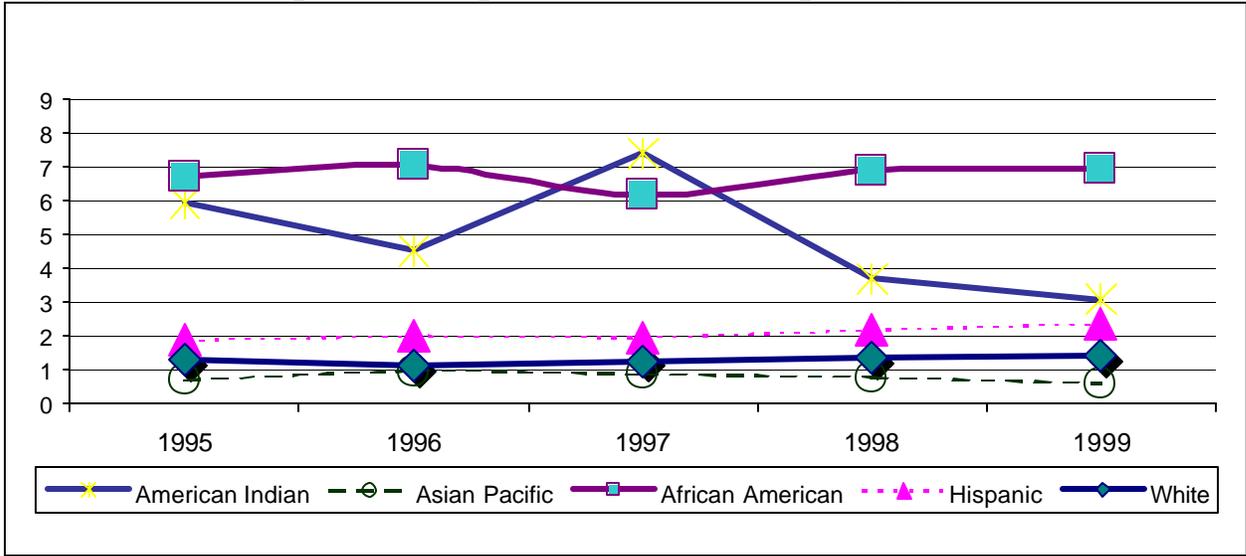


Chapter 6. Over-representation in Special Needs Cases

Program Area VI, Special Needs Cases, is the smallest in size, and has youth in three categories: those for whom efforts at reunification have failed, those who are adopted and receiving services for special needs, and those defined as Medicaid only. There were 10,104 case openings for special needs between 1995 and 2000, of whom 9,802 had known ethnicities. These numbers are higher than those shown in Chapter 1, Table 1.1, because they include a number of cases that had prior openings as CPS cases during the period. This section presents information on differences between ethnic groups in this program area, focusing on age, gender, program target, legal status, service pattern, close residence, length of case, and recurrence of a second special needs case. While this child welfare program area has the fewest cases, it has the most disproportionality of minority children in relation to census figures. There are almost four times as many African American children in Program Area VI as their proportion in the 1997 census (18.2% compared to 4.5). There are three times as many American Indian children as their census proportion (2.4% compared to .7%). Hispanic children are also over-represented, but not to the same degree (24.8% compared to 20.1%).

In addition, when the number of case openings for children with these special needs are graphed over a five year period in terms of rates per thousand (Figure 6.1), it can be seen that while those rates are very small (under 10 children per thousand for all groups), there is considerable disparity. Rates for African American children were the highest – remaining close to 7 per 1000 over the period, compared to 1 per thousand for White children. Rates for American Indian children showed the most change over the period, with a marked increase in 1997 followed by a downward trend.

Figure 6.1: Rates per 1,000, Special Needs Case Openings, 1995-2000



Program Area Target

Just as the rates per 1,000 show a pattern of over-representation, there are several noticeable differences by ethnicity in the program target of cases opened in this category. Figure 6.2 shows the numbers and percentages within groups for the three target areas. For all groups, a majority of cases were opened for special needs adoptions. The percentages for African American, Hispanic, and White children are fairly close (58 to 60%).

