Parents with disabilities face discrimination and prejudice in regard to creating and maintaining families. As with other populations who experience prejudice and discrimination, parents with disabilities are often disproportionately involved in the Child Protection System. However, this system is not properly equipped to work successfully with parents with disabilities. Before practice and policies can be developed for working with parents with disabilities, a better understanding of the level of involvement of parents with disabilities throughout the child protection process is required.

### Research Questions

1. Are parents with disabilities disproportionately involved in the Child Protection System as compared to parents without disabilities? 
2. Do the rates of involvement change at the key decision-making points throughout the process? 
3. Do the rates of involvement differ by disability diagnosis?

### Method

- **Data Source:** Secondary data from the Minnesota Departments of Human Services (DHS) and Education housed by the Minn-Link project

#### Disparity Indices:

**No disability reference group:**
- # parents with disability "X" at decision point / # people with disability "X" in population
- # parents with no disability at decision point / # people with no disability in population

**Other disability reference group:**
- # parents with disability "X" at decision point / # people with disability "X" in population
- # parents with no disability at decision point / # people with no disability in population

#### Measures

- Parent’s CPS involvement: Involvement in a CPS Investigation (CPS), Out-of-Home Placement (OHP), Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)
- Demographic characteristics: disability label, gender, race, free or reduced price lunch eligibility (FRL; Economic indicator)

### Results

#### Figure 1. Parent Involvement by Disability Label (vs. No Disability)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>CPS (n=5,000)</th>
<th>OHP (n=2,689)</th>
<th>TPR (n=781)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disparity index</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(reference: no disability)</td>
<td>0.68*** 0.03 1.97</td>
<td>0.77*** 0.06 2.17</td>
<td>1.04*** 0.08 2.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/ethnicity:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>-- -- 1.00</td>
<td>-- -- 1.00</td>
<td>-- -- 1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>0.82*** 0.04 2.27</td>
<td>0.81*** 0.05 2.25</td>
<td>0.26** 0.10 1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>0.28*** 0.07 0.75</td>
<td>0.61*** 0.31 0.54</td>
<td>1.16*** 0.22 0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>1.15*** 0.05 5.71</td>
<td>1.89*** 0.06 6.64</td>
<td>1.43*** 0.11 4.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>1.74*** 0.05 3.04</td>
<td>1.46*** 0.05 4.32</td>
<td>1.53*** 0.09 4.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1.11*** 0.03 3.04</td>
<td>1.46*** 0.05 4.32</td>
<td>1.53*** 0.09 4.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRL Eligible: male</td>
<td>0.89*** 0.03 2.44</td>
<td>0.99*** 0.05 2.69</td>
<td>1.29*** 0.09 3.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Conclusion & Implications

- **Parents with a history of disability diagnosis were disproportionately involved in the Child Protection System.**
- **Parents with disabilities were 2.12 times more likely to be involved in a Child Protection investigation than parents without a history of disability diagnosis.**
- **Parents with disabilities were 1.08 times more likely to experience the out-of-home placement of at least one child than parents without a disability.**
- **Parents with disabilities were 1.32 times more likely to experience a TPR of a child than parents without a disability.**

- **The rates of involvement of parents with disabilities changed throughout key decision-making points in the Child Protection System. Parents with disabilities became increasingly overrepresented throughout the child protection process, even when controlling for race/ethnicity, gender, and economic status.**

- **The rates of involvement of parents with disabilities differs depending upon disability label and decision-making point within the Child Protection System.**

- **Policy Implications**
  - Some policies overtly discriminate against parents with disabilities (e.g., statutory grounds for TPR); these policies must be revised to base TPR on parental behavior rather than the disability condition/label.
  - Policy adherence to Title II of the ADA warrants further examination and enforcement assuring parents are offered appropriate service accommodations while being allowed to demonstrate parenting ability with appropriate modification.

- **Practice Implications**
  - Assessment and identification of disability in order to provide a tailored service delivery array is critical to reducing the disparate representation of parents with disabilities.
  - Training is a crucial tool to combat disparate involvement of parents with disabilities; comprehensive and competency-based disability training is imperative.

- **Research Implications**
  - More research is needed to disentangle the complex issues involved in the over-representation of parents with disabilities in the Child Protection System.
  - Applied research to assess the effectiveness of Child Protection Interventions tailored to parents with disabilities is needed to guide the use of evidence-based practices.