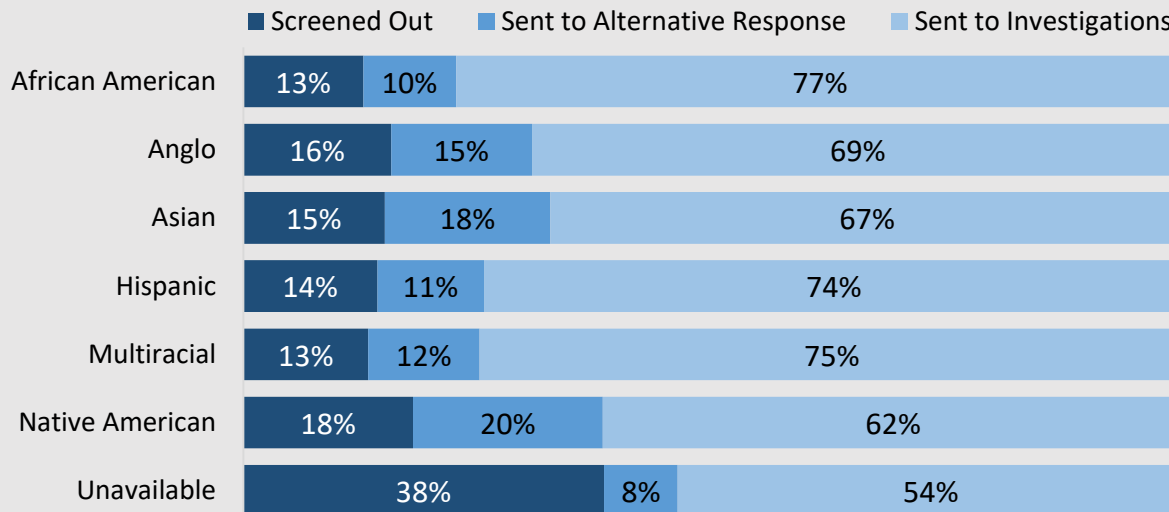
Community Concern and Hotline Response



Children Reported



Percent Screened in for INV/AR (FY20)



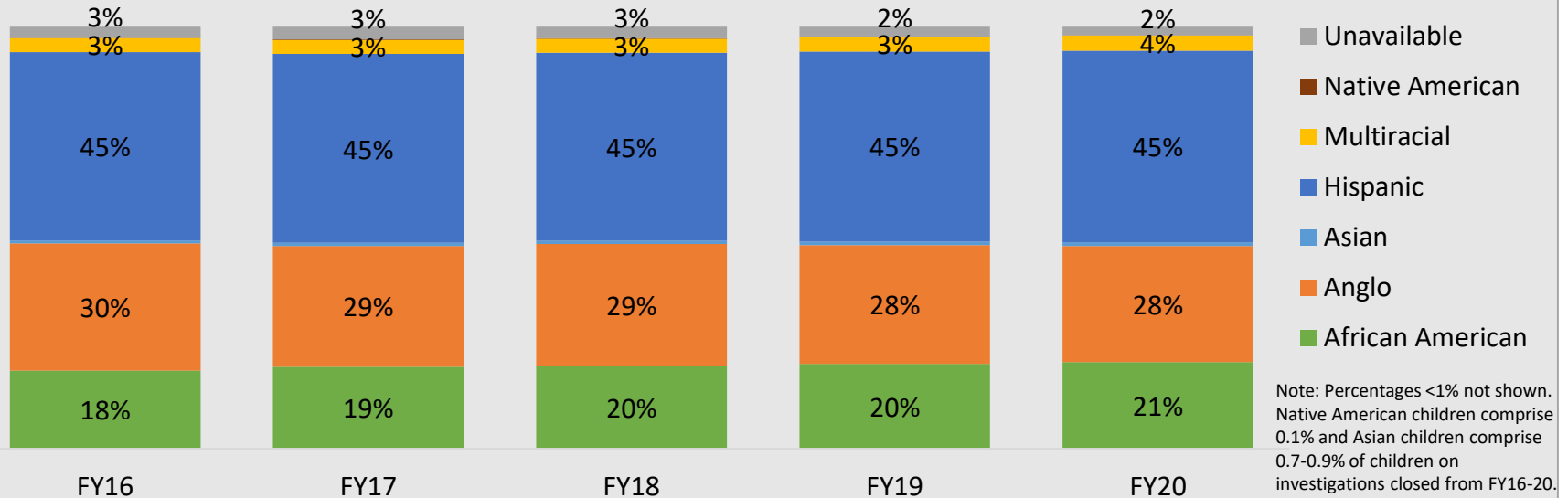
Takeaways

- The community reported to DFPS a similar proportion of children from racial and ethnic backgrounds between FY16 and FY19. In FY20, fewer children reported to statewide intake were missing race/ethnicity.
- African American children are most likely to be sent to investigations.
- Native American and Asian children have the largest proportion sent to alternative response.

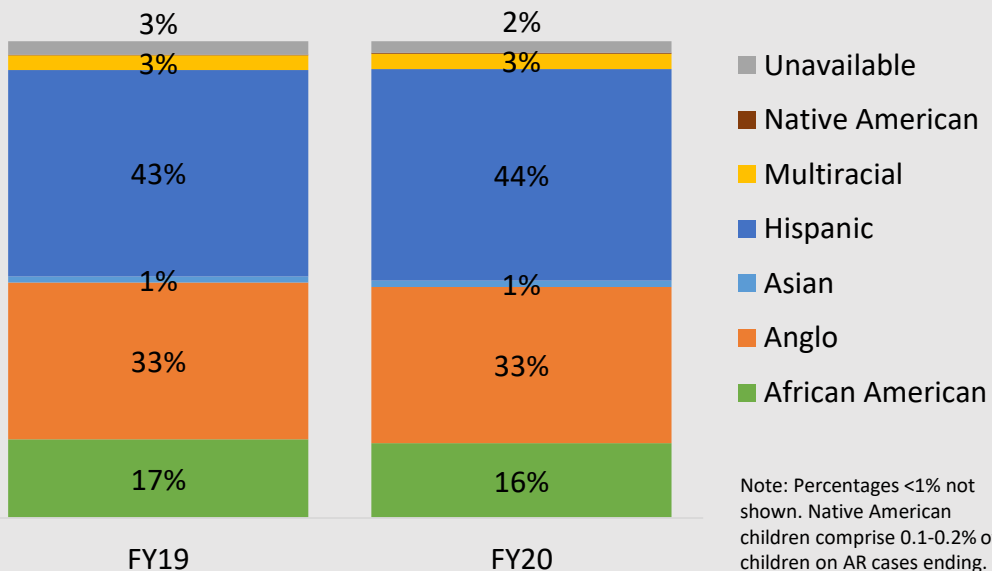
Alternative Response and Investigations



Children in Completed Investigations



Children in Completed Alternative Response Stages



Alternative Response (AR) represents a philosophical shift in how Child Protective Investigations responds to certain cases of alleged abuse and neglect based on factors such as the type and severity of the alleged maltreatment, number and sources of previous reports, and family willingness to participate in services. The most recent two fiscal years are presented as AR is rolling out region-by-region.

Takeaways

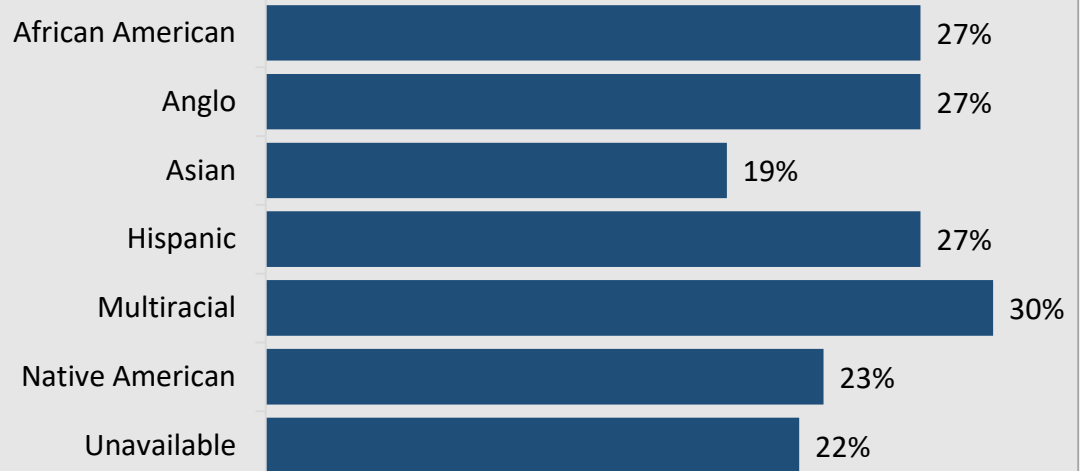
- The racial composition of children in investigations and in AR has been consistent across fiscal years.
- African American children make up a larger proportion of children on investigations than children in AR.

Investigation Outcomes

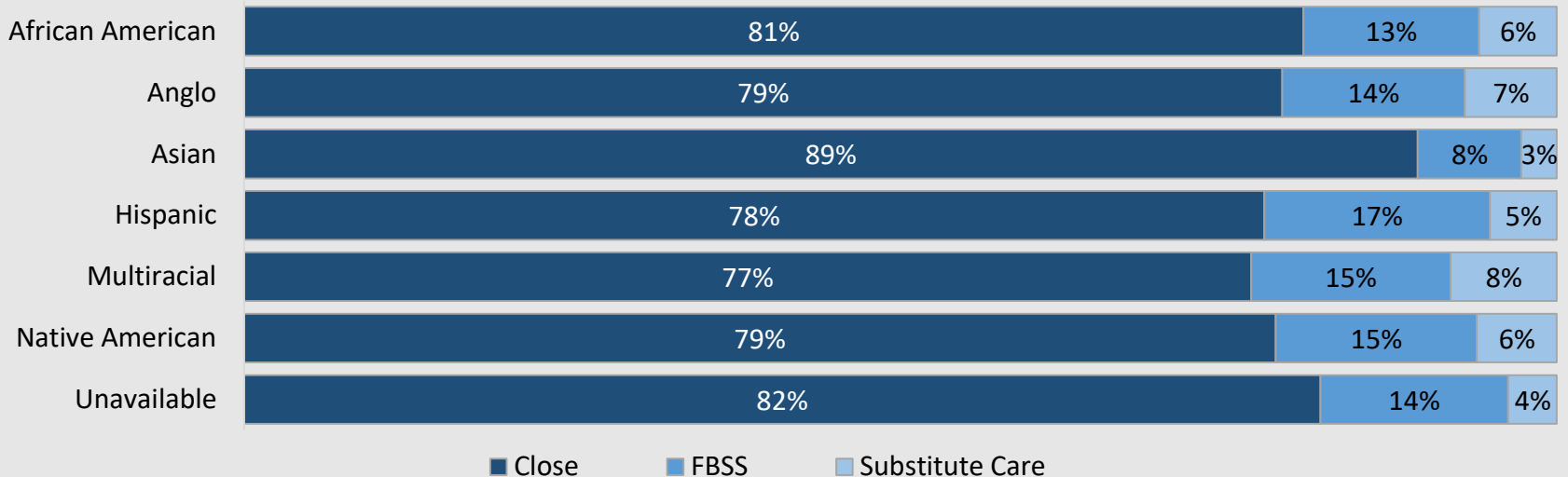
Takeaways

- Investigations for Multiracial children are confirmed at a higher rate and investigations for Asian children are confirmed at a lower rate than investigations for children of another race/ethnicity.
- At investigation close, most families have their investigation closed with no services. Investigations of Asian children are most likely to be closed with no services.
- Multiracial children are most likely to have their investigations opened to substitute care.