Figure 6.2: Program Target within Special Needs Cases, Percent by Ethnicity

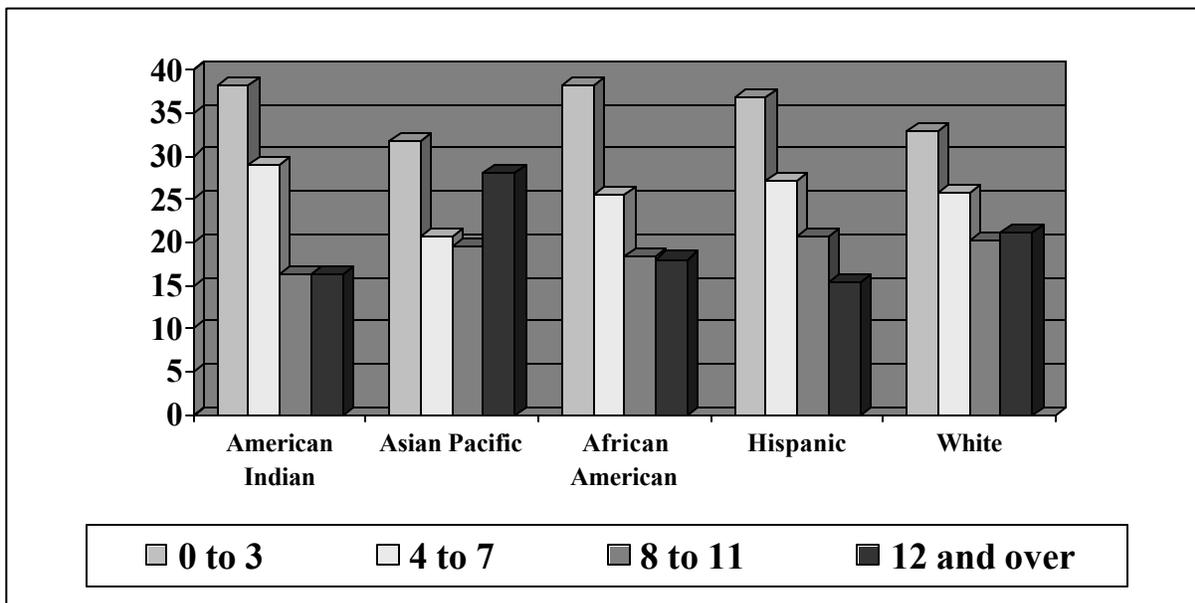
		Program Target			Total
		Reunification failure	Special Needs Adoption	Medicaid only	
American Indian	Count	55	124	45	224
	%	24.6%	55.4%	20.1%	100.0%
Asian/Pacific	Count	35	55	14	104
	%	33.7%	52.9%	13.5%	100.0%
African American	Count	525	999	198	1722
	%	30.5%	58.0%	11.5%	100.0%
Hispanic	Count	781	1461	197	2439
	%	32.0%	59.9%	8.1%	100.0%
White	Count	1485	3056	669	5210
	%	28.5%	58.7%	12.8%	100.0%
Total	Count	2881	5695	1123	9699
	%	29.7%	58.7%	11.6%	100.0%

Slightly less cases open for this reason among American Indian and Asian/Pacific Island children. American Indian children had considerably fewer cases opened as reunification failures – just 25%, compared to Asian Pacific/Island children, of whom 34% opened with this reason. Rates of reunification failure case openings for Hispanic, African American and White children fall within that range, listed in order of the highest first. American Indian children have the highest percentage of cases opening for Medicaid only (close to 20%), where Hispanic children have the lowest percentage.