Percent of Children in Investigations that are Confirmed for Abuse and/or Neglect (FY20)



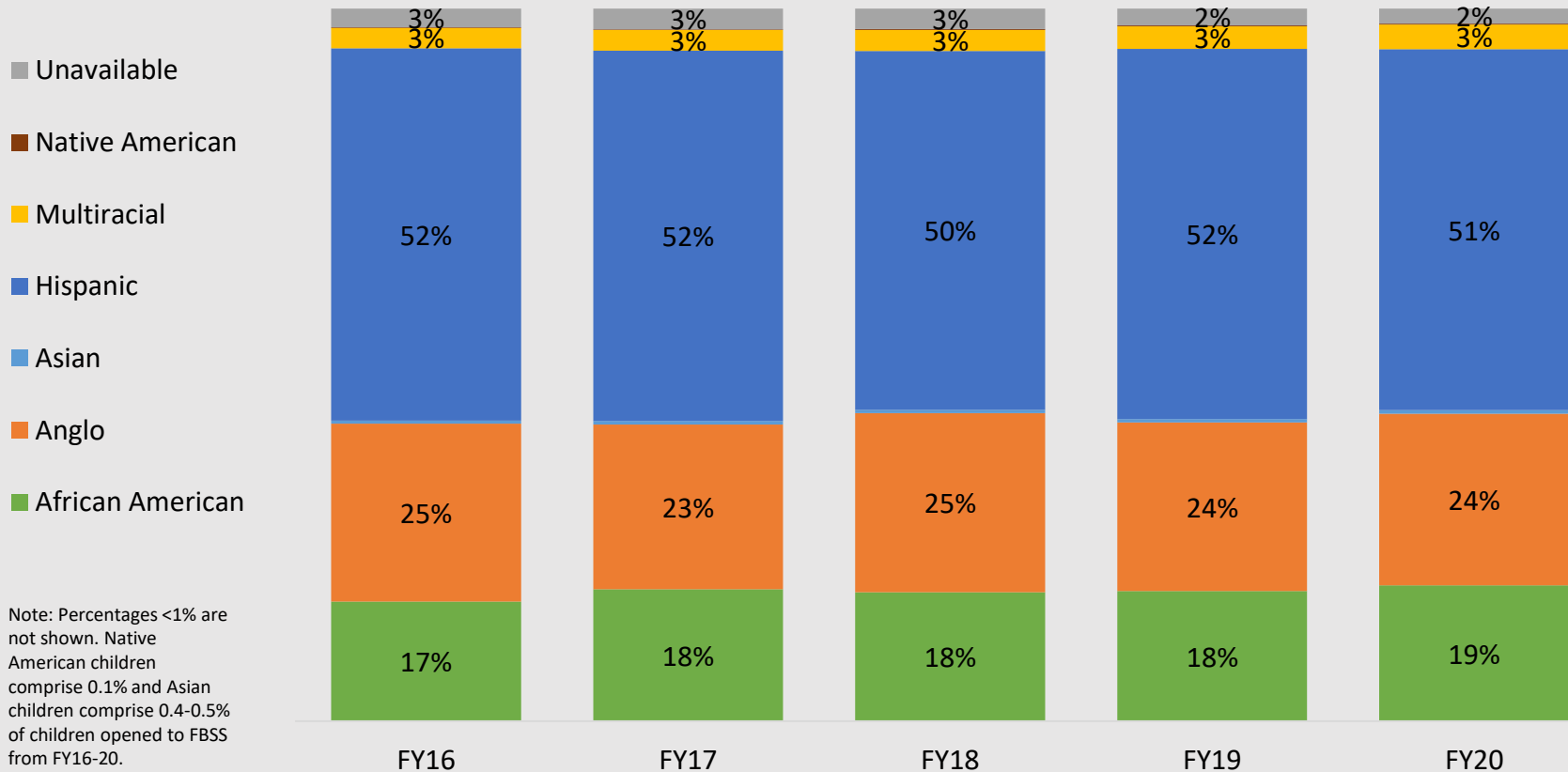
Outcomes for Children in Completed Investigations (FY20)



Family-Based Safety Services (FBSS)



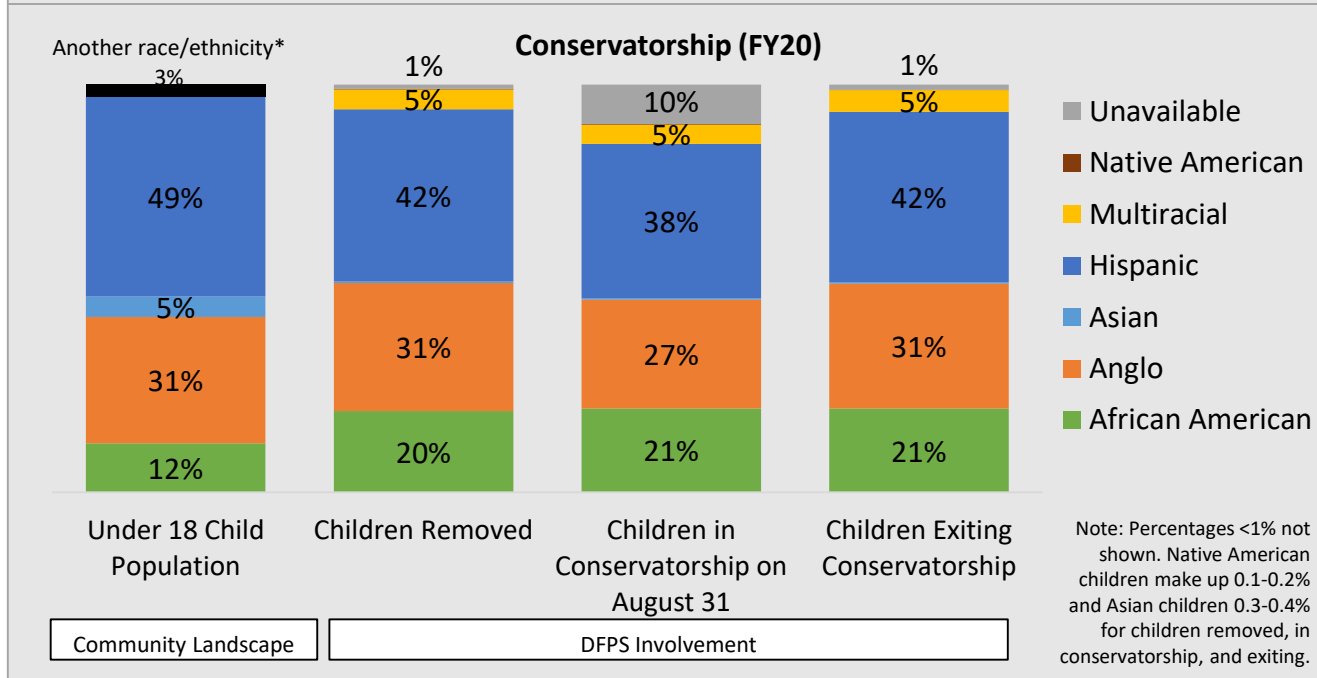
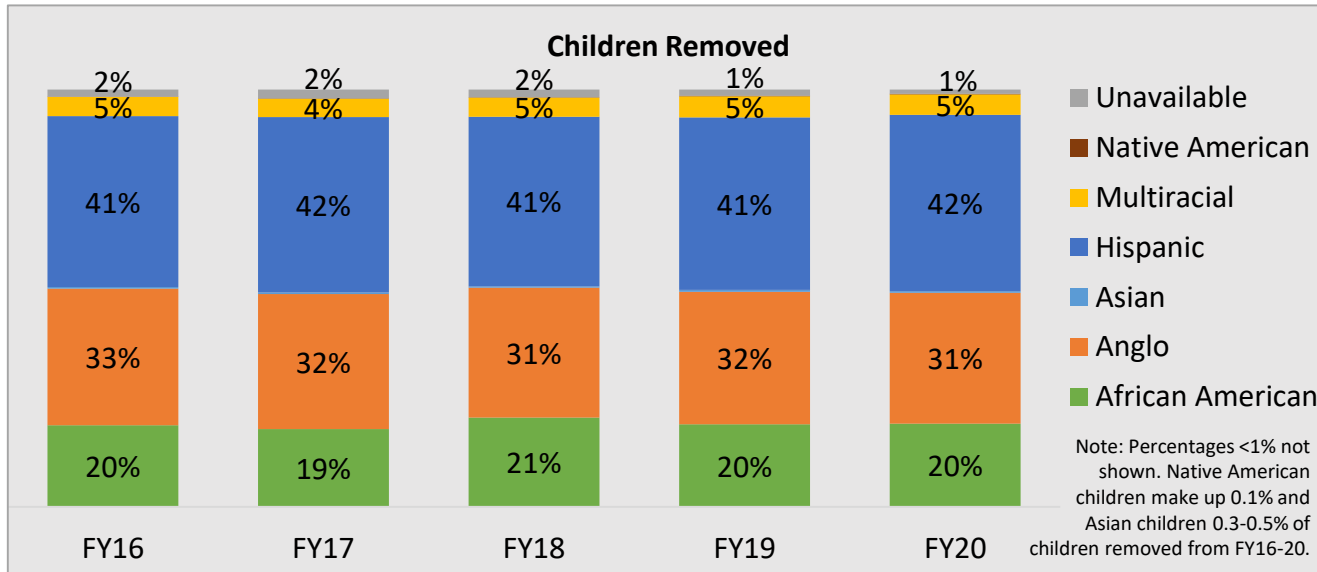
Percent of Children on Cases Opened to FBSS



Takeaways

- FBSS served fewer overall children between FY17 and FY20, but the proportion of children served by race/ethnicity is similar across fiscal years.
- Compared to the proportion of children on investigations ending in the fiscal year, more Hispanic children and fewer Anglo children are on cases opened to FBSS.

Progression From Removal

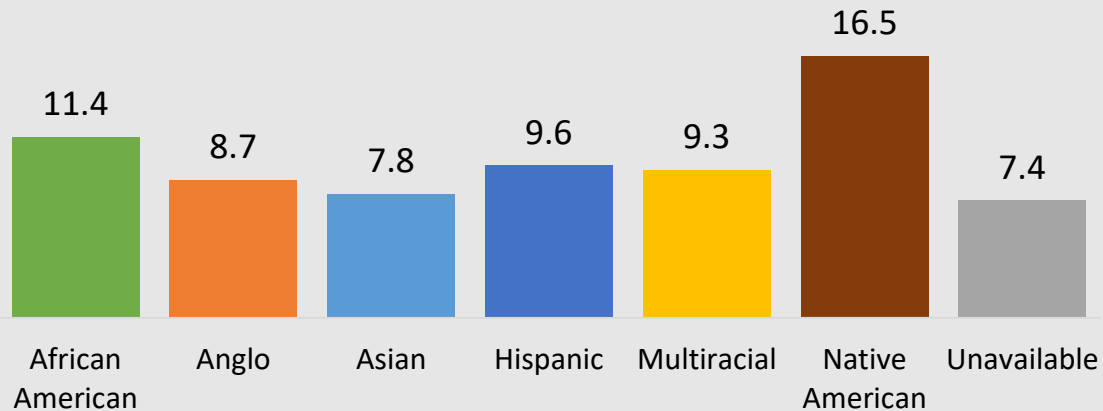


- Takeaways:**
- The racial and ethnic demographics of children removed has been consistent across FY16 to FY20.
 - In comparison to the child population in Texas, a higher proportion of African American children and a lower proportion of Asian children are entering, in, and exiting conservatorship.
 - Children with unavailable race/ethnicity data make up a larger proportion of those in conservatorship than entering or exiting.

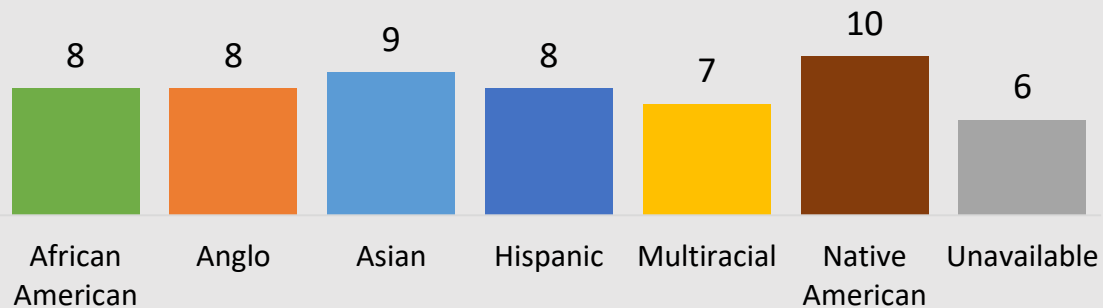
*The category of "Another race/ethnicity" for population data includes Multiracial and Native American children.
 Note: Data presented are a distinct count of children.

Children in Placement (FY20)

Median Time Awaiting Adoption in Months (FY20)



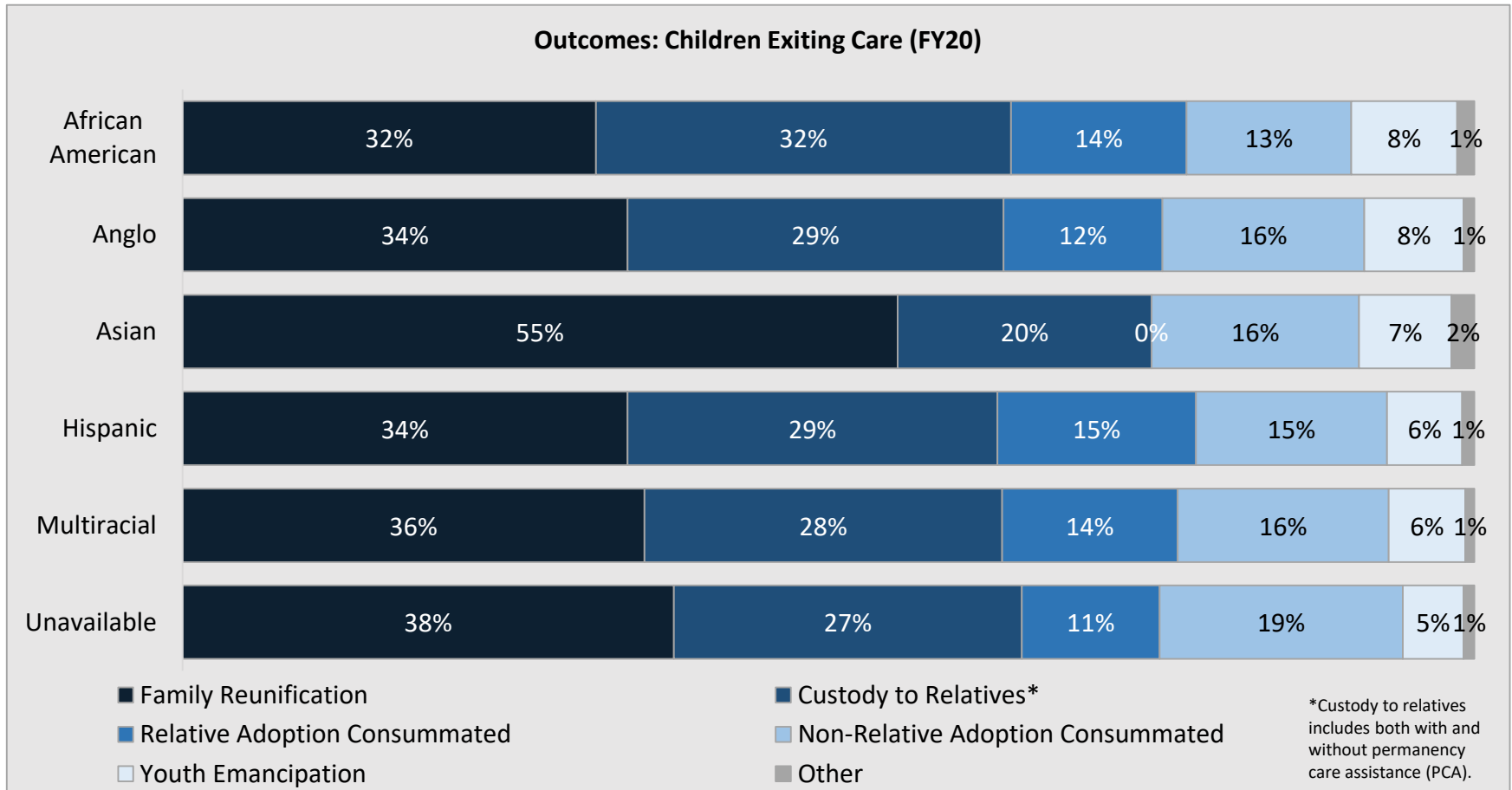
Average Age of Children Awaiting Adoption (FY20)



Takeaways

- Native American children have the largest median time waiting for adoption at 16.5 months.
- There are multiple factors that contribute to age of children awaiting adoption, including the child's age entering care, time in care, and needs of child. Multiracial children and children for whom race/ethnicity are unavailable are, on average, the youngest children awaiting adoption. Native American children are the oldest, on average.

Children in Placement (FY20)



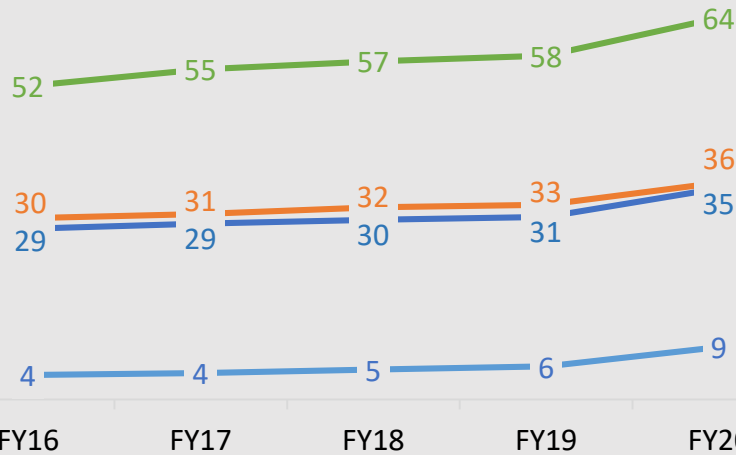
Note: 11 Native American children were excluded from this analysis due to the small sample. Data presented are a distinct count of children.

Takeaways

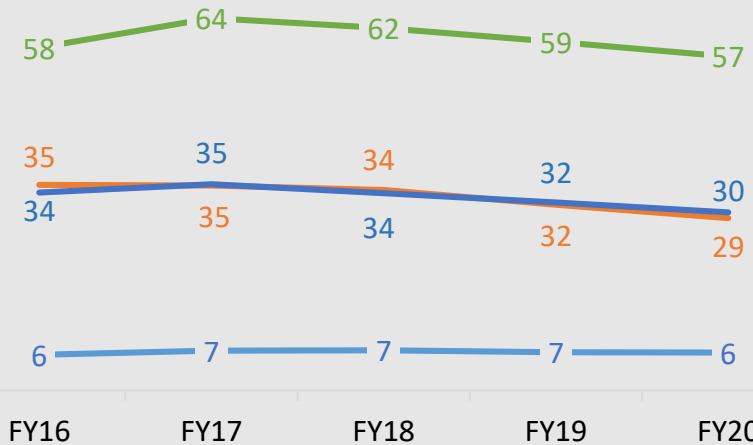
- The proportion of children in each exit type is similar across race and ethnicity, with the exception of Asian families. The majority of Asian children in FY20 were reunified with their families.
- African American children have the largest percentage of children with custody to relatives and a lower proportion of children with a non-relative adoption.

Comparison to Children in the Population

Rate of Children Reported
Per 1,000 Children in the Population



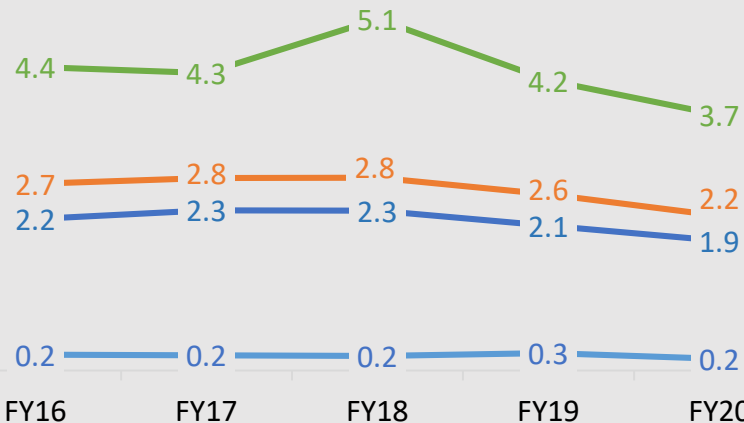
Rate of Children in Completed Investigations
Per 1,000 Children in the Population



— African American — Anglo — Asian — Hispanic

Note: Population-level data was limited for other racial groups, so only the largest four statewide racial/ethnic groups are presented. Rates are reported using a distinct count of children.