Demographics

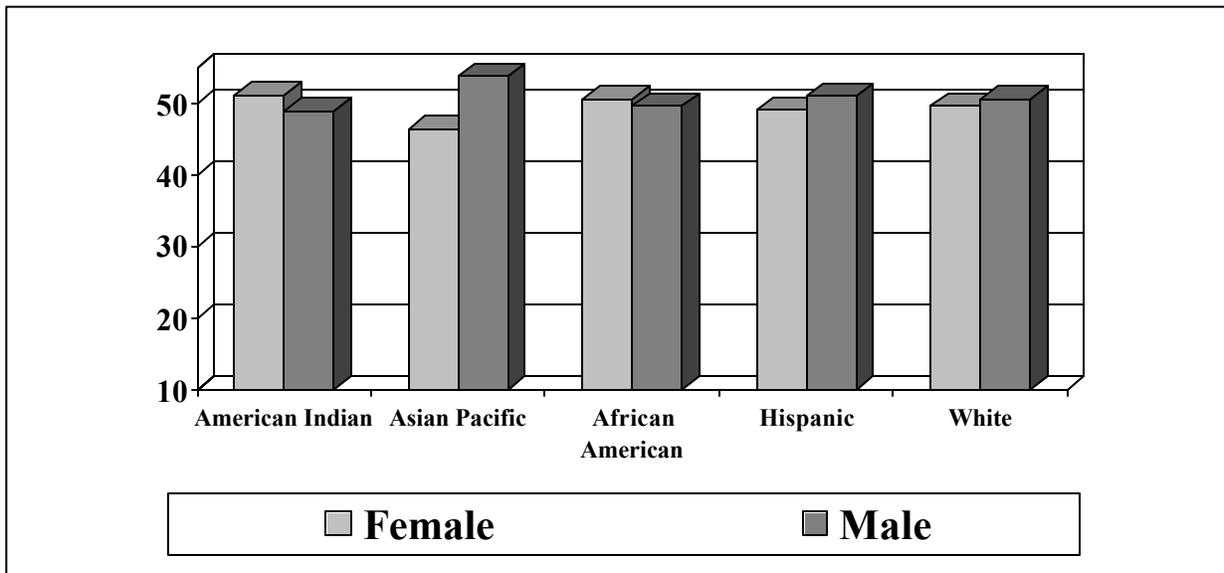
Children in this Program Area tend to be younger at the time their case opened than children in either CPS cases or YIC. Figure 6.3 shows the differences in age group by ethnicity. As with CPS cases, a higher proportion of cases for American Indian, African American, and Hispanic children are very young, especially 0 – 3, and a higher proportion of Asian/Pacific Island and White children are teens at time of case opening.

Figure 6.3: Age at Case Opening, Program Area VI, Percent by Ethnicity



There are few differences in gender across ethnic groups, as seen in Figure 6.4, with the exception of Asian/Pacific Island children, where 54% of cases involved boys.