Rate of Children Removed
Per 1,000 Children in the Population



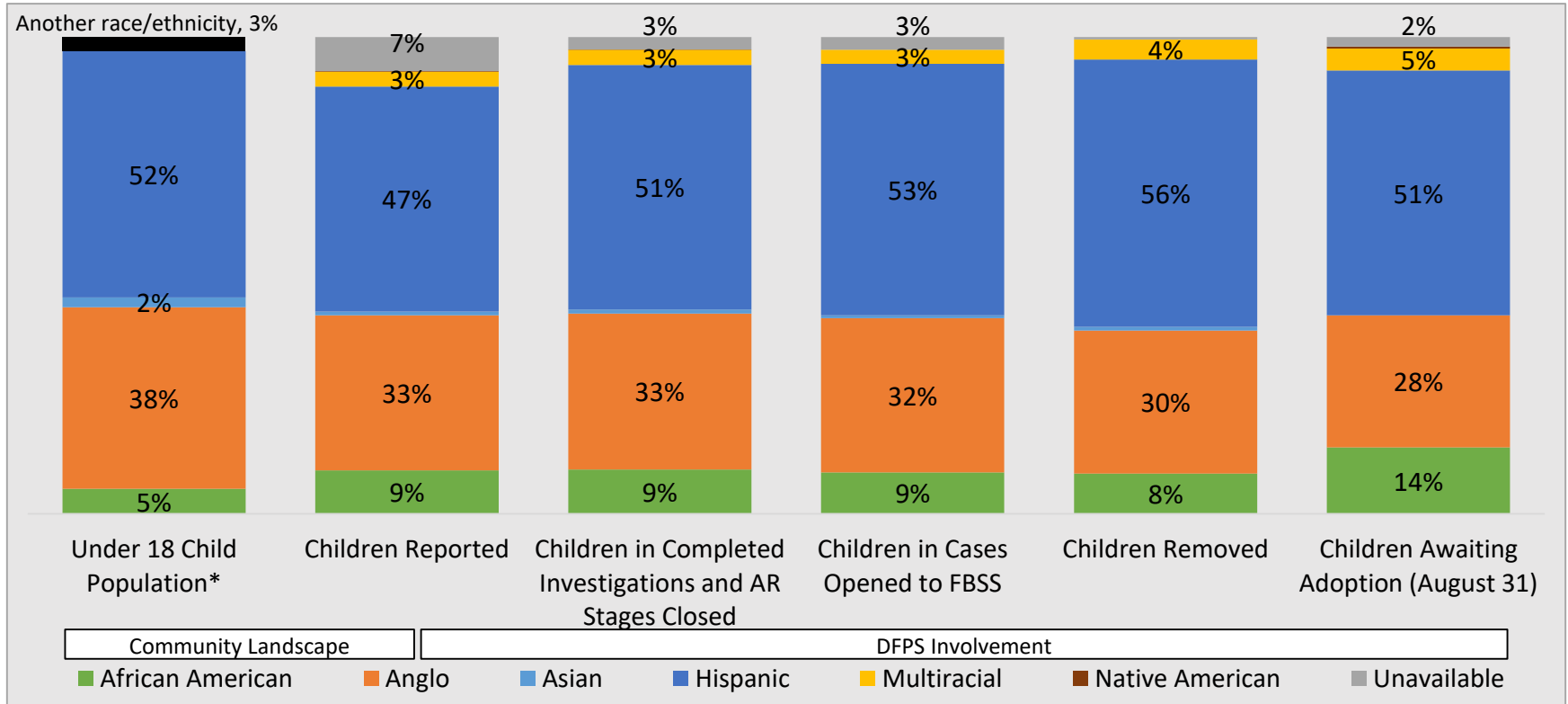
Rates can tell us the occurrence of a situation in relation to the population. This allows for easier comparison between racial groups of different sizes.

Takeaways

- African American children are reported, investigated, and removed at a higher rate than children of Anglo, Asian, or Hispanic origin.
- Hispanic and Anglo children have similar child welfare involvement rates, while Asian children are least represented in the child welfare system.
- While the rate of children reported across all races and ethnicities has increased in the past five fiscal years, the rate of children investigated and removed has decreased in the past three fiscal years.

Region 1: Decision Point Analysis (FY20)

A decision point analysis identifies the racial and ethnic characteristics of children at different decision points. It can be useful in examining representation compared to the population.



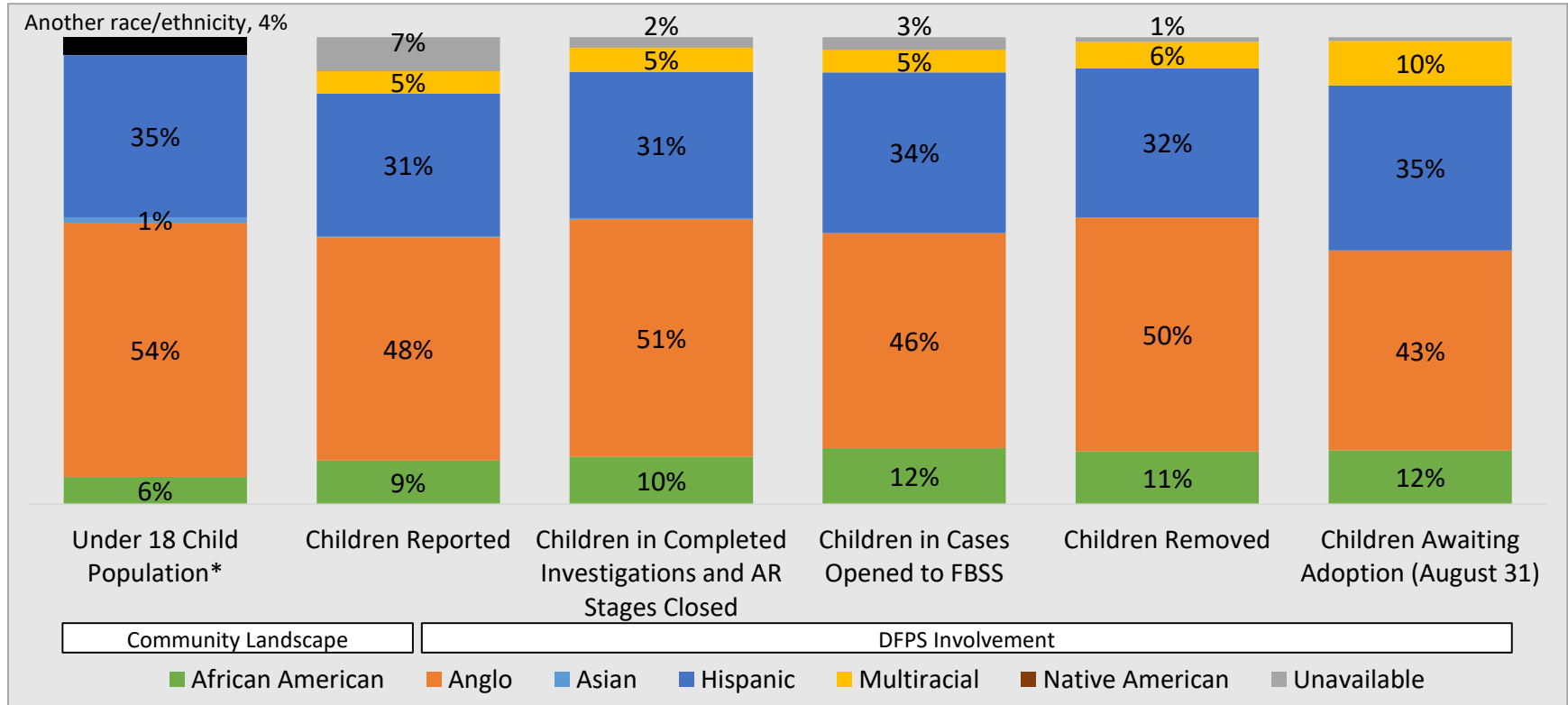
*Native American and Multiracial children are captured in 'Another race/ethnicity' due to available population-level data.

Takeaways

- African American children make up a larger proportion of children being reported by the community and experiencing DFPS involvement, especially of children awaiting adoption, than they do in the child population in Region 1.
- Asian and Anglo children are underrepresented in the child welfare system in Region 1.

Region 2: Decision Point Analysis (FY20)

A decision point analysis identifies the racial and ethnic characteristics of children at different decision points. It can be useful in examining representation compared to the population.



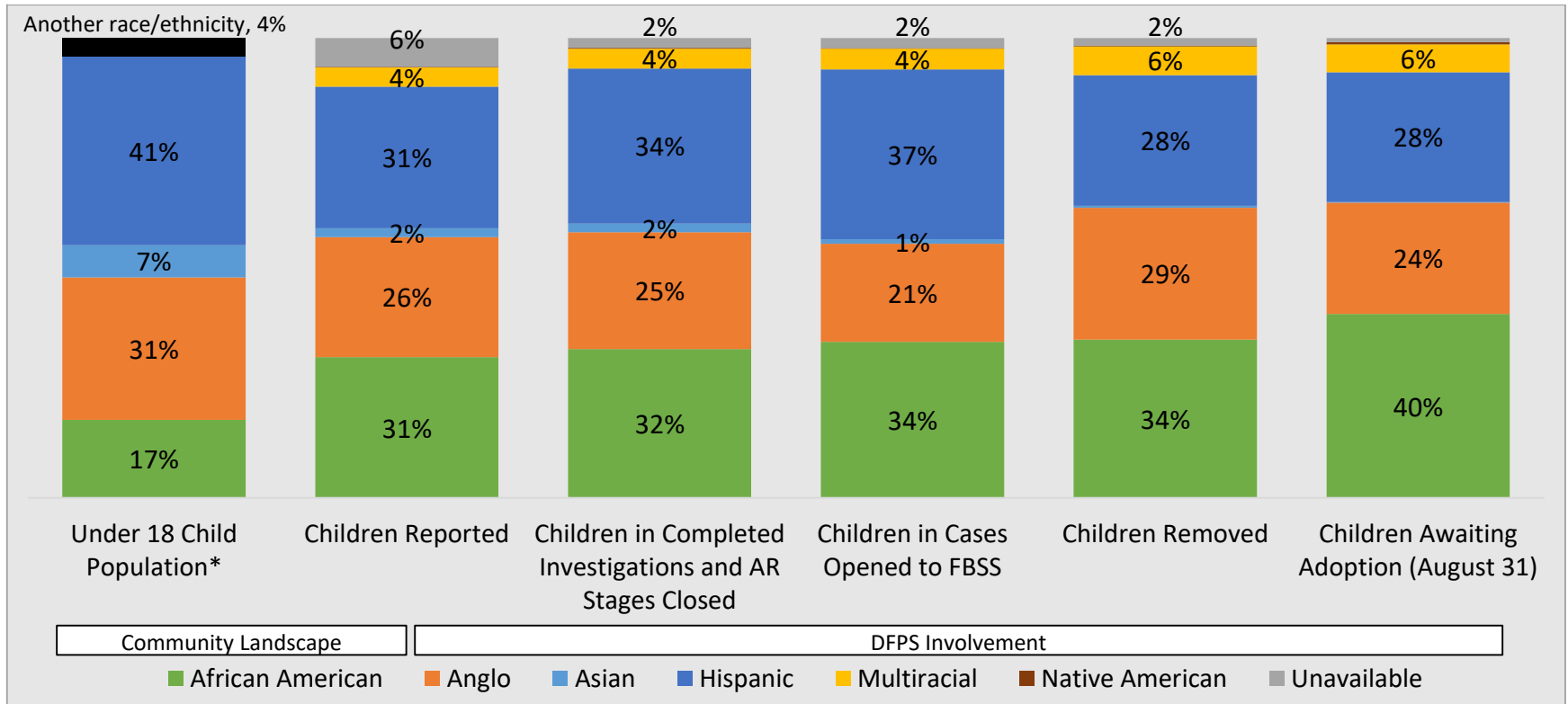
*Native American and Multiracial children are captured in 'Another race/ethnicity' due to available population-level data.

Takeaways

- African American children make up a larger proportion of children being reported by the community and experiencing DFPS involvement than they do in the child population in Region 2.
- Multiracial children comprise a larger proportion of children awaiting adoption than the population of children in other stages of DFPS involvement.

Region 3E: Decision Point Analysis (FY20)

A decision point analysis identifies the racial and ethnic characteristics of children at different decision points. It can be useful in examining representation compared to the population.



*Native American and Multiracial children are captured in 'Another race/ethnicity' due to available population-level data.

Note: There were 754 children reported in region 3 that did not correspond to a county in regions 3E and 3W. These children were excluded from the regional analysis of children reported.

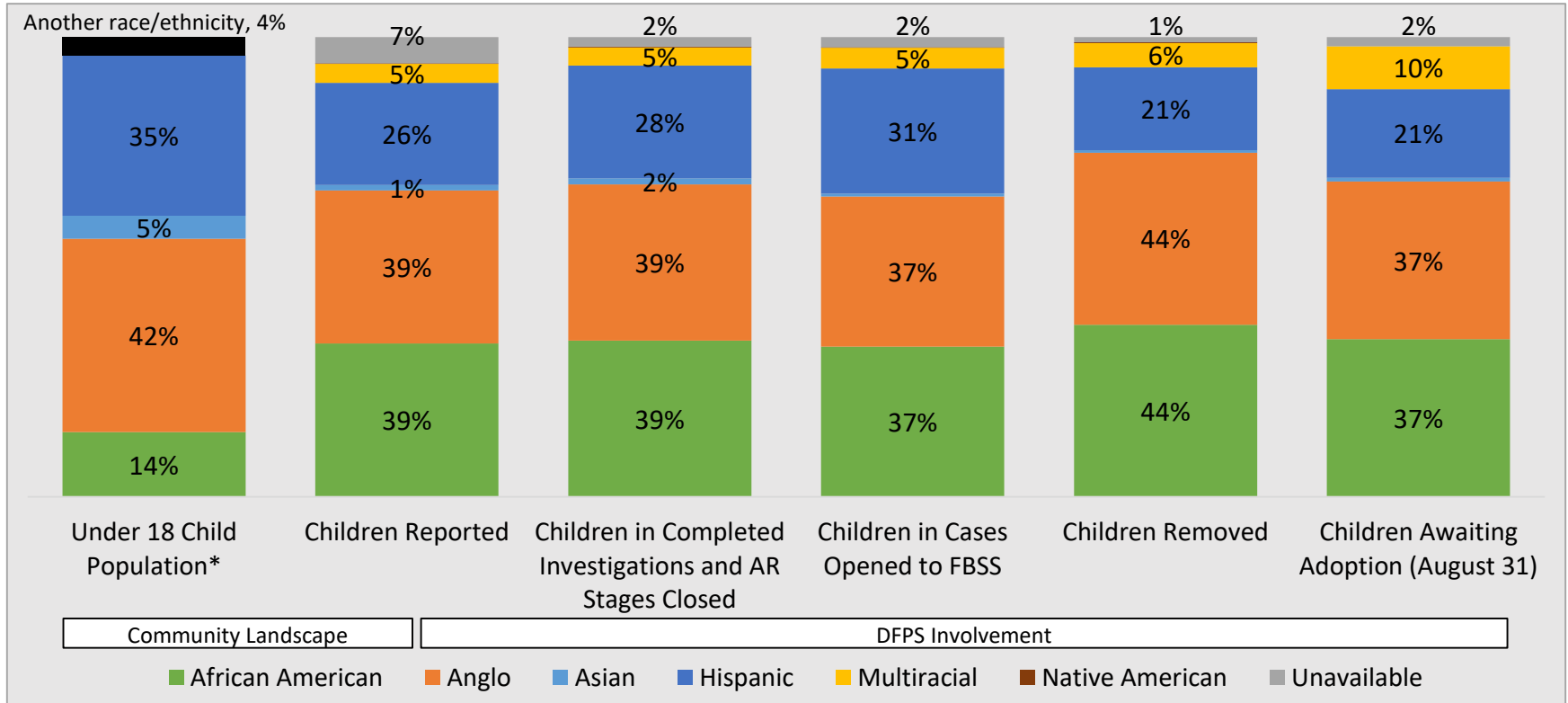
Takeaways

- African American children make up a larger proportion of children being reported by the community and experiencing DFPS involvement, especially of children awaiting adoption, than they do in the child population in Region 3E.
- Asian children are underrepresented in all stages of DFPS involvement in Region 3E.
- Anglo and Hispanic children are underrepresented in reports to DFPS and investigations, but the population of Hispanic children in cases opened to FBSS and the population of Anglo children removed is more proportionate to their percentage of the population.

Region 3W: Decision Point Analysis (FY20)



A decision point analysis identifies the racial and ethnic characteristics of children at different decision points. It can be useful in examining representation compared to the population.



*Native American and Multiracial children are captured in 'Another race/ethnicity' due to available population-level data.

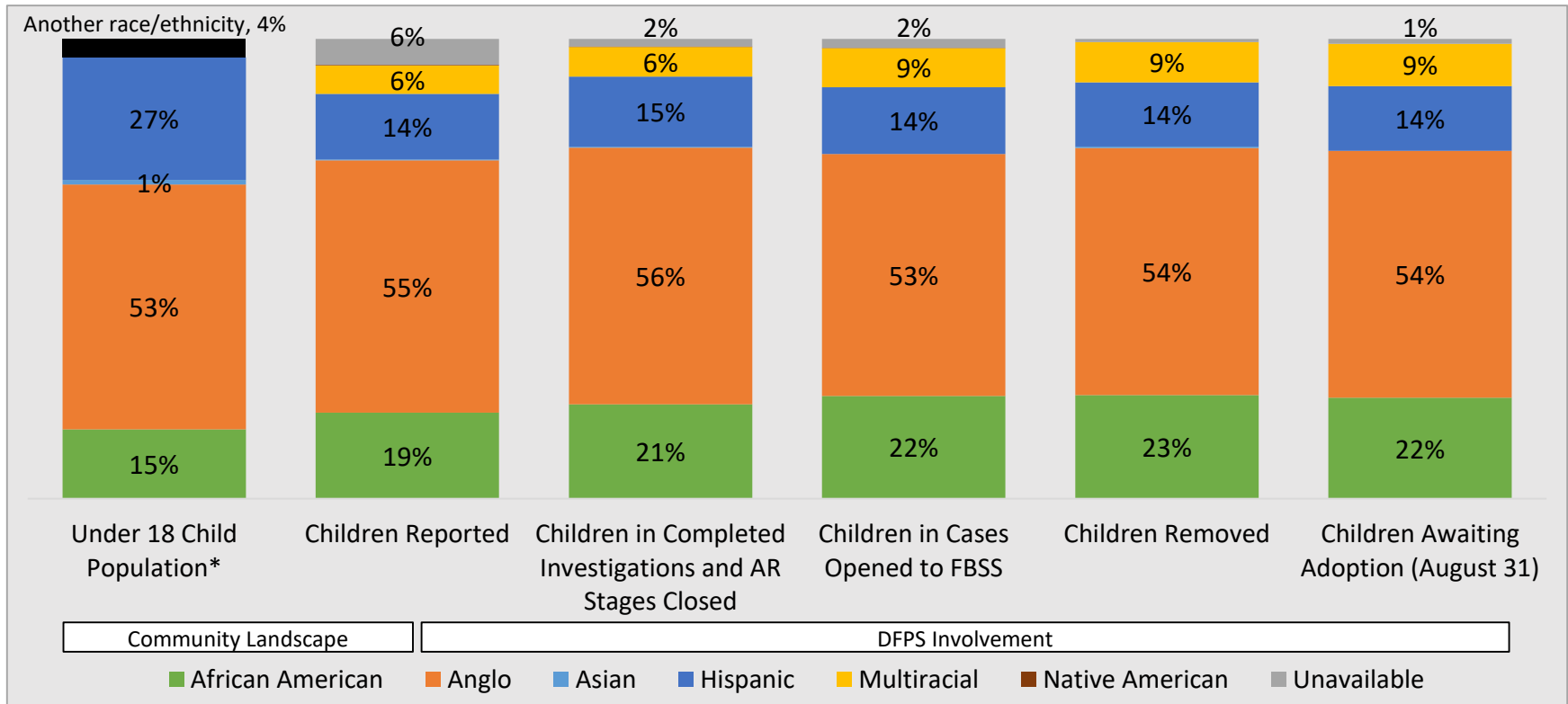
Note: There were 754 children reported in region 3 that did not correspond to a county in regions 3E and 3W. These children were excluded from the regional analysis of children reported.

Takeaways

- African American children make up a larger proportion of children being reported by the community and experiencing DFPS involvement, especially of children removed, than they do in the child population in Region 3W.
- Asian and Hispanic children are underrepresented in the child welfare system in Region 3W.
- Multiracial children make up a larger proportion of children awaiting adoption than the population of children in other stages of DFPS involvement.

Region 4: Decision Point Analysis (FY20)

A decision point analysis identifies the racial and ethnic characteristics of children at different decision points. It can be useful in examining representation compared to the population.



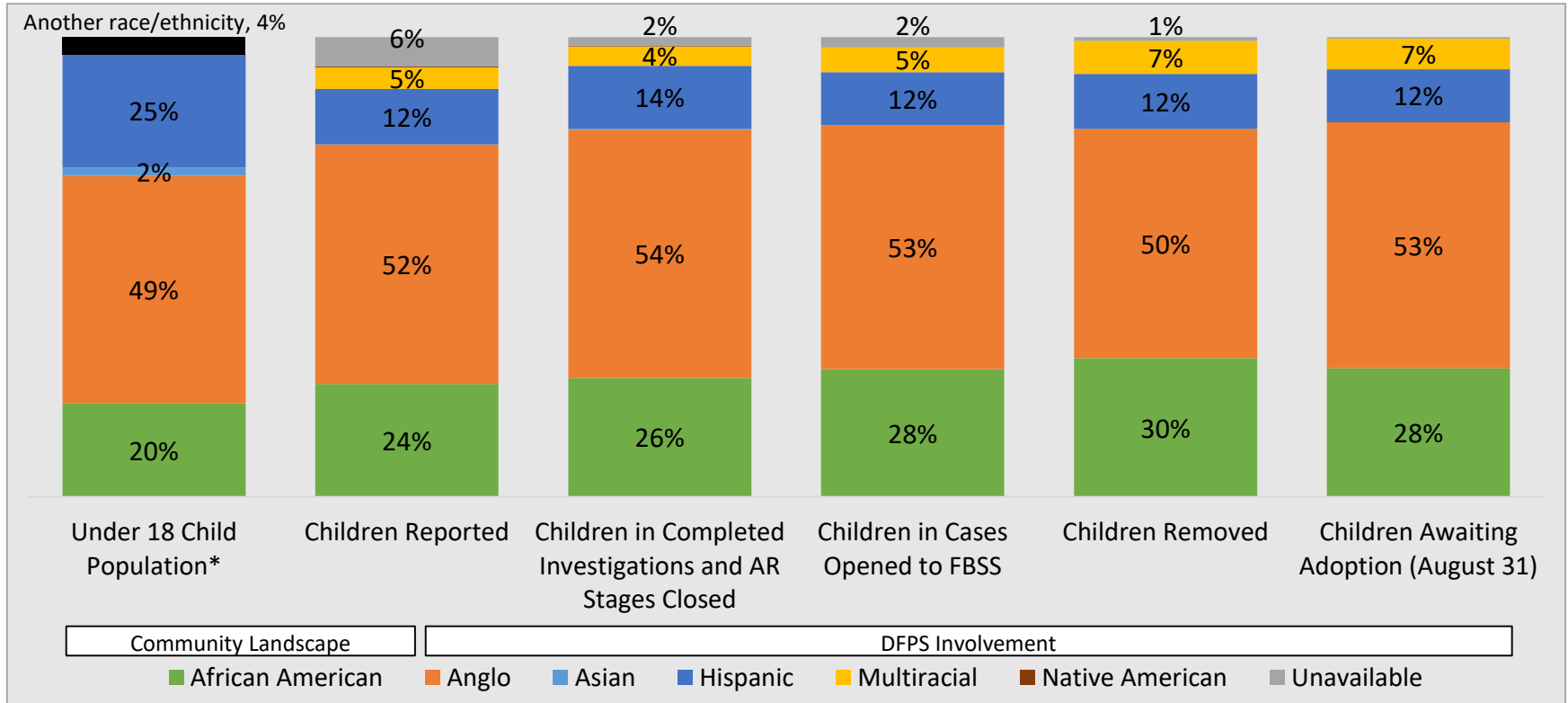
*Native American and Multiracial children are captured in 'Another race/ethnicity' due to available population-level data.