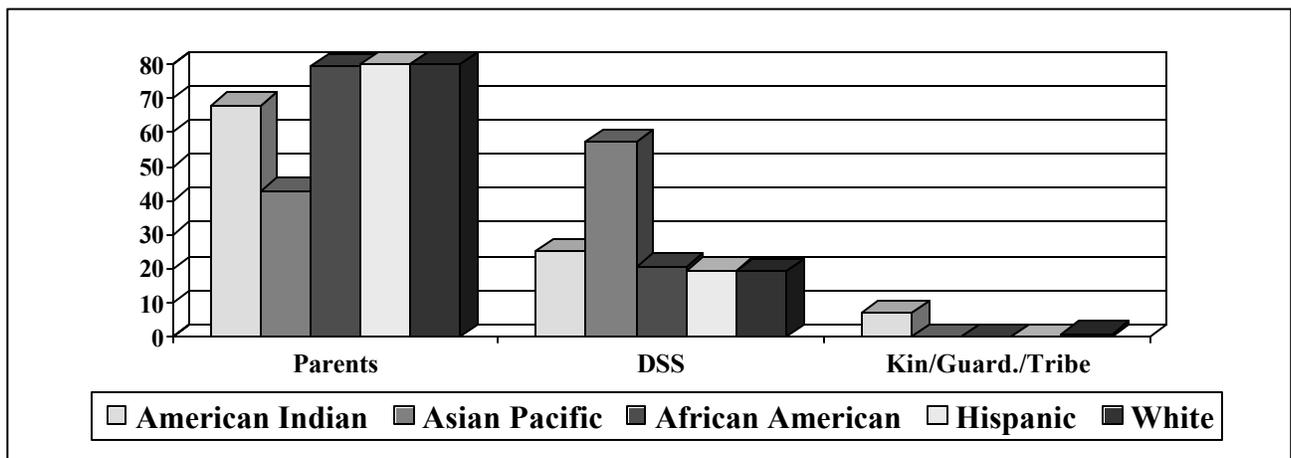
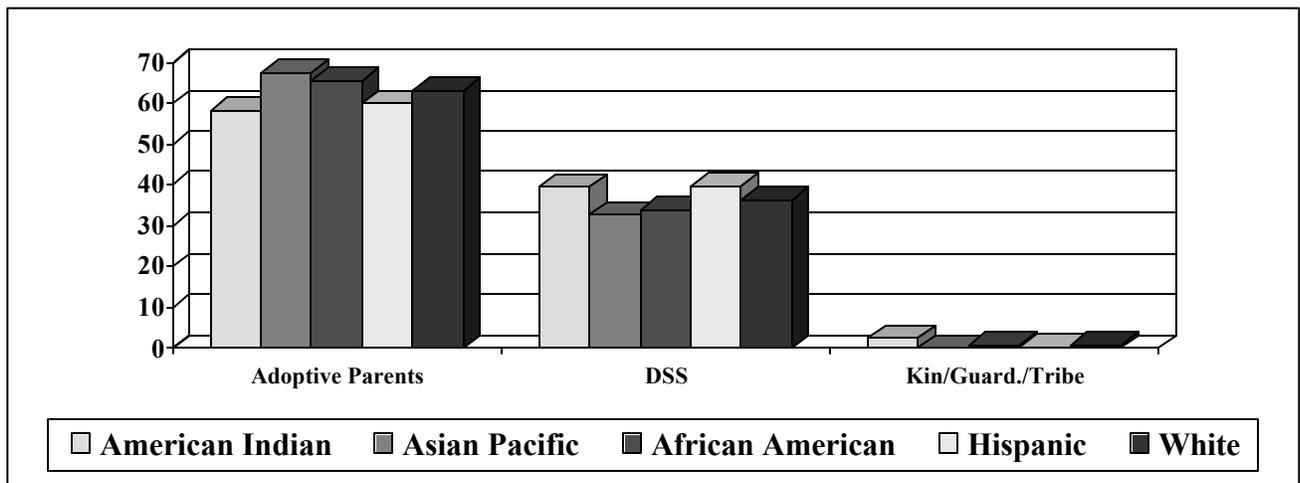
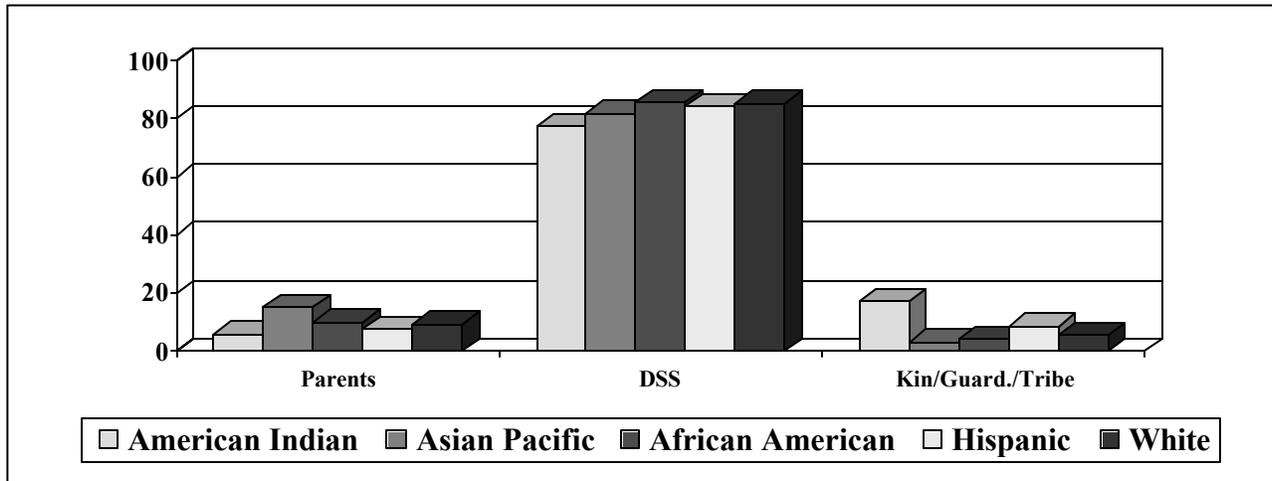
Figure 6.4: Program Area VI Cases, Gender Distribution, Percent by Ethnicity



Legal Status

As would be expected in this Program Area, many more of the children are in DSS custody. Figure 6.5 shows the percent of cases with DSS, parental, and kin custody, across the three target areas in this program. The differences between target areas are generally larger than the differences by ethnicity. For reunification failure, children are in DSS custody in 77 to 86 percent of the cases, and in special needs adoption, in DSS custody in approximately one third of the cases. There is more variability in custody for Medicaid only cases, but except for Asian/Pacific Island children, most cases opened for Medicaid only have parental custody. There is more use of kin custody for children whose reunification has failed, and it should be noted that the category also includes guardians, and, for American Indian children, tribal custody.