Takeaways

- Hispanic children are underrepresented in the child welfare system in Region 4.
- Multiracial children make up a larger proportion of children in later stages of DFPS involvement.
- African American children make up a larger proportion of children being reported by the community and experiencing DFPS involvement than they do in the child population in Region 4.

Region 5: Decision Point Analysis (FY20)

A decision point analysis identifies the racial and ethnic characteristics of children at different decision points. It can be useful in examining representation compared to the population.



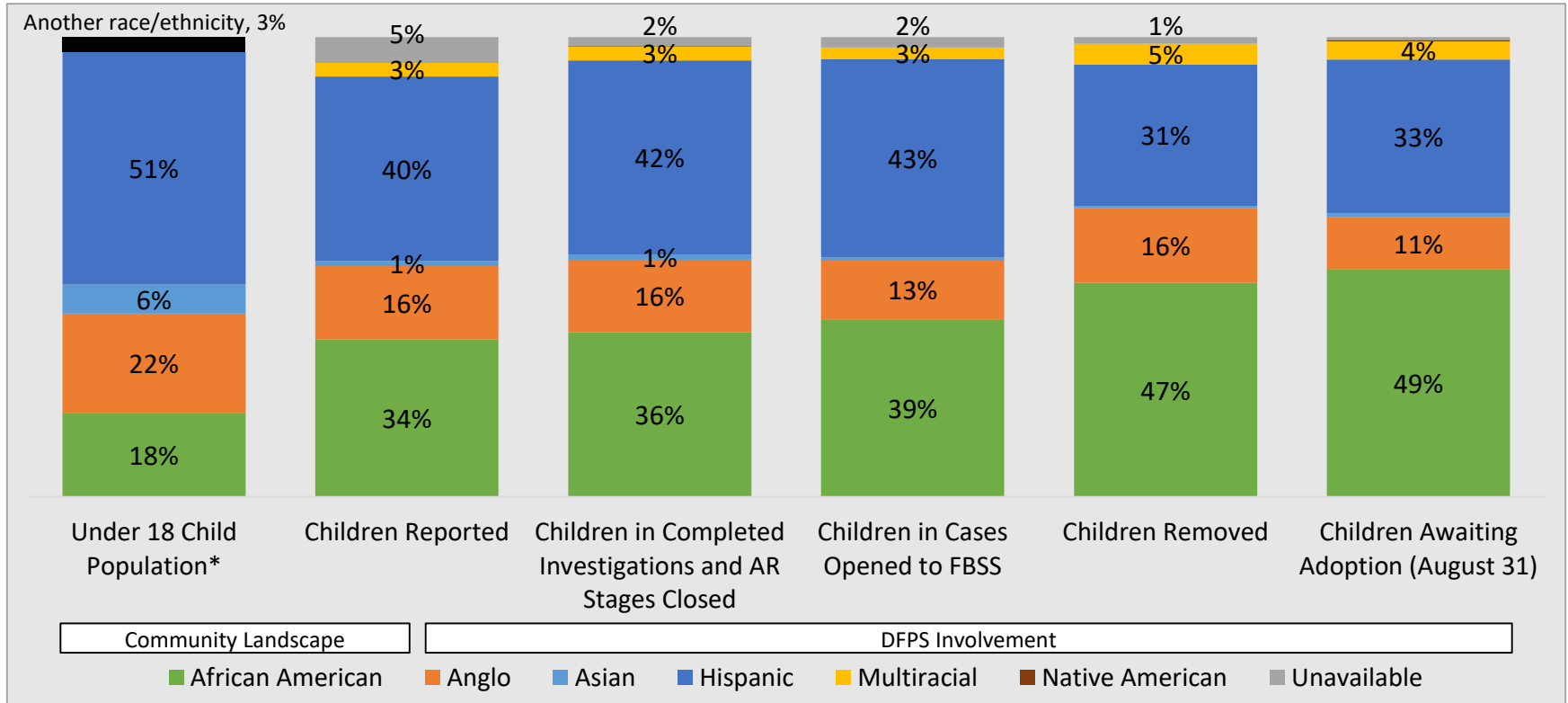
*Native American and Multiracial children are captured in 'Another race/ethnicity' due to available population-level data.

Takeaways

- Hispanic children are underrepresented in the child welfare system in Region 5.
- African American children make up a larger proportion of children being reported by the community and experiencing DFPS involvement than they do in the child population in Region 5.

Region 6a: Decision Point Analysis (FY20)

A decision point analysis identifies the racial and ethnic characteristics of children at different decision points. It can be useful in examining representation compared to the population.



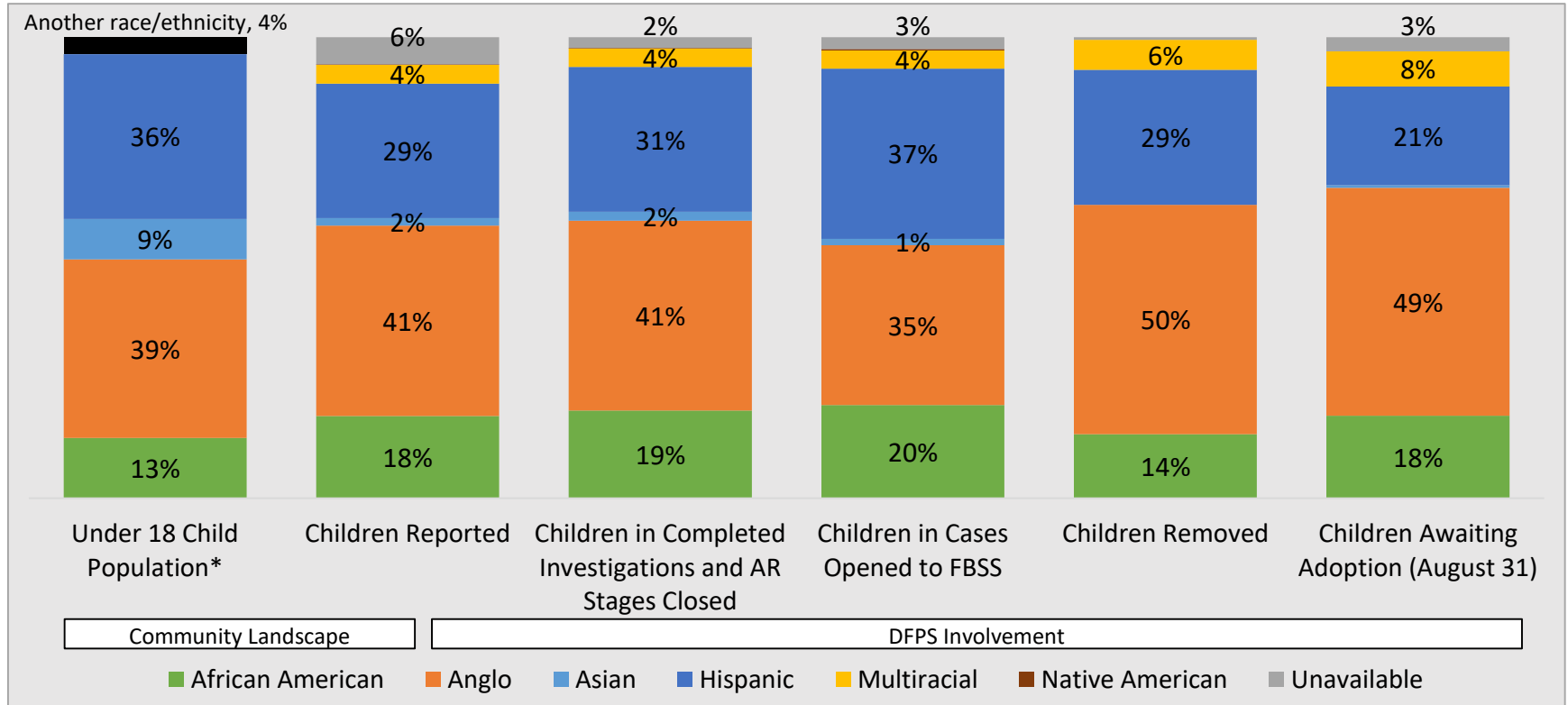
*Native American and Multiracial children are captured in 'Another race/ethnicity' due to available population-level data.

Takeaways

- African American children make up a larger proportion of children being reported by the community and experiencing DFPS involvement, especially removals and those awaiting adoption, than they do in the child population in Region 6a.
- Asian, Hispanic, and Anglo children are underrepresented in the child welfare system.

Region 6b: Decision Point Analysis (FY20)

A decision point analysis identifies the racial and ethnic characteristics of children at different decision points. It can be useful in examining representation compared to the population.



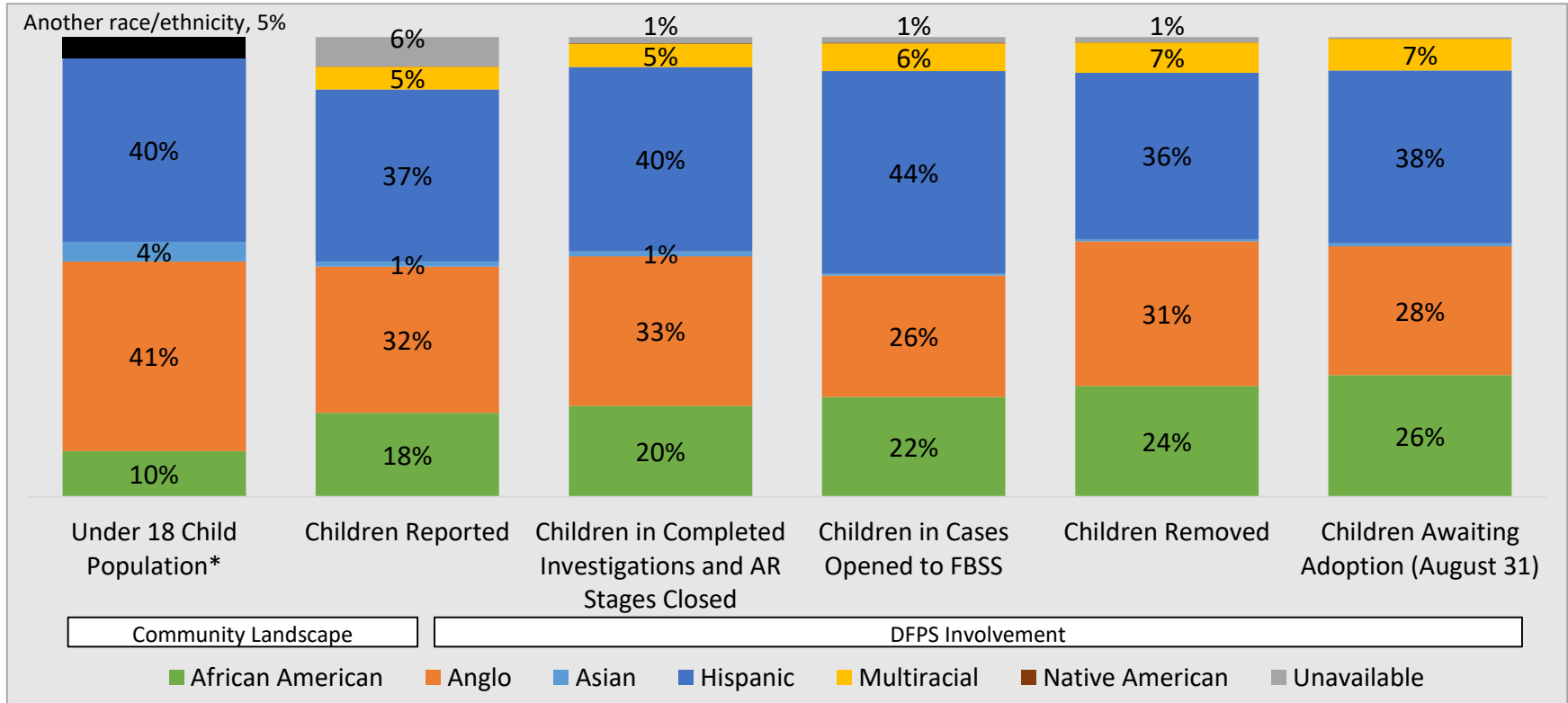
*Native American and Multiracial children are captured in 'Another race/ethnicity' due to available population-level data.

Takeaways

- African American children represent a larger proportion in all stages of DFPS involvement compared to their proportion of children in the population in Region 6b, but the proportion looks similar for the population of children removed.
- A similar proportion of Anglo children are in the earlier stages of the DFPS populations as compared to the general population, but Anglo children make up a larger proportion of children removed and awaiting adoption.
- Hispanic children are similarly represented in FBSS compared to the child population, but underrepresented in the other stages of DFPS service.
- Asian children are underrepresented in the populations of children with DFPS involvement.

Region 7: Decision Point Analysis (FY20)

A decision point analysis identifies the racial and ethnic characteristics of children at different decision points. It can be useful in examining representation compared to the population.



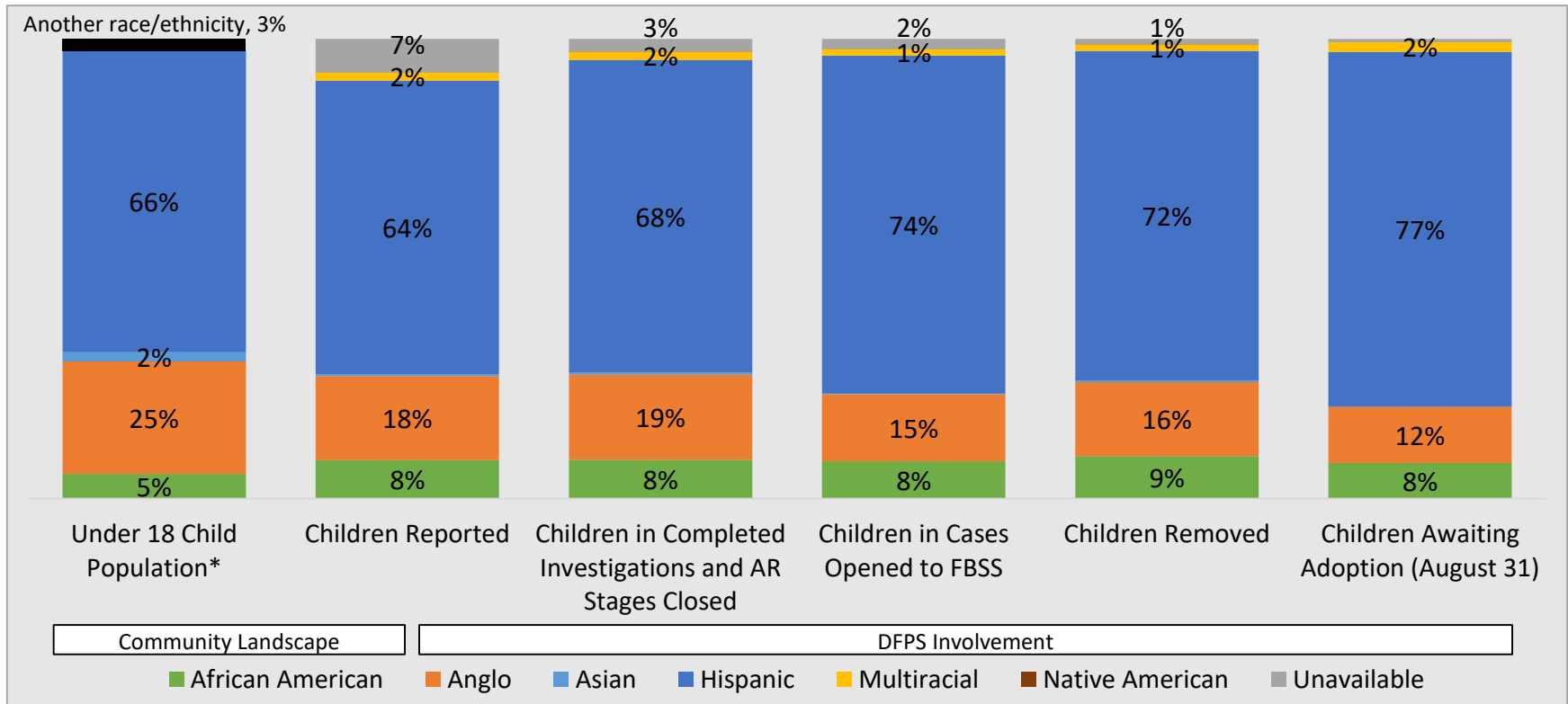
*Native American and Multiracial children are captured in 'Another race/ethnicity' due to available population-level data.

Takeaways

- Asian and Anglo children are underrepresented in the child welfare stages of service.
- African American children make up a larger proportion of the child welfare population than the general population, and this disparity grows through each stage of DFPS involvement.

Region 8: Decision Point Analysis (FY20)

A decision point analysis identifies the racial and ethnic characteristics of children at different decision points. It can be useful in examining representation compared to the population.



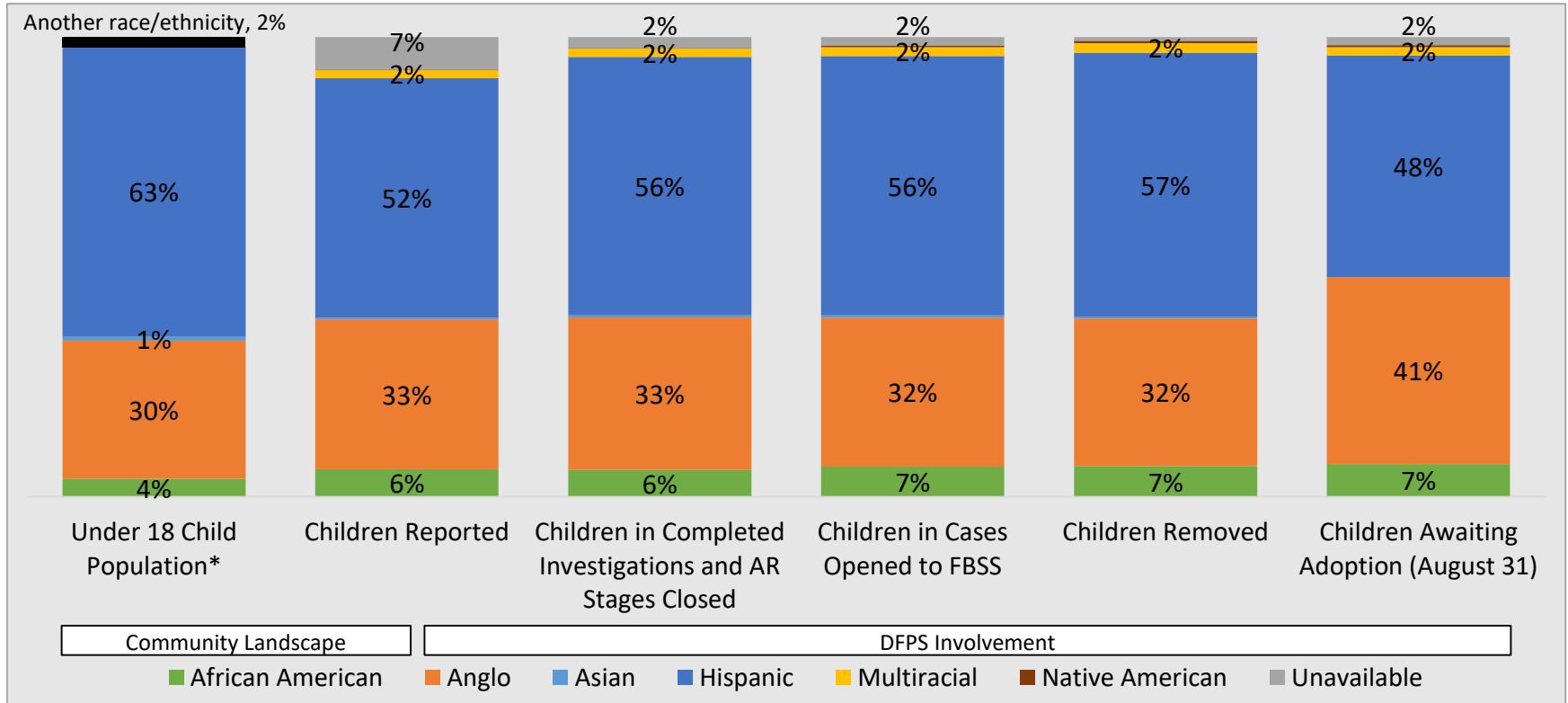
*Native American and Multiracial children are captured in 'Another race/ethnicity' due to available population-level data.

Takeaways

- Hispanic children are represented in the populations of children reported and those that are investigated and experience alternative response at a proportion similar to the population. Hispanic children are overrepresented in the population of children in cases opened to FBSS, removed, and awaiting adoption.
- Anglo children are underrepresented in the child welfare populations, especially in the population of children awaiting adoption.
- African American children represent a larger proportion in all stages of DFPS involvement compared to their proportion of children in the population. The proportion of African American children is consistent throughout stages of service.

Region 9: Decision Point Analysis (FY20)

A decision point analysis identifies the racial and ethnic characteristics of children at different decision points. It can be useful in examining representation compared to the population.