Figure 6.5: Legal Custody: Reunification Failure, Special Needs Adoption and Medicaid only Cases, by Ethnicity



Service Patterns

Most Program Area VI cases that open for Reunification failure or as Special Needs adoptions involve at least one out of home placement, so there is little variation by ethnic group in the broad pattern of services. The percentage placed out of home is approximately 95% for all groups except Asian/Pacific Island (92%), where more children are coded as receiving casework supervision only (6.7%). For the Medicaid only cases, the pattern is different – within most groups, a majority of the children receive casework supervision services only (ranging from 57% of Asian/Pacific Island children to 73% of Hispanic children). Over half of American Indian children opened for Medicaid only did experience a placement at some point in the case (55.6%), followed by 39.4% of African American children. The rates of any out of home placement for White and Asian/Pacific Island children (28.3% and 35.7% respectively) fall in the middle range, while just 25.4 of Hispanic children experienced an out of home placement during a Medicaid only case.

Length of Stay

Cases in this program area also differ from other CPS and YIC cases in that they stay open much longer, on average, close to two years for African American children.

However, only a few of the differences in case length by ethnicity were significant.

Figure 6.6 Length of Program Area VI Case, by Ethnicity

Ethnic Group	N	Mean LOS in Days	Std. Deviation
American Indian	113	649	4684
Asian Pacific	57	610	378
African American*	707	684	456
Hispanic*	1008	699	443
White*	2322	618	466

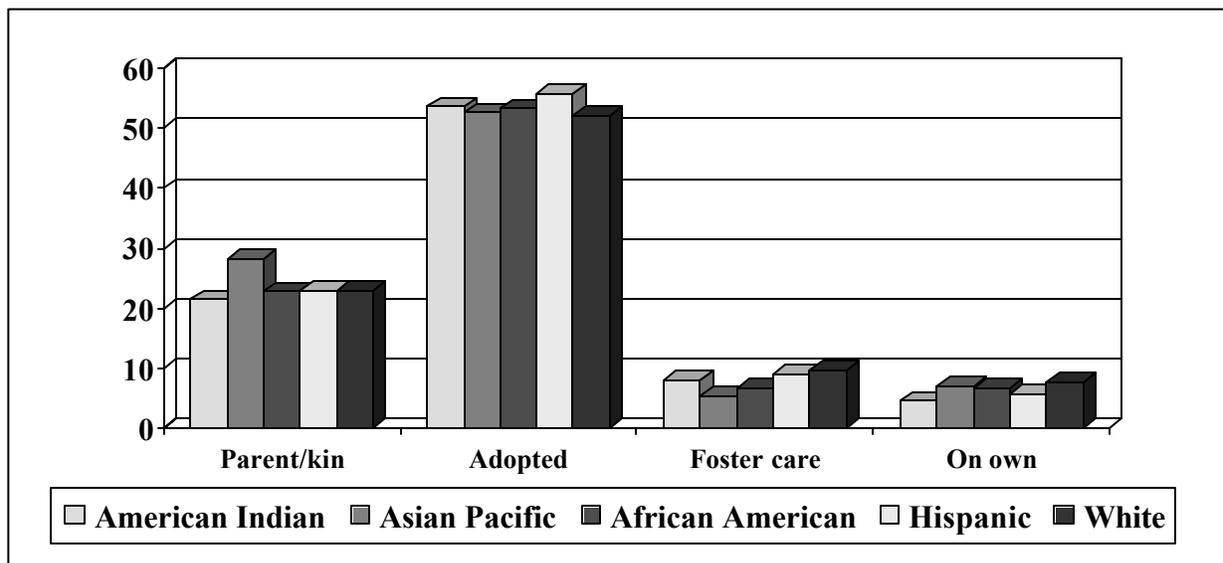
Figure 6.6 shows the average number of days first cases remained open, but the only significant differences in the length of stay were the comparison between African American and White children and the comparison between Hispanic and White children.

Case Closure Residence

Since many of these cases involve special needs adoption, a higher percentage of children are in adoptive homes at case closure, but there are some who are with parents or kin, in foster care, or who emancipate. Figure 6.7 shows the close residence for Program Area VI cases. Two categories are not shown; less than 60 children (1.4% of cases) end in DYC, and the numbers within ethnic groups are too small to do comparisons.

Approximately 8% of cases have a close residence of ‘other,’ which is also omitted from the chart.