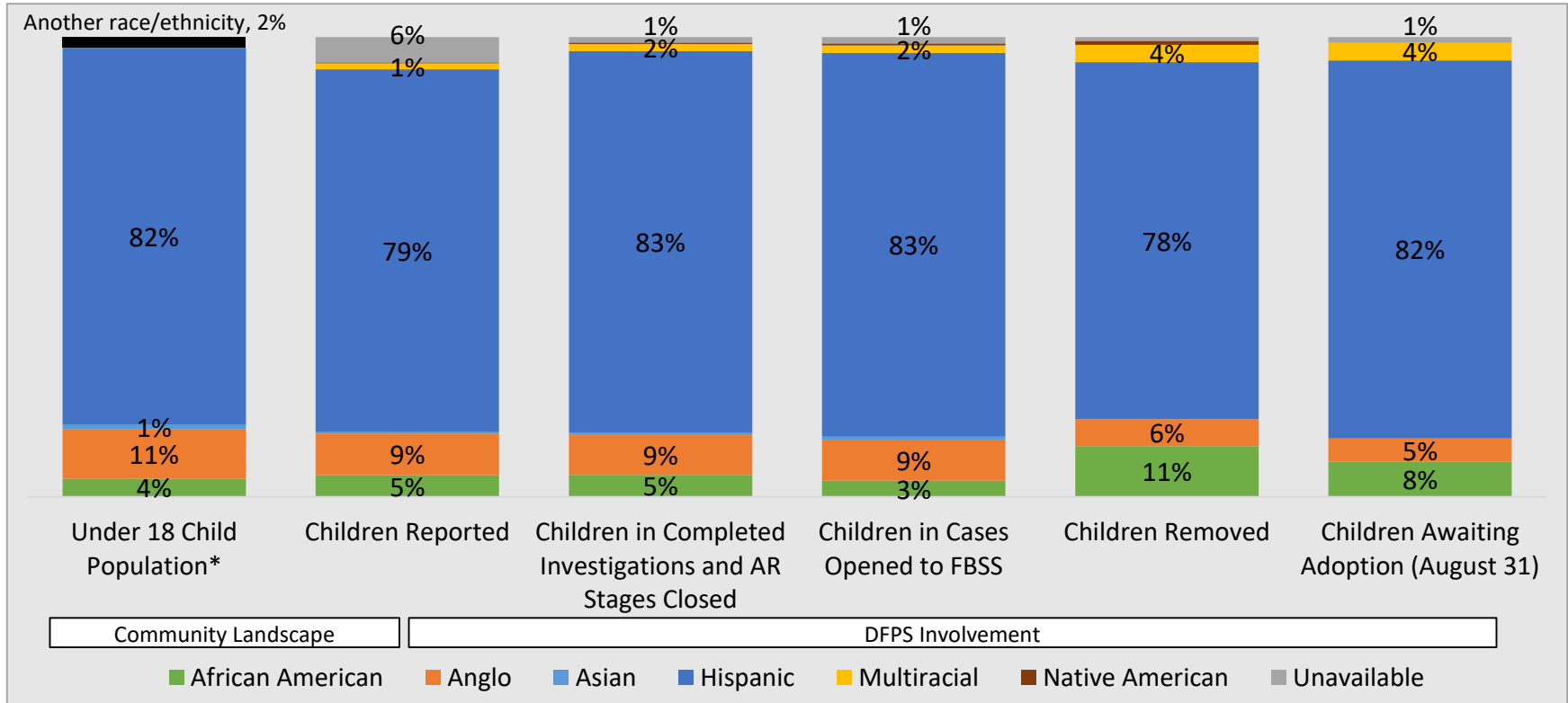
*Native American and Multiracial children are captured in 'Another race/ethnicity' due to available population-level data.

Takeaways

- African American children represent a larger proportion in all stages of DFPS involvement compared to their proportion of children in the population. The proportion of African American children is relatively consistent throughout stages of service.
- Anglo children represent a similar proportion of the DFPS-involved populations compared to their proportion of the general population, but are overrepresented in the population of children awaiting adoption.
- Hispanic children are underrepresented in the DFPS-involved populations, especially in the population of children awaiting adoption.

Region 10: Decision Point Analysis (FY20)

A decision point analysis identifies the racial and ethnic characteristics of children at different decision points. It can be useful in examining representation compared to the population.



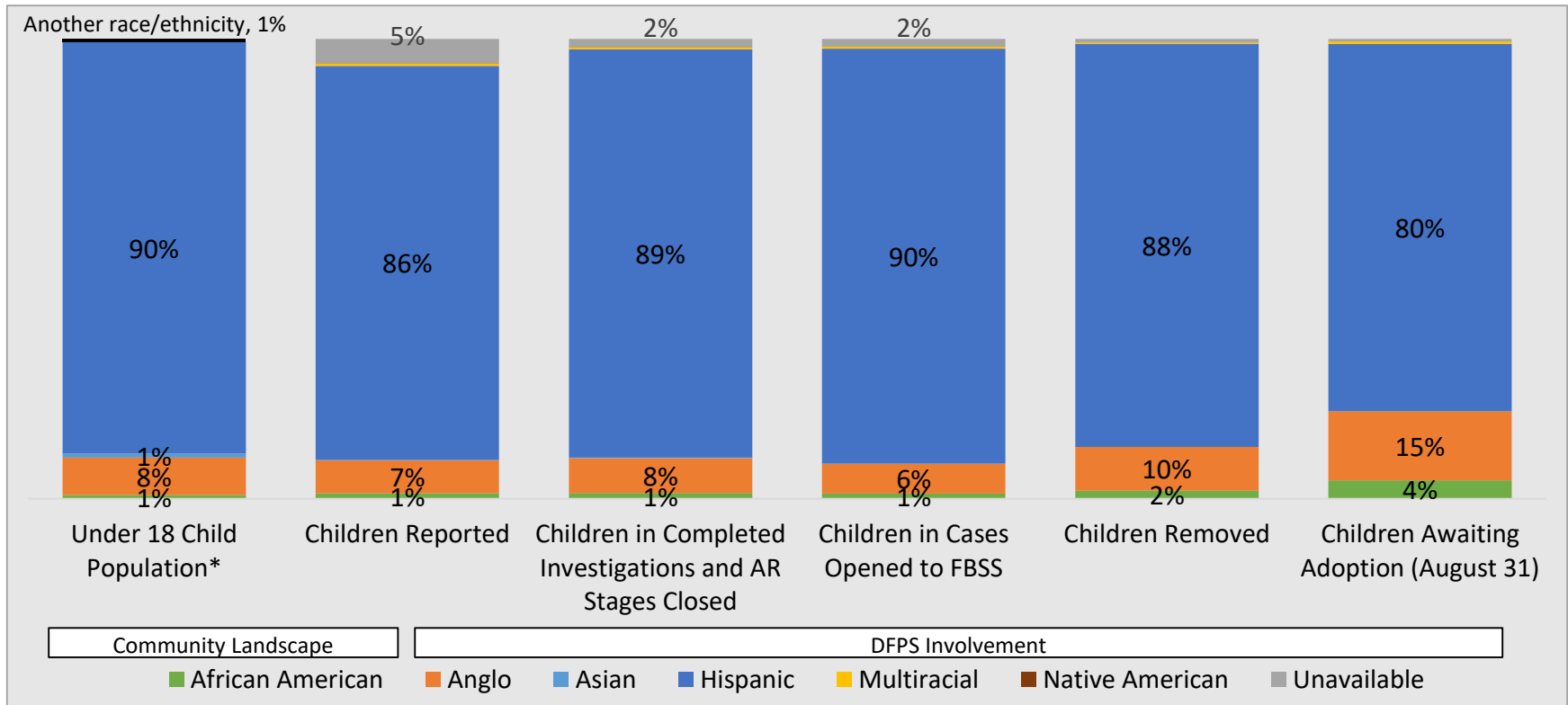
*Native American and Multiracial children are captured in 'Another race/ethnicity' due to available population-level data.

Takeaways

- African American children are proportionally represented in many DFPS stages of service compared to the general population, but are overrepresented in the proportion of children removed and awaiting adoption.
- Anglo children are underrepresented in the population of children removed and awaiting adoption.
- Multiracial children are overrepresented in the population of children removed and awaiting adoption compared to their proportion in the earlier stages of service.

Region 11: Decision Point Analysis (FY20)

A decision point analysis identifies the racial and ethnic characteristics of children at different decision points. It can be useful in examining representation compared to the population.



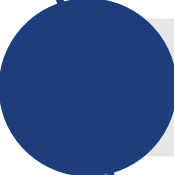
*Native American and Multiracial children are captured in 'Another race/ethnicity' due to available population-level data.

Takeaways

- The majority of the child population and at each stage of DFPS involvement is Hispanic in Region 11.
- Anglo children represent a greater proportion of children removed and awaiting adoption than their proportion in the general population.
- While African American children make up a small percentage of the child under 18 population, they are overrepresented in the population of children awaiting adoption.



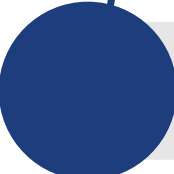
This report provides a quick glance at the major decision-making points in the Texas child welfare system. Further multi-level analysis must be conducted to understand all of the factors influencing outcomes.



Explore the protective factors and reasons why Hispanic children are overrepresented in poverty yet are not overrepresented in child welfare at the state level.



Conduct a deeper analysis to understand why fewer African American families are being routed to alternative response. Are there particular AR criteria that are causing disparities? This recommendation is consistent with the recent journal article, "Racial disparities in assignment to alternative response" (Choi et al., 2021).



The regional data in this report provides a level of information. Internal and external stakeholders are encouraged to analyze data at the county level for deeper context.



Optimize internal and external resources to improve data collection on poverty. DFPS should collect better data on income due to the disproportionate number of families of color living in poverty and track these trends.



Enhance strategic partnerships with youth, biological family, and kin family to deliver equitable and culturally responsive services.

This involves engaging youth and families in initiatives and agency processes. The Capacity Building Center for States identifies the importance of engaging youth and families at the agency level. Specifically, agencies should engage youth and family in decision-making bodies; development of agency policies, procedures, and practices; and in leading trainings for agency staff (Williamson & Gray, 2011; Capacity Building Center for States, 2019). It is recommended that DFPS use the steps outlined in “Strategic Planning in Child Welfare: Strategies for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement” (Capacity Building Center for States, 2018). While DFPS currently engages youth and families in different programs, the current level of engagement is limited.

Refocus on the tenants of the DFPS practice model.

The DFPS practice model provides staff with a common and consistent framework to organize efforts and establishes the parameters for best practices that deliver good outcomes for children and families. The practice model drives decisions and actions at all levels of the organization. One core principal of the practice model is equity. Equity in outcomes can be achieved by applying methods fairly and consistently, and customizing interventions to the unique cultural and community context of the children, youth, and families served.



Continue efforts to increase reunification.

Reunification is the desired exit outcome for children and families. It appears that efforts to increase this outcome should be continued. While there appears to be parity across races and ethnicities in FY19 and FY20, the percentage of families reunifying is low. Intentional refocusing on the tenets of the practice model; developing strategic partnerships with youth and families; increased community level supports; and partnering with external stakeholders may serve to improve exits to reunification.



- Race/ethnicity may not match previous reporting. If a child is determined to be of Hispanic origin, they are only counted as Hispanic and are not included in any other racial/ethnic categories. Multiracial includes children identified as “Multiple races” and “Black-White”. Unavailable racial data includes “Unable to determine,” “Declined to Indicate,” and those missing race/ethnicity (null values)
- Unless noted otherwise, data on victims is presented as duplicated counts; a child is counted each time that DFPS has contact with them.
- Data is from DFPS Data and Decision Support report #102358 and #102518
- Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.
- Regional analysis excludes children out-of-state or where region is unknown.

References

- Population data was retrieved May 2021 from 2020 Population Estimates and Projections Program, Texas State Data Center, Office of the State Demographer and the Institute for Demographic and Socioeconomic Research, The University of Texas at San Antonio.
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