Figure 6.7 Case Closure Residence, Program Area VI Cases, Percent by Ethnicity



Recurrence of a 2nd Case

Program Area VI cases are less likely than CPS cases to have a second case opening within the data period of 1995-2000. This may be partly a function of the nature

of these cases, and also due to the fact that they stay open much longer. But like the CPS cases, there is little influence of ethnicity on the likelihood of a second case. Figure 6.8 shows the percentages of case re-openings by ethnicity. While slightly more

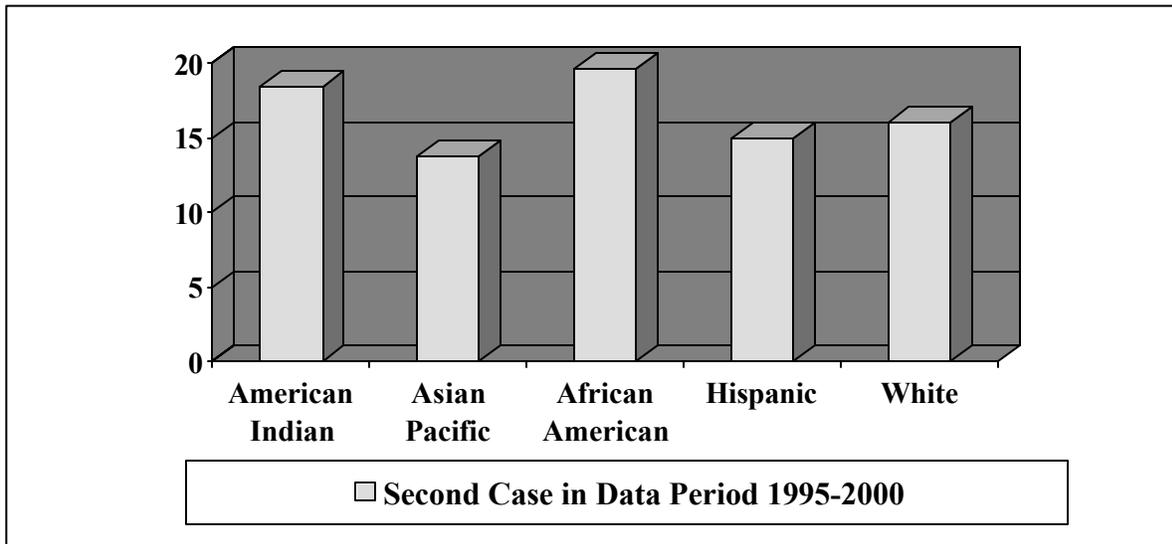


Figure 6.8 Percent with 2nd Program Area VI Case, by Ethnicity

Asian/Pacific Island children have a second case, the only statistically significant difference in likelihood to re-open is for Hispanic children. Figure 6.9 uses results of a Cox regression model to look at the influence of age, sex, target area, extreme poverty, and ethnicity on the time and likelihood of a second case opening. Factors that are listed as more likely could be thought of as associated with a second case opening that happens sooner than for the comparison group. In this program area, there is little influence of ethnicity, with the exception of Hispanic children being 40% more likely to have a second case re-opening sooner than White children. Extreme poverty was also associated with a quicker return to a second case, while special needs adoption and Medicaid only cases were less likely to return quickly than reunification failure cases.

Figure 6.9 Predicting Time to 2nd Case, Program Area VI

Ethnicity (compared to White)	
Hispanic	1.4 times (40%) more likely
All other groups	no difference
Program Target (compared to Reunification failure cases)	
Special needs adoption	61% less likely
Medicaid only	56% less likely
Extreme Poverty	1.4 times (40%) more likely
Age	minimal effects
Gender	no difference

Summary

The data for the time period 1995-2000 reveal that children of color, particularly African American and American Indian children are over-represented in the population of children whose cases open due to reunification failure, special needs adoption, or Medicaid only. In addition, Hispanic and African American children have significantly longer lengths of stay in these cases than White children, and Hispanic children are more likely than White children to have a second case opening occur sooner after closure of a first case. American Indian, African American, and Hispanic children in this program area tend to be younger than White children. Some case factors, such as legal custody status and the child’s residence at case closure, tend to be distributed more evenly across ethnic groups. The primary disparities by ethnicity in Program Area VI are in the proportions of children referred in for these services and in the length of stay in the case.